

Salvation

Relationship

FaithQuest
A Guide to Simple Christianity

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About the Author:

Walter L. McCutcheon is a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Arts. He has served as a missionary, youth minister, and senior minister. He is a trained trauma specialist, volunteer firefighter and Fire Chaplain.

The Philosophy of Simple Christianity

Simple Christianity centers on restoring the *heart* of New Testament Christianity. Simple Christians endeavor to live, love, worship, and have the commitment and faith like that of the New Testament Christians. Simple Christianity is logical, relational and unconventional.

Simple Christians don't claim to be perfect or right about everything. Simple Christians focus on the commands and examples shown in God's Word of how the Church was when it first began. Simple Christians let these commands and examples be their guide for practicing Christianity today. This simple philosophy is how we approach the concept of the Salvation Relationship.

Why Simple Christianity is Important

As you look at your community, you will notice several church buildings representing different Christian religious groups. That may not seem strange to you, but it wasn't what Christ had in mind when the Church first began. Jesus wanted all Christians to be united as one.

Throughout history, the Church has split over and over again with each faction beginning another form of church organization. This is so unfortunate. What does it say about our faith and love to a non-Christian when Christians can't agree among themselves?

Many times the traditions that separate people are not issues of doctrine or teaching, but of personal or group preference. If we can focus back on the God's Word and commit ourselves to being simple Christians – perhaps we will begin to find that Christian unity that is so needed in our world today.

One important goal of Simple Christianity is unity. Jesus said in John 17:20, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

INTRODUCTION

Our Relationship with God

Becoming a Christian has everything to do with our relationship with God. Our salvation hinges on the fact that we are either in a right relationship with God, or we are not. Salvation is about our personal relationship with God right now. It is possible to go to worship services, be a generally nice person, and still not be right with God. God wants all of us to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), yet he does not force himself on us or take away our free will. We have the right to accept him or reject him, and based on that decision, we will receive the blessings - or the consequences - of that choice.

Sin

Sin is an offense against God's law. It is what makes having a right relationship with God so difficult. In Romans 3:23, we learn that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. In this matter, we are all in the same boat. Romans 6:23 teaches us that the consequence of our sin is separation from God and spiritual death. The first step to spiritual wellness is accepting the fact that we are sinners and that we must confront the sin in our lives. No excuses, no blaming others - just total honesty with ourselves and with God.

Grace

There are many people who believe that they can somehow work their way to heaven by doing good deeds. Yet, sin isn't made right by doing good deeds. Sin can only be made right by God's grace (Ephesians 1:7). This grace is ours through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus came to earth to give his life as a ransom for our sins (1 Timothy 2:6). He paid the price that we should have paid. He endured the pain, suffering, and separation from God on the cross so that we might be set free from sin. This wonderful gift is grace.

THE HEART BEHIND THE SALVATION RELATIONSHIP

- Faith
- Repentance
- Acknowledgement
- Immersion
- Focus

Living a Life of Faith

Faith is a way of life for Christians. Hebrews 11:1 teaches us that "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we have not seen." Faith goes beyond seeing with our eyes or touching with our hands. In Romans 10:17 we learn that faith comes by hearing the word of God. The foundation of Christian faith is our belief that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus became like us, He died on the cross and was raised from the dead that we might be forgiven of our sins and have the hope of heaven. Our faith will continue to grow as we listen to His word and put it into action in our lives. We must live our faith.

Living a Life of Repentance

Repentance simply means to turn away from something completely. As we look at our lives and see the sin that is there, we need to have hearts that want to turn away from that sin. We want God to know that we don't take His grace for granted -- that we truly want to be the people that He wants us to be. Repenting of sins is a way of life for a Christian. We are continually turning away from our sins and striving to be more like Jesus.

Living a Life of Acknowledgement

Jesus taught us that to be a follower of His, our lives must acknowledge our relationship with Him. There is no such thing as a neutral Christian. Jesus said, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33). Romans 10: 9-10 says, "if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Acknowledging our faith with our mouths and lives is a part of our salvation and a way of life for Christians.

Living Our Immersion

When the Church first began, people listening to Peter asked what they must do to be saved. Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). Baptism or Immersion is the moment in faith when we submit our lives to God. We obey Him and allow ourselves to be immersed in water. By faith, we believe that it is during this moment that God keeps His promise to us and washes away our sins.

