

Back to the Basics

Serving God 24/7

Memory Verse:
1 Peter 2:21-22

There is More to Christianity than Just "Going to Church."

When you were set free from your bondage to sin, you became a slave or servant of the Father in Heaven. At the point of your conversion, you were to turn from a life of sin to a life of serving God without fail. However, after your conversion to the Lord, you likely faced temptations to serve the Lord only part of the time.

There are many Christians who have faced this same challenge and have failed. The sum of their Christianity is simply attending the "church services." What these "part-time Christians" fail to realize is that worshiping with the saints is only one part of a godly life. They desperately need the realization that serving God is a twenty-four hour a day, seven days a week process. (This fact will be established later in the lesson.)

The danger in living as a "part-time Christian" is this: When a person serves the Lord only through attending the worship services, he or she is no longer living as a Christian. To show this point, consider two definitions of a Christian. First, a Christian is one who is a disciple of Christ, a learner of Christ, and a follower of Christ and, therefore should be following the teachings and examples of Christ. In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, "*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*" (NKJV) Jesus obeyed His Father in Heaven twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. We see Jesus' drive in His statement: "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*" (John 4:34, NKJV; cf. John 5:30) Secondly, a Christian is one who is in Christ, therefore being Christ-like in his life. If we are in Christ and Christ is in us, then we will live a godly life. If we do not live a godly life, then we will have departed from the fellowship of Christ. Jesus said, "*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5, NKJV)

*There will be no
part time
Christians living in
Heaven.*

Christ gave His all.

So, too, must we.

If you are living as a Christian, then you will be serving God with all your might, whether you are in this meeting place or in some other place in the world. This is the life of a child of God, a servant of God, and a follower of Jesus Christ. Are you living this type of life?

True Service Begins with the Heart

Have you wondered why some Christians do not serve the Lord twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week? Maybe you are this type of person. If so, then you need to understand why you only serve the Lord on Sundays and Wednesdays. You will find that the answer lies within your heart.

Let us consider the contrast seen between Mary and Martha, who were both good people and who both served the Lord. This contrast of service can be seen in Luke 10:38-42:

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (NKJV)

Take notice of what Martha was doing. Martha is seen physically serving the Lord and others by preparing the food and setting the table. She was doing what she perceived to be important. Mary, on the other hand, was spending all of her time with the Lord. She was listening and gleaning from His wonderful words. Now, when Martha complained to Jesus that Mary was not doing her part, Jesus reprimanded Martha. Jesus said, "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.*"

Now let us draw a comparison between Martha and Mary. Martha served the Lord. She worked to make certain that the food was prepared, the table was set, and the house was in order for the visitors and for Jesus. Martha was concerned about appearances and physical preparations. She wanted Mary to help serve. On the other hand, Mary saw other things to be more important. Mary seized the opportunity to be in the presence of Jesus. She showed Jesus love and adoration.

There is a very clear lesson seen within this comparison. While we should all serve the Lord as Martha did, we must first develop within ourselves the love and adoration for the Lord as Mary possessed. While we may serve the Lord physically through worship, praise, and service, we must first serve Him with love, devotion, adoration, respect, and awe. If we love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, then we will serve like Martha and love like Mary.

In his letter to the church in Rome, Paul clearly showed the necessity of service beginning in the heart. In Romans 6:17, Paul wrote, "*But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*" (NKJV) In this verse, Paul referred to the brethren in Rome having obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine. What doctrine did they obey? The Christians in Rome had obeyed from the heart the doctrine of Christ and salvation. The brethren in Rome had first made the decision and determination within their heart to obey the doctrine of Jesus Christ. This inward determination brought forth their outward obedience which resulted in their being saved from their sins.

Serving the Lord 24/7 in Your Private Life

Now that we have established that true service begins within the heart, we will look at serving the Lord twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week within your private life. This area of service is extremely important because your private life is the true mirror of your heart. If the child of God is truly serving the Lord from his heart, then his private life will be filled with obedience. (It is easy, when around other Christians, to read the Bible, pray to God, and do the right things. However, when no one is looking, when we are alone, our true faithfulness is exposed.) Consider the following partial list of “to do’s” within your private life.

