

What Do I Owe My Congregation? Author unknown

I owe it my loyalty. I must help carry out every good work it undertakes. I should help other congregations in special efforts, but I should not neglect my home congregation. I owe it my dependability. I am depending on it for many things it does in my behalf. It is not fair and right for me to depend on it and not be such that it cannot depend on me.

I owe it my financial support. It takes money to operate the church and preach the gospel. I am responsible to the Lord to give as He has prospered me. My home congregation has first call on my financial ability, for if the members of the church do not support the work of the home congregation, it will not be supported. The expenses go on whether I am there or not, so I should make up my contribution when absent.

I owe it my presence. If everyone stayed home there would be no worship of God. I am responsible as anyone to attend all of my congregation's services. I must not be a parasite.

I owe it the influence of a godly life. The life I live either helps others to obey the gospel or makes it the harder for them. How I live affects the work of the church and the salvation of the lost. I should live in such a way that my life will be blessing to others. ♦

THE ONE BODY

The church is the body of Christ, "And he is the head of the body, the church **(Col. 1:18)**. There is only one body, one church. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" **(Eph. 1:22-23)**. The New Testament teaches that there is only one body; this one body is the church. We are "fellow heirs of the same body" **(Eph. 3:6)**. We are "reconciled to God in one body" **(Eph. 2:16)**. Christ is founder of only one church. "Upon this rock I will build my church" **(Matt. 16:18)**. Jesus did not say that we would build a church, His church or one of His churches. He said, "I will build my church." The word "church" signifies singularity. Jesus did not build many different churches, but one! None should encourage any to seek the church of your choice, but the church of Christ's choice, that is, the one that is Christ-built, blood-bought **(Acts 20:28)**, the one in which He is the Saviour of **(Eph. 5:23)**.

Since there is one, and only one church and since Christ saves only those in that one church; thus, if one living today is not a member of that church **(Rom. 16:16)**, then he is not saved. ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

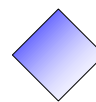
- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

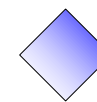
Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us	Our Address	Schedule of Assembly
Telephone: (920)499-5677 E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com 	1621 Hillcrest Drive Green Bay, WI 54313 	Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm* <small>*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month</small>

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



April 8, 2012

"Christian Living" By Jimmy Pettigrew

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" **(Philippians 1:27)**. The "conversation" (manner of life, ASV) of the Christian is to be "as becometh the gospel." The manner of life of the Christian will be either a real asset or a significant liability to the cause of Christ.

The conduct of the Christian should "adorn" the doctrine of God **(Titus 2:10)**. "Adorn" means to beautify. The life of a Christian reveals the beauty of God's will and way. There is nothing more impressive than the influence of a pure Christian life! It is the most overpowering, undeniable argument for Christianity. The Christian must, by his/her life, show the world what a Christian is! Remember the words of Paul, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" **(1 Corinthians 11:1)**. Christianity changes people **(1 Peter 4:1-4)**. Saints are to "walk in newness of life" **(Romans 6:3-4)**. In Christ people become "new creatures" **(2 Corinthians 5:17)**.

Jesus is the one we should follow **(Revelation 14:4)**; whose steps we should pursue **(1 Peter 2:21)**. Jesus is the great pattern for everyone to follow **(Luke 9:43)**. The perfect pattern of Jesus describes the Christian life as a life of

service to God **(Luke 22:42)**. It is the Christian's responsibility to serve God, not mammon **(Matthew 6:24)**. Serving God means serving Christ, which in turn, means following and living for Christ **(John 12:26)**. The life Christ lived is not just to be admired, talked about, or sung about, but it is to be followed. Christ is the perfect pattern. It is mockery to claim to be a servant of Christ while living in disobedience to Him **(Luke 6:46)**. The Christian is distinctive! The conduct of a Christian is a powerful preacher. So, what are you preaching? Would you verbally proclaim that worship (singing, praying, giving, preaching and the Lord's Supper) is insignificant? Would you preach that Bible study is unimportant? What do you preach by your manner of life? Preachers should not have to **BEG** Christians to study, and attend every time the doors are opened. **TRUE SERVANTS DO NOT HAVE TO BE BEGGED!**