Focusing our Life

A part of our Salvation Relationship is learning to focus our life in Christ. We are called to live a new life in Jesus. He said in, John 10:10b "...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." He wants us to have guilt-free grace-empowered lives. We must continually grow in our knowledge and in our spiritual service to Him. Throughout our Christian lives we are faced with various situations that stretch our faith. Knowing this, Christ established the Church to encourage, comfort and guide us on our spiritual journey.

It is important that we "continue to live in Him" as we make this journey together. Colossians 2:6-7 says, *"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."* It is our hope that you will have a wonderful life filled with joy as you walk in the light with Him. Keep this promise to all Christians near your heart -- 1 John 1:7, *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."*

LIVING A LIFE OF FAITH

What does it mean to have faith?

1. What does the following passage's definition of faith tell us about faith?

Hebrews 11:1: *Now faith is being _____ of what we hope for and _____ of what we do not see.*

2. What does this verse teach us about where faith comes from?

Romans 10:17: *Consequently, faith comes by _____ the message, and the message is _____ through the word of Christ.*

- What does the author mean by "hearing?"

3. What does the following verse tell us about living with faith?

2 Corinthians 5:7: *We live by faith, not by sight.*

What does a Christian believe?

Read the following passages. Use the space given to describe how the passage explains what a Christian believes.

1. **John 4:42:** *They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."*

2. **John 6:69:** *We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*

3. **John 12:44:** *Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me."*

4. **John 14:10-11:** *Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. {11} Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.*

5. **1 John 3:23:** *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

What is the result of having faith?

Read the following passages. Use the space given to describe how the passage explains the result of having faith.

1. **John 3:18:** *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

2. **John 20:31:** *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

3. **Acts 16:31:** *They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."*

4. **Romans 10:9-10:** *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. {10} For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

5. **1 John 5:13:** *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

6. **1 Peter 1:9:** *for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

What is the result of not believing or having faith?

1. What does the following passage teach us is the result of not having faith?

John 8:24: *I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."*

What does faith lead to?

Read the following passages. Use the space given to describe how the passage describes what faith leads to.

1. **1 Thessalonians 1:3:** *We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. **2 Thessalonians 1:11:** *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.*

3. **James 2:14:** *What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?*

4. **James 2:17-18:** *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. {18} But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.*

5. **James 2:26:** *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

Life Application

1. Is belief that Jesus is the son of God necessary for salvation?

2. How will your life change if you are living a life of faith?

3. What practical things would you change in your life?

LIVING A LIFE OF REPENTANCE

What is repentance?

1. According to the following passage, what leads a person to repent?

2 Corinthians 7:9-11: *yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. {10} Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. {11} See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.*

2. According to the following verses, why should a person repent?

- **Acts 2:38:** *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

- **Acts 3:19:** *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,*

3. According to the following verse, what does it mean to prove your repentance by your deeds?

- **Acts 26:20:** *First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*

Life Application

1. Is repentance necessary for salvation?

2. How can we live a life of repentance?

3. How is this practical in my life?

4. How would this work on a daily basis?

LIVING A LIFE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

What does it mean for a person to acknowledge their faith?

1. How is the following narrative an example of what it means to acknowledge faith?

Acts 8:35-37: *Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. {36} As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" {37}*

2. According to the following passage, what are Christians to acknowledge?

Acts 18:5: *When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.*

3. According to the following passages, why is acknowledgement so important?

- **Luke 12:8:** *"I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.*

- **1 John 4:15:** *If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*

4. What does the following passage mean by the term "disown?"

Matthew 10:32-33: *"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. {33} But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.*

5. What does the following passage teach us about acknowledging faith?

Romans 10:9-11: *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. {10} For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. {11} As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."*

6. According to this passage what is often the reason people do not acknowledge their faith?

John 12:42-43: *Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; {43} for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.*

Life Application

1. Is acknowledgment necessary for salvation?

2. What does it mean to live a life of acknowledgment?

3. Is there any part of your life that denies your relationship with Jesus?

4. Who do you want to share your faith with?

5. How will you accomplish this important goal?

LIVING OUR IMMERSION

What is Baptism? (Immersion)

1. According to the following passages what must accompany baptism?

- **Mark 16:16:** *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

- **Acts 8:12-13:** *But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. {13} Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.*