- Q Study daily the word of God. (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Q Pray daily to God in Heaven. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Q Create within yourself a desire to serve the Lord. (2 Corinthians 7:11; cf. Romans 6:17)
- Q Be honest with yourself about your service to God. (Galatians 6:3; cf. 1 John 2:3-6)
- Q Love and serve the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. (Mark 12:29-30)
- Q Put on the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Q Love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)
- Q Love your brothers in Christ. (Romans 12:10)

Satan, in his attempt to pull you away from your Father in heaven, will tempt you in other areas of your life. Satan will tempt you in areas of morality, integrity, and the like. Consider now a partial list of things to avoid within your private life.

- Q The works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:19-21)
- Q Evil influences. (1 Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 1:15-16) For instance, you should avoid association with certain people. You should avoid any and all types of pornography, whether it be “soft porn” or “hardcore porn.” This would include pornography on television, in movies, in books, on the internet, etc. Also, you should avoid all worldly and suggestive movies, songs, and books which may lead you away from living a godly life.
- Q Do not love the world. (1 John 2:15-17)
- Q Do not cause others to sin or stumble. (Luke 17:1-2; cf. 1 Corinthians 8:11-13)
- Q Avoid immodest behavior and apparel. (1 Timothy 2:9-10)
- Q Avoid materialism. (Ephesians 5:3; cf. Colossians 3:5)
- Q Avoid lying and dishonesty. (Ephesians 4:25; cf. Revelation 21:8)
- Q Avoid corrupt language. (Ephesians 4:29; cf. Colossians 4:6)

Serving the Lord twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week is the key to total service and commitment to the Lord within your private life. Once your private life is in order, then your service to the Lord elsewhere will become much more natural and without hypocrisy.

Serving the Lord 24/7 in Other Areas of Your Life

Serving the Lord twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week in your private life will directly affect your service to the Lord in the other areas of your life. For instance, let us begin with your public relationships with other people.

- Q A faithful Christian will have the proper attitude towards the government ruling over him. He will obey the rulers of the land. (Romans 13:1-7) He will also pray for the rulers of the land. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- Q A faithful Christian will have the proper attitude and behavior at his place of employment. He will work well so that he might be pleasing to God. (Ephesians 6:5-9) He will let his light shine through righteous attitudes and actions. (Matthew 5:14-16) He will work to be a good influence so that those around him will see the path of righteousness. He will also work to avoid evil influences. Paul wrote, “*Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’*” (1 Corinthians 15:33, NKJV) This is such a crucial rule for Christians to apply within their lives. Evil influences will act as an anchor tied to the leg of a drowning man. They will pull Christians down and keep them down as long as they can. Solomon knew of these dangers. He warned his children against walking in the way of the wicked. (Proverbs 1:15-16; 4:14)
- Q A faithful Christian will have a proper attitude and behavior at school. Young Christians are to let their lights shine through righteous attitudes and actions. (Matthew 5:14-16) Likewise, they too are to be good influences so that those around them will see the path of righteousness. Young Christians are to also avoid evil influences. (1 Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 1:15-16; 4:14) Avoiding evil influences during the early part of one’s life is necessary to the proper development of character, morals, and godly expectations.
- Q A faithful Christian will have the proper attitude and behavior while he is around his friends. He will serve as a light to his friends. (Matthew 5:14-16) A faithful Christian will also avoid all forms of evil influences to which his friends may try to subject him. (Cf. Proverbs 1:15-16; 4:14) A faithful Christian will not drink alcohol, he will not swear, he will not steal, he will not view pornography, and he will not engage in ungodly and unlawful behavior with his friends.
- Q A faithful Christian will have the proper attitude and behavior around strangers. You see, a stranger does not know you. He does not know what to expect from you. He does not know that you are a Christian. However, even in these cases, you are to let your light so shine before men. (Matthew 5:14-16) This is especially important in this age of internet chatting and correspondence with total strangers. Remember, no matter who you talk to, you are first a Christian.

Having shown how a faithful Christian behaves when he is around others in the world, let us now examine a faithful Christian's relationship with his family.

Q First, let us consider the duties of the husband and wife. Husbands are to love, honor, lead and provide for their wives. (1 Peter 3:7; cf. Ephesians 5:23, 25-32) Wives are to honor their husbands and submit themselves unto their husbands. (Ephesians 5:22-24) Husbands and wives are not to defraud each other. Both spouses are to provide for the physical (sexual) needs of the other. (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)

When Does It Fall Apart?