Christ wants us to do all in His name to His glory **(Colossians 3:17)**. We need to magnify Christ **(Philippians 1:20)**, so others can see Christ living in us **(Galatians 2:20)**. The life of the faithful, dedicated Christian magnifies the doctrine of Christ and glorifies the Father **(Matthew 5:16)**. Paul urged Timothy to be an example of the believers **(1 Timothy 4:17)**. To be a Christian, our manner of life is different! Following our Master is the way we adorn the doctrine of Christ! Which are you doing? ♦

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- BETWEEN** the atheist who would not dream of financially supporting the church and the Christian who will not financially support the Lord's church?
- BETWEEN** the skeptic who does not believe the Bible and the negligent Christian who never reads it?
- BETWEEN** those who do not believe in Bible classes and those who choose never to attend a class?
- BETWEEN** the atheist who does nothing to build up the Lord's church and the Christian who finds fault with others, but does nothing himself?
- BETWEEN** a man of the world, and a person in the church who lives like a man in the world?
- BETWEEN** a man of the world who lives for self and a person in the church who lives for self, not God?

These are tough questions for Christians who live in a tough world. The fact is, Christians make no difference until they are different. Again, **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?** ♦

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“When Am I Ready To Be Baptized?”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Having been taught the truth concerning the Lord’s plan for salvation (faith, repentance, confession of faith, and baptism, **Acts 2:36-38, 8:35-39, 22:16**), some people may wonder when is the right time to be baptized. Perhaps it is a young person who has grown up hearing sound preaching. At some point, he will wonder, “When am I ready to be baptized?” Others who are older and are impressed by the word of God may wonder the same thing. We find examples in Scripture of those who heard one sermon, they then believed one sermon, and obeyed one sermon (**Acts 2:41, 8:35-39**, etc.). Yet, it seems others waited for a time before obeying the truth. While we have no lease on life, Jesus certainly taught us the necessity of counting the cost and understanding just what it means to be a child of God (**Lk. 14:25-32**). Therefore, the question remains. When can one know he is ready to be baptized?

When One Should Not Be Baptized.

To help us appreciate the importance of this decision, let us understand that there are some occasions when one ought not be baptized. One should not be baptized when it is done merely to please others. Please understand that being baptized for the remission of sins will definitely please people, and will of course, please God and the angels of Heaven. Yet, if our purpose for doing this is solely to please others, then we ought not take this step. In such a case, we have the wrong motivation.

Further, if we are being baptized merely to be a part of “the crowd,” then we ought not be baptized. I know of occasions where some (especially young people) have been caught up in “the moment,” and were baptized just because one or more of their friends were baptized. Let us be careful and not be swayed by what others do. This type of mentality is what caused “many” of Christ’s disciples to leave Him (**Jn. 6:66**).

Another reason not to be baptized is when someone else thinks it is time for you to be baptized. Sometimes, we find people pressured into being baptized because well-meaning older folks think it’s time. I also know of times when it was well-meaning “younger folks” who put pressure on their friends to be baptized. Either way, beware!! Sometimes, children start feeling pressured to be baptized around 10-11 years old. Then the pressure really builds on them about ages 13-15, and through the teen years! I realize that it is hard sometimes to strike that balance between encouraging and forcing a child, but we must be

careful about that. Just because I might think it is time for someone to be baptized doesn’t mean they are ready. If they are not ready, but submit anyway because of my pressure, then they’ll never be what they need to be.

Having seen some times when we ought not be baptized, when is the time that I know I am ready to be baptized?

When I Realize The Seriousness Of My Own Sins.

Jesus taught that there are only two eternal destinations for the soul of man. He will either enter into life, or go to destruction (**Matt. 7:13-14**). The righteous will go into “eternal life,” while the wicked will go to “eternal punishment” (**Matt. 25:46**). Therefore, the seriousness of sin can be seen in the consequence of sin. The apostle Paul said, “*the wages of sin is death*” (**Rom. 6:23**). James taught the same thing in **James 1:14-15**. He said, “*sin when it is fully grown brings forth death*”! It is sin which keeps man separated from God (**Isa. 59:1-2**). Therefore, when one realizes that he is a sinner, separated from God, having nothing to look forward to but eternal punishment (**Eph. 2:12**); this is the time to consider his soul’s condition, repent of sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (**Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38**).

