

THE FIRST 4 STEPS BELIEVERS MUST TAKE

To Make It Through To What Comes Next!

***An Examination of “The Normal Christian Life” by Watchman Nee** **5-Part Series, Lesson 1 Overview**

Intro: Heaven is the Lord's promise for those believers who not only know Him, but also DO THE WILL of the Father (Mt 7:13-29 esp v21). Therefore we must also know HOW to walk with Jesus now just as His original disciples followed His lead. A close examination of scripture shows us that this is not a matter of religious precepts but rather purposeful steps we take to live the way Jesus did...

The “**Normal Christian Life**” is made up of **4 Simple Steps**: **1) Knowing, 2) Reckoning 3) Presenting & 4) Walking** according to the New Testament prescription written by Paul in his letter to the Romans (Ro 6:9, 11, 13 & 8:1). These steps describe the process which enables the foundation of Christianity to be established in our lives (Ro 6:5:17-21...1-8). That foundation is described by Paul in other letters as, “Christ living in us” (1Cor 3:11; Gal 2:20; Eph 4:17-24; Col 1:26). To get the full context so we can identify both the problem all believers experience AND the solution all NORMAL believers encounter, let's divide Romans chapters 1-8 into 2 Sections; Ro 1:1-5:11 (four and one half chapters) & 5:12-8:39 (three and one half chapters).

Overview of Contents:

KNOWING _____

1. The **blood** of Christ is God's remedy for man's **sins** – **plural**. – chapter 1
2. The **cross** of Christ is God's remedy for man's **sin** – **singular**. Every person is born “in Adam” and as such has sin working within us as a principle that causes us to sin. We are not sinners merely because we sin, but instead we sin because we are born sinners. But when we are baptized into Christ's death (born again) we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son. The old man died with Christ and the new man rises to new life in Christ. Therefore now those who are in Christ are no longer “sinners” but “saints.” – chapter 2
3. We can **know** that we have died with Christ and that the sin principle within us has been overcome and rendered powerless **through our identification with Christ's death** – chapter 3

RECKONING _____

4. Therefore likewise we are to “**reckon**” ourselves *dead to sin and alive to God*. It is an accomplished fact, which we appropriate by reckoning—that is, making a conscious choice to consider—ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. – chapter 4

5. We are no longer “*in Adam*” but we have passed from death to life and are now “*in Christ*.” These are totally different realities, and never the twain shall meet. Baptism is the clear line of demarcation that we are no longer in Adam but instead in Christ. What was true of us “in Adam” is no longer true of us “in Christ.” We are new creatures in Christ. – chapter 5

PRESENTING _____

6. Now that we *know* we’ve died and risen with Christ and therefore *reckon* ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, the proper response is for us to present ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness, for His service. Nee refers to presenting ourselves to God in this way as “**consecration**.” – chapter 6

7. **God’s purpose in all this goes beyond mere redemption.** Man’s sin and redemption was actually a *detour* in God’s eternal plan for man and the world. God’s eternal purpose is to have many sons who are conformed to the image of Christ, and to bring these many sons to glory. – chapter 7

8. We fulfill the righteous requirements of the law not by trying to keep the law, but through *walking by the Spirit*. Acts 2 shows us that the Holy Spirit was poured out on all the people of God as a result of Jesus’ exaltation to the right hand of God. Therefore, just as we can know we have died and risen with Christ, we can also know that if we have trusted in Christ then we have received the gift of His Spirit. It is not a *matter of feelings but of trust in the finished work of Christ and belief in the promise and Word* of God. – chapter 8

9. Not only have we been **delivered from sin** through the death of Christ, but we have *also been delivered from the Law*. We are now dead to the Law and alive to God. – chapter 9

10. The Law is not fulfilled in us by trying to keep the law, but by walking in the Spirit. Not only are we in Christ, but Christ is also in us through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law.

Walking in the Spirit does not equate to effort on our part, but *simply to recognizing that our flesh has been crucified and allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work* in and through us. – chapter 10

WALKING

11. Another part of Christ's eternal purpose is that He would have a **Body to express his life** (p. 210). This purpose of God shows us that redemption was not God's original intent for man, because sin was not part of God's original intent for man. Instead, redemption was a restorative measure to bring humanity back in line with God's original purpose, which was to have *a corporate, glorious church, a body*, through which to express His life. – chapter 11

12. Because Adam chose the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil rather than the Tree of Life, *man developed an independent self-life which caused the human soul to become more developed than God ever intended. God never meant for man to live independent of Him.* Therefore sinful man has the capacity to live life on his own and to depend on the power of the soul rather than on the power of God. Even *a Christian has to guard against relying on the over-developed power of his soul to serve God rather than relying on the power of the Spirit. A Christian's task is to walk by the Spirit, not live and work in the power of his soul. Therefore the believer has to choose to take up his cross daily,* which consists of making a conscious decision in every situation to live and move in the power of the Spirit rather than relying on his soul power. Instead he must allow the soul to be crucified by resisting the temptation to rely on his soul and instead relying on the Spirit. – chapters 12 and 13

13. We may be **tempted to think that time and energy spent ministering to God is a “waste.”** We may think we should not “waste” precious time and energy in “idle” tasks like prayer, worship, and Bible reading. But ministering to God is more important than ministering to people. It is not a waste for us to pour out ourselves at the feet of God. Martha's busy service is contrasted with Mary sitting at the Lord's feet. The author invites us to “waste” ourselves in ministry to God. – chapter 14

*Much of this outline has been written by Morgan Trotter, and can be found online at:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/morgantrotter.wordpress.com/2015/06/07/book-summary-of-the-normal-christian-life-by-watchman-nee/amp/>