- ü When the person ceases to love the Lord God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- ü When the person no longer desires to serve the Lord 24/7.
- ü When the private life of the person ceases to serve the Lord 24/7.

At this point, God demands repentance and change! (2 Corinthians 7:9-11)

Q Secondly, let us consider the parental responsibilities. Parents have a responsibility to train their children in the way of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4; cf. Deuteronomy 6:4-9) Parents are to also discipline and correct their children. (Proverbs 13:34; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15) In short, parents are to train up their children to walk in the way of the Lord. (Proverbs 22:6) This is accomplished through word, example, love, discipline and support.

Q Thirdly, we need to also consider the child's responsibility as a member of the family. Children are to honor and obey their fathers and their mothers. Paul wrote, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.*" (Ephesians 6:1-3, NKJV)

The last area of our lives where private faithfulness will affect our obedience has to do with our duties and relationships towards the local church.

Q A faithful Christian will have the proper attitude toward the organization of the local church. A faithful Christian will respect and serve the head of the church, which is Christ. (Ephesians 1:20-22; cf. Colossians 1:18) He will also respect and obey the elders. (Hebrews 13:17; cf. Acts 20:28)

Q A faithful Christian will have the proper attitude and action during the worship services. He will worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) He will also worship the heavenly Father with his fellow saints. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Q A faithful Christian will have the proper attitude and action towards the work of the local church. He will faithfully contribute what he can to the work of the local congregation. (1 Corinthians 16:1,2) He will be a worker and will cooperate with the other members. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26) He will respect the scriptural decisions, as well as the decisions of judgment made by the elders in regards to the work of the church. (Hebrews 13:17) The faithful Christian will also respect the actions of discipline taken against the unrepentant Christian. (1 Corinthians 5:11; cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15) Every member of a local congregation is to be "joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" when disciplined is exercised. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Ten Questions

1. Who suffered for Christians, leaving them an example? _____
2. Which sister, Mary or Martha, chose to listen to Jesus? _____
3. Regarding the brethren in Rome, where did their obedience begin? _____
4. What does 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tell Christians to do? _____
5. How much should Christians love their neighbors? _____
6. What will evil companionship (communications, KJV) corrupt? _____

7. What Bible passage teaches Christians to “be subject to the governing authorities? _____

8. Why are Christians to let their light shine before men? _____

9. How should Christians act towards the local eldership? _____

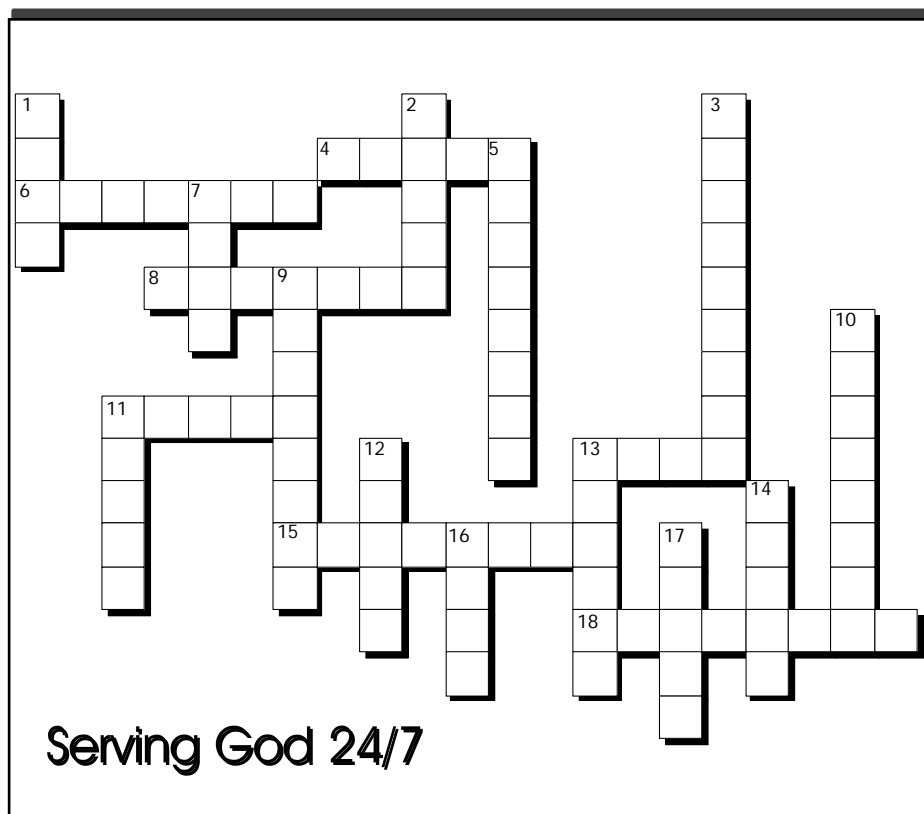
10. If a person stops serving the Lord 24/7, what does the Lord demand that he do? _____

