



## *Practical Christian Living*

### *Being Christian*

**Icebreaker:** *What is your favorite thing about being a Christian?*

Christianity is more than an option between this religion or that religion. Christianity is more than what happens in a Christian worship gathering on a Sunday morning or a Wednesday night. Christianity is more than something we do. It is who we are. It is an identity and out of that identity flows all the rest of our life, ministry, compassion, and everything else.

*What is the difference between “being” a salesman, policeman, or doctor and “being” a Christian?*

- Christianity is who we are. Our profession is what we do.

You can give someone legal advice but that doesn't make you a lawyer. You can put plants in your yard but that doesn't make you a landscaper. You can sit in a pew but that doesn't make you a Christian.

*How is it possible to be at church but not really be in tune with God?*

#### **Ephesians 4:17-24**

Notice the great change that Paul talks about that takes place in the life of a Christian. *What kind of life does he say they can no longer live like?*

- They can no longer have hardened hearts, futile thinking, a pagan lifestyle and behavior, or indulge in impurity.

*What is the alternative we are offered through Christ that he mentions in verses 22-24?*

He says that they were taught about a better way to live because they were given a new identity. Christianity is more than a religion. It is who we are. We become Christlike with a new self, with righteousness instead of unrighteousness, and holiness instead of unholiness. Many Christians have confused Christianity with something you do. Christianity is who you are. Out of that identity flows proper worship and a godly lifestyle.

#### **Ephesians 4:25-32**

Paul mentions two parts of our identity out of which the Christian “do’s” and “don’t’s” come out of. In 25 he says we are members of “one body”. *How does being a member of the body of Christ give us identity?*

In verse 30 he gives us the second identity forming part of being a Christian—the Holy Spirit which seals us.

If Christianity is just a matter of not stealing or not lying or not murdering then there are many non-Christians who qualify to be Christians. Christianity is more than a list of do’s and don’ts—it is WHO we are. It is an identity.

Once we know who we are then we know what to do. Christianity requires action and that action flows from our Christian identity.

*What are some things Paul says Christians should not do in this passage?*

*What are some things Paul says a Christian ought to do in this passage?*

Being Christian is more than avoiding sin. It involves doing good in the world. Being Christian is more than not damaging the world and the people around us. Being Christian means we go through the world offering a better alternative than what the world has to offer. We offer a positive voice of love, life, and light to a world that only knows hatred, death, and darkness.

*How is the message of Christ contrary to the message of the world?*

*In what ways do we spread the message of the positive alternative of Christ?*

We have to move away from a checkbox mentality of doing church to an identity mentality of being church. When we are the church the world will recognize it.

*What does the church have to offer that the world really needs?*

### **Application:**

*How can you encourage other Christians to grow beyond doing Christian things to actually being Christian?*

*How will that encourage even more Christian action to take place than before when people were just “doing church”?*

*What are some specific needs you know of in the people you know that you could meet in the name of Jesus Christ?*

*What things have you grown comfortable with in your Christianity that could really use a spark to help you grow and mature beyond it?*

### **Commission:**

This is the last LIFE group of the year before the summer break. At the close of the session commission the members of your group to be salt and light to the people they encounter on a regular basis. Send them out to show the world a better way to live and to take the words of Jesus with them into a lost and dying world. Pray over your group that they will be who God wants them to be and out of that identity do what God wants them to do.