

The Christian Faith

The Christian has the wonderful benefit of being part of something much, much greater than him or herself. Countless Christians have preceded us and we are the beneficiary of their lives of faith, service, shortcomings and triumphs. Collectively, they provide us with a wealth of resources with which to aid us in our own journey today. The Bible is our ultimate source of truth, but the great minds of Christians past and their lives lived according to biblical truth are also useful in our quest to know the God who is.

Our first joyous experience with the God who saves is at the point of our conversion to the Christian Faith. The life we live after is one of childlike wonder and intellectual amazement as we progressively discover more about God. God is inexhaustible. We cannot ever fully know everything about Him. However, we may find joy, peace, reverence, hope, fear, grace, love, purpose, truth, knowledge and wisdom in Him; and we may never be bored or unimpressed by His Self-Revelation.

Course Design

This course is to be an instruction for Christian believers. Every disciple of Christ is to love the Lord God with his or her heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). The contents of this work should be a wonderful tool to assist you in loving God with you mind. Worship may not usually be associated with the mind, as many seem to think that the mind has little or no effect on the heart, soul and strength. By the end of this study you will, God willing, understand that the mind's attention focused on God (as He has revealed Himself) is the birthplace of the heart's affection for Him and the catalyst for actively pursuing a holy life unto the God who saves.

Course Content

The content of this course comes largely from documents of church history. We are deeply indebted to the faithful believers who have gone before. Several times in church history, Christian leaders sought to articulate a systematic and concise statement of beliefs. This course follows one such statement and investigates the scriptural basis for the claimed beliefs herein. We, who have been made partakers in the community of the Christian faith, will stand on biblical truth alone and guard our hearers and ourselves well.

"The gold of Godliness isn't found on the surface of Christianity. It has to be dug from the depths with the tools of the Disciplines. But for those who persevere, the treasures are more than worth the troubles."

-Donald Whitney

The Christian Life is a life of investigation, wonder and continuing renewal.

When one begins the journey, a new life in Jesus Christ, there is often many questions that come to mind. One of the underlying realities of the Christian life is that it is a life-long investigation. The questions one has at the beginning are only the first of many.

The goal of the Christian life is to live as unto the Lord. This means that we, who are believers, are to live our lives in such a way that honors God and glorifies Him. As you may already recognize, there is so much to learn about how we might do this and so much to experience along the way.

It is the honor and delight of every Christian to know God. He has revealed Himself most fully in His word, the Bible. The growth, stability and confidence in the life of each believer will correlate directly to his or her study and knowledge of *Holy Scripture*.

RC Sproul says, in his book *Knowing Scripture*, "We cannot learn competency by osmosis. The biblically illiterate Christian is not only inadequate but unequipped. In fact, he is inadequate because he is not equipped."

Let us be diligent in our pursuit of God by learning and understanding as much as we can about the Self-disclosure He has provided for us. We may not be the one God uses to change the world, but we are the one God will use to affect the lives of those He has placed near us.

"I believe that a crucial key for church renewal is to be found in adult education. I dream of a multitude of articulate and knowledgeable Christians making a new impact on our land."

- RC Sproul

Humanity

What is the ultimate purpose for which humans have been created?

Every person's ultimate purpose is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

God created everything for His glory.

Psalm 86:1-13

Isaiah 60:20-21

Romans 11:33-36

Revelation 4:8-11

Even more particularly, Christians are for His glory.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

1 Corinthians 10:31

God does everything He does according to His will and for His glory.

Submit to God in prayer for His glory. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

God leads us into righteousness for His name's sake. (Psalm 23:3)

God saved Hebrew people for His name's sake. (Psalm 106:8)

God saves sinners from sin and death for His glory. (Acts 15:14)

God forgives sin for His name's sake. (1 John 2:12)

J.I. Packer writes: "Glory" in the Old Testament carries associations of weight, worth, wealth, splendor, and dignity, all of which are present when God is said to have revealed his glory. God was answering Moses' plea to be shown God's glory when he proclaimed to Moses his name (i.e., his nature, character, and power, Exod. 33:18-34:7). With that proclamation went an awe-inspiring physical manifestation, a bright shining cloud that could look like fire, white-hot (Exod. 24:17).

The glory of God; it appeared at significant moments in the Bible story as a sign of God's active presence (Exod. 33:22; 34:5; cf. 16:7, 10; 24:15-17; 40:34-35; Lev. 9:23-24; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Ezek. 1:28; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4; 11:22-23; Matt. 17:5; Luke 2:9; cf. Acts 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7). New Testament writers proclaim that the glory of God's nature, character, power, and purpose is now open to view in the person and role of God's incarnate Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14-18; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Heb. 1:1-3).

God's glory, shown forth in the plan and work of grace whereby he saves sinners, is meant to call forth praise (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14), that is, the giving of glory to God by spoken words (cf. Rev. 4:9; 19:7).

All life activities, too, must be pursued with the aim of giving God homage, honor, and pleasure, which is glory-giving on the practical level (1 Cor. 10:31).¹

The greatest joy for every believer is to glorify God.

Psalm 16:11

Psalm 144:15

Isaiah 12:1-6

Philippians 4:4

Thinking through the Information

What is the ultimate purpose for which all humans were created?

Does God's demand for glory mean that He is an emotional tyrant?

Is the biblical description of the purpose of humanity different from that of popular thought among average people?

What are some ways that our understanding of ultimate purpose should affect our daily thoughts, actions, and words?

¹ Packer, J. I. (1993). *Concise theology: A guide to historic Christian beliefs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House.