True or False

1. T or F : A Christian is one who is a disciple of Christ, a learner of Christ, and a follower of Christ.
2. T or F : Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”
3. T or F : Mary was distracted by much serving and Martha sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His words.
4. T or F : Christians are supposed to love only their fellow Christians.
5. T or F : Drunkenness is part of the work of the flesh.
6. T or F : Christians are to avoid immodest behavior and apparel.
7. T or F : Christians are to avoid using corrupt or filthy language.
8. T or F : It is not important for a Christian to behave in a godly manner around strangers.
9. T or F : Serving the Lord 24/7 involves remaining sexually pure.
10. T or F : Serving the Lord 24/7 does not involve your attitude towards the local church.

A Little Fun

(Use the lesson text to answer these questions.)



Across

4. "Do not love the _____ or the things in the world."
6. "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an _____, . . ."
8. "Let every soul be _____ to the governing authorities."
11. "Therefore, putting away _____, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' . . ."
13. "But one thing is needed, and _____ has chosen that good part, . . ."
15. You shall love your _____ as yourself.
18. "Likewise you _____, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife . . ."

Down

1. "_____ those who rule over you, and be submissive . . ."

2. Galatians 5:22-23 describes the _____ of the Spirit.
3. "Be kindly affectionate to one another with _____ love, . . ."
5. A Christian is one who is a _____ of Jesus Christ.
7. Who wrote, "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine . . .?"
9. "But that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same _____."
10. "Do not be _____: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"
11. "You are the _____ of the world."
12. "Let your light so _____ before men."
13. ". . . and a certain woman named _____ welcomed Him into her house . . ."
14. "It is good for a man not to touch a _____."
16. Christ "is the _____ of the body, the church . . ."
17. Who said, "I am the vine, you are the branches . . .?"

Passages in this Lesson

Deuteronomy 6:4-9	pg 87	2 Corinthians 7:11	pg 85
Proverbs 1:15-16	pg 85,86	Galatians 5:19-21	pg 85
Proverbs 4:14	pg 86	Galatians 5:22-23	pg 85
Proverbs 13:34	pg 87	Galatians 6:3	pg 85
Proverbs 22:15	pg 87	Ephesians 1:20-22	pg 87
Proverbs 22:6	pg 87	Ephesians 4:25	pg 85
Proverbs 23:13-14	pg 87	Ephesians 4:29	pg 85
Proverbs 29:15	pg 87	Ephesians 5:3	pg 85
Matthew 5:14-16	pg 86	Ephesians 5:22-24	pg 87
Mark 12:29-30	pg 85	Ephesians 5:23,25-32	pg 87
Mark 12:31	pg 85	Ephesians 6:1-3	pg 87
Luke 10:38-42	pg 84	Ephesians 6:4	pg 87
Luke 17:1-2	pg 85	Ephesians 6:5-9	pg 86
John 4:24	pg 87	Colossians 1:18	pg 87
John 4:34	pg 83	Colossians 3:5	pg 85
John 5:30	pg 83	Colossians 4:6	pg 85
John 15:5	pg 83	1 Thessalonians 5:17	pg 85
Acts 20:28	pg 87	2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15	pg 87
Romans 6:17	pg 84,85	1 Timothy 2:1-2	pg 86
Romans 12:10	pg 85	1 Timothy 2:9-10	pg 85
Romans 13:1-7	pg 86	2 Timothy 2:15	pg 85
1 Corinthians 1:10	pg 87	Hebrews 10:24-25	pg 87
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1 Corinthians 15:33	pg 85,86	1 John 2:15-17	pg 85
1 Corinthians 16:1-2	pg 87	Revelation 21:8	pg 85
2 Corinthians 7:9-11	pg 87		