

Experiencing Christ's Power

Follow-Up #3



In the second lesson, you learned that as you abide or trust in Christ, He produces His qualities within you. That is how He changes your life.

But even as Christians, there are times that we may not trust Christ. In fact, we may do wrong things or harbor attitudes that are disobedient to God. As a result, our relationship with Christ is hindered and we are not fulfilled. The Bible says these wrong attitudes and actions are called sin.

How can you deal with your sin? Do you just have to work at it on your own strength? Grit your teeth? Try hard?

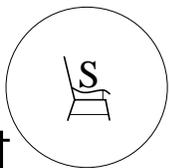
Fortunately, Christ provides the power for us to be obedient.

Would You Like Your Relationship With God To Be More Life-Changing?

HOW DO YOU THINK IT CAN HAPPEN?

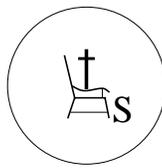
- I don't know. I haven't heard anything yet that seems to work.
- I try as hard as I can to do what God wants me to do.
- Believing in Christ is important, but I live like I want to-- it's my life.

Did you know that the Bible talks about three kinds of people (1 Cor 2:14-3:3)?



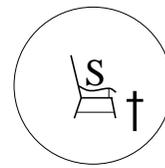
THE PERSON WITHOUT CHRIST

- self enthroned directing the life.
- Christ outside the life.
- person is separated from God.



THE CHRIST-CENTERED CHRISTIAN

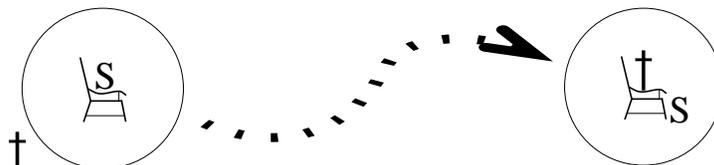
- Christ in the life and on the throne.
- self yielding to Christ's direction.
- person enjoys fellowship with God.



THE SELF-CENTERED CHRISTIAN

- self on the throne directing the life.
- Christ in the life, but not directing.
- person's life has changed little.

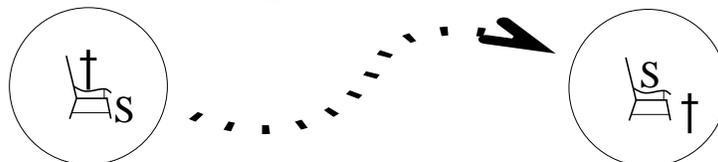
How would a person move from being without Christ to being a Christ-centered Christian?



Can a Christian ever move back to being a person without Christ?

The Christian's relationship with God is secure because he has Christ (1 John 5:11-13), not because of his performance (Ephesians 2:8-9).

How would a person move from being a Christ-centered Christian to being a self-centered Christian?



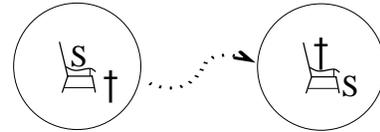
Although there are many ways this can happen to a Christian...

The Bible gives three general causes:

- He may not know how to keep from becoming self-centered.
- He may be trusting in his own efforts to live the Christian life because he has forgotten how to keep from becoming self-centered.
- He may be rebelling against Christ from directing his life and he knows it.

When a Christian lives like this, his relationship with Christ cannot glorify God or be life-changing.

How can a Christian move from being self-centered to Christ-centered?



A Christ-centered life is available through the filling (directing and empowering) of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). God the Holy Spirit indwells all Christians, but He does not fill them without their cooperation. We must choose to be filled (directed and empowered) with the Holy Spirit by faith, then we can know the life-changing experience of a Christ-centered life.

When you choose to be filled with the Holy Spirit, you must:

- A. Sincerely desire to be directed and empowered by the Spirit (Matt. 5:6).
Do you want His direction and empowering?
- B. Confess your sins to God (1 John 1:9). If we confess our sins, God will forgive and cleanse us.
Would you like to know that your fellowship with God is not hindered by unconfessed sin?
If so, stop and silently ask God to reveal any sin; then confess it to Him and give thanks.
- C. Yield the throne of your life to God (Romans 12:1-2).
Are you willing for Christ to be Lord of your life?
- D. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit by faith based on:
 1. HIS COMMAND -- Continue to let the Spirit fill you (Ephesians 5:18).
 2. HIS PROMISE -- We can be sure that He will always answer when we pray according to His will (1 John 5:14, 15).

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith alone. However, prayer is a good way to express your faith.

If you want this, you can ask God right now to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Here is a suggested prayer, or you can use your own words.

"Dear Father, I need you. I admit that I have been directing my own life and that, as a result, I have sinned against You. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place at the center of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Thank You for directing my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit."

What if I blow it by sinning again?

Don't worry, the Holy Spirit never leaves the Christian's life. However, you must continue to let Him direct and empower your life. If you retake the throne of your life through sin, a willful act of disobedience, then BREATHE SPIRITUALLY. Just as you exhale impure air and inhale pure air physically, BREATHING SPIRITUALLY enables you to be cleansed from your sins and once again filled with the Holy Spirit.

EXHALE: Call it sin. Agree with God concerning your sin (1 John 1:9) and repent (change).
Call it forgiven. Thank Him for His forgiveness because of Christ's death for you.

INHALE: Call on God. Ask Jesus to again take the throne of your life (Romans 6:11-13, 19) and claim the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith. Trust that He now directs and empowers you based on the command of Ephesians 5:18 and the promise of 1 John 5:14-15.

Next week, we are going to learn more about growing in your new relationship with Christ.