When I Understand That Sin Demands A Sacrifice.

“*All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God*” (**Rom. 3:23**). Therefore, in order for sin to be cleansed, there must be a sacrifice. This sacrifice was made in the giving of Christ on the cross (**Jn. 3:16**). Christ’s blood was shed, not for the remission of His sins, but for mine (**Matt. 26:28; Rom. 3:24-25**). He was the sacrifice for my sins (**Eph. 5:2; Heb. 7:27, 9:26**). When I realize this, and come to grips with what my sin did to the Lord (**Isa. 53:4-6**), then I am on my way to knowing when I need to be baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:36-38**).

When I Understand The Conditions Of Pardon For Sin.

What are the conditions of pardon for the forgiveness of sin? Some think man has nothing to do to be saved. Others suggest that one needs to believe, but no other action is demanded by Christ. This is wrong (**Jas. 2:17, 24, 26**). In Christ’s death, He made a way for us to be saved

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from our sin. He provided “access”, if you will, but we still must respond to what the Lord has provided! We must respond to the Lord’s invitation in order to be saved (**Matt. 11:28-30**). In order to be saved, one must hear God’s word (**Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:22**), believe that Jesus is the son of God (**Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6**), repent of past sins (**Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30**), confess one’s faith in Christ (**Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10**), and then be baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21**). These are the Lord’s terms or conditions for salvation, and we must come to Him on these terms, and not our own! The Holy Spirit revealed that Christ “*became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him*” (**Heb. 5:8-9**). Friend, do you understand the conditions of pardon that Christ demands? Why have you not submitted to Him?

When I Am Ready To Make A Commitment To Put The Lord First.

If one is not ready to put the Lord first in all things, he is not ready to be baptized. Baptism changes one’s relationship from being outside of Christ, to being in Christ (**Eph. 2:12-13**). One changes from being in the kingdom of darkness to being in “*the kingdom of his beloved son*” (**Col. 1:13**). Therefore, in this new relationship, one must determine to put God and His kingdom first. Jesus said, “*but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*” (**Matt. 6:33**). We see the extent of one’s commitment and how serious it is when we read Christ’s words that we must love Him more than family, friends, and even self (**Matt. 10:34-38**). This commitment to Christ is a lifelong commitment as well (**I Tim. 6:12-14; II Tim. 4:6-8**). If one is not ready to commit one’s life completely to the Lord (**Rom.**

12:1-2), he is not ready to be baptized.

When I Am Ready To Live For Christ.

In connection with the thought above, please note that when one becomes a Christian, he begins living a new life (**Rom. 6:4**). The apostle Paul said it this way: “*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come*” (**II Cor. 5:17**). Living for Christ is just that, living for Christ, and not for self! (**II Cor. 5:14-15**) Once one submits to the Lord’s plan for salvation, including being baptized for the remission of sins, he must be ready to live for Christ and not for self. His body and spirit belong to God (**I Cor. 6:19-20**). This means life-long service to the King of kings and Lord of lords (**Rom. 6:16-18, 12:1-2**). Friend, are you ready to live for Christ? If you say no, remember that by refusing to live for Christ, you are living for self, and ultimately, living for Satan. You cannot “straddle the fence” on spiritual matters as important as this (**Matt. 6:24**). Live for Christ!

Conclusion

Are you ready to do the Lord’s will and serve Him all the days of your life? This is what is expected of those who are baptized for the remission of sins. Are you ready to say “no” to a life of sin, and “yes” to a life of serving God? This is a life-changing decision, and it is the best decision one can make. This is because this decision affects us and follows us into eternity! There is nothing better than becoming a Christian, and no more rewarding thing on earth than becoming a Christian (**Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38**) and being faithful to God all the days of your life (**I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10**; etc.)! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com* ♦

Do You Just Belong?

Are you an active member?
The kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented that your name is on the list?
Do you attend the meeting and mingle with the flock?
Or do you stay away to criticize and knock?
Do you take an active part to help the work along?
Or are you satisfied to only just belong?
Think this over, my dear friends:
I know you won’t go wrong.
Are you an active member, or do you
just belong? ♦

***A faith that will not take us to worship will not
Take us to heaven!***