- **Acts 2:38:** *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

2. Therefore, a person who is going to be baptized would first have to _____ and _____.

A. Would this include infants? Why or Why not?

3. According to the following passages, why should a person be baptized?

- **Acts 22:16:** *And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.*

- **Acts 2:38:** *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

- **John 3:5:** *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.*

4. According to the following passage, what follows baptism?

Romans 6:3-4: *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? {4} We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

5. What do the following passages teach us about the necessity and urgency of being baptized?

- **Acts 2:41:** *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

- **Acts 8:36-38:** *As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" {37} {38} And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.*

- **Acts 16:14-15:** *One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. {15} When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

- **Acts 16:33:** *At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.*

- **Acts 18:8:** *Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.*

6. How should a person be baptized?

A. The three most common types of baptism methods used are:

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

B. Read the following passages. List how the following passages describe baptism, and which method mentioned above would have been used.

- **Romans 6:3-4:** *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? {4} We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Method: _____

- **Colossians 2:12:** *having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

Method: _____

C. What method of baptism does the following narrative suggest?

- **Acts 8:36-38:** *As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" {37} {38} And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.*

Method: _____

7. In what names is a person to be baptized?

Matthew 28:19: *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

Life Application

1. Is Immersion necessary for salvation?

2. When do you want to be immersed?

3. How can we live our immersion daily?

4. How can you remind yourself to live your immersion daily?

FOCUSING OUR LIVES

What does it mean to “focus our lives?”

As stated in the beginning of this study, salvation is simply a right relationship with God. Like any relationship, we can choose to walk away from our relationship with our Lord. Like any relationship, there are things we should do and things we should avoid to keep that relationship healthy. Like any relationship, we can build the strength of our relationship - or we can let our relationship with our Lord crumble.

1. What do the following passages teach us about having a right relationship with Christ?

- **John 15:1** *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."*

- **John 15:5** *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."*

We are never forced into a relationship with God. It a choice. Like any choice there are blessings and consequences of that choice. Every day we must make a choice. We must choose to follow our Lord or not. Jesus said, *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* (Luke 9:23)

Learning to Focus Our Lives in Christ

Focusing our lives in Christ is a daily commitment and challenge. It is how Christians should live. It is our choice, our burden and our joy. The following study will help you as you begin to walk with focus.

1. Use the following passages to answer the questions below.

- **John 8:12** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*
- **John 12:46** *I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*

A. Where does the light come from?

B. What do these passages teach us about walking in the light?

C. What is "darkness"?

2. Use the following passage to answer the questions below.

1 John 1:5 *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:*

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

A. What does walking in the light have to do with our fellowship with God and each other?

B. What would it mean to walk in darkness?

3. According to this passage, what does it mean to live as children of light?

Ephesians 5:8-10 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord.*

A. How can we find out what pleases the Lord?

4. According to the following passage, how does God view those who walk in the light?

1 Peter 2:9-10 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Keeping the Darkness in Check

1. In the following passage, Paul encourages us to put on the “armor of light.”

Romans 13:12-13 *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.*

- A. What is the “armor of light and what is it for?

2. Paul goes on to say that we should clothe ourselves with the Lord.

Romans 13:14 *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

- A. How do we do this?

- B. What are the desires of the sinful nature?

C. How do we keep these desires in check?

3. Use the following passages to answer the questions below.

1 John 2:9 *Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. ¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*

A. Why is loving your brother so important to walking in the light?

B. Who is the brother he is speaking of here?

4. According to the following passage, what are some things Paul encourages Christians to do in order to walk in the light?

1 Thessalonians 5:4-11 *But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

- A. What important thing does this passage mention that are we do for other Christians?

Letting our Light Shine

1. What is Jesus teaching us in the following passage?

Matthew 5:14 *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

- A. How can your light shine before men?

- B. If your light is shining before men, how are we to be living our lives?

- C. What is the point of living such a life?

A FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

In the following chapter, the writer weaves a beautiful pattern for the Christian life:

Hebrews 10:19 *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Life Application

1. What are some of the threads important to the pattern of a Christian living?

2. Why is meeting with fellow Christians so important to focusing our lives?

3. What can you do every day to focus your life in Christ?

4. What can you do every day to remember to walk in focus?

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Written by Walter L. McCutcheon, 2006
Edited by Sally D. McCutcheon

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