

Subject: *Marks of a Normal Christian Life – Part 7*

Scripture: *1 Thessalonians 1:1-10*

The Bible describes the unmistakable marks of a normal Christian life. These things can be said about normal Christians. So far we have examined six of these marks:

1. A serious commitment to God's Word
2. A serious commitment to Christ
3. A serious commitment to the church
4. A serious commitment to eternal things
5. A serious commitment to prayer
6. A serious commitment to evangelism

The 7th mark of a normal Christian life is a serious commitment to serving God

1. Serving God is a proof of real conversion

In the opening chapter of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians we see the testimony of model Christians who are excellent examples of what believers ought to be. They are not Christians in name only, but their lives are bearing fruit that marks them out as God's people.

Paul was sure of their election (vs. 4). He knew they were chosen by God. How did Paul know that? He could see the evidence in their lives. Just look at the evidence (vs. 3, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10). They had been changed by the gospel (vs. 5). They were new creatures in Christ. Verse 9 gives us one of the best descriptions of true conversion. This is a statement about the normal Christian life. We are saved by grace, and not by works. But we are not saved to be idle. We are saved for a life of service.

Ephesians 2:8-10⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*⁹ *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Titus 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

Titus 3:8 *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

2. Serving God is a joy and privilege

Serving God is a blessing, not a burden, even if it involves suffering and hardship (vs. 6).

1 Samuel 12:24 *Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.*

Psalms 100:2 *Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

Hebrews 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

We serve God out of gratitude, not out of guilt. We serve God not in order to be forgiven, but because we are forgiven already.

Isaiah 6:1-8 ¹ *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. ⁶ Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷ And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

John Newton illustrated the right attitude for Christian service: “If two angels were to receive a commission from God, one to go down and rule earth’s greatest empire, and the other to go and sweep the streets of its humblest village, it would not make any difference to either one which service fell to his lot, for the joy of the angels lies only in obedience to God’s will.”

3. Serving God is a lifelong commitment

John 12:26 *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.*

We must make it our priority to serve the Lord. It takes time and effort. A servant must be available to serve when and where the Lord leads. We can’t serve the Lord out of convenience.

In these days of COVID-19, we have seen some strange and sad things. It’s strange that the government decided that church is an essential business, but some church members have decided it is not essential.

4. Serving God requires genuine humility

John 13:12-16 ¹² So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? ¹³ Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Elisabeth Elliot: “Does God ask us to do what is beneath us? This question will never trouble us again if we consider the Lord of heaven taking a towel and washing feet.”

Philippians 2:3-8 ³ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

5. Serving God brings great reward

We look forward to seeing Christ one day (vs. 10). The word “wait” means to look forward to something with patience and confidence. When you wait for someone important you have everything ready for His arrival. We don't await His arrival in fear because He will save us from the wrath that is coming on the lost. For us it will be a time of welcome and a time of rewards if we have served Him well. What a day that will be when we hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

If God wrote a job description for His servants this is what it would look like: “WANTED: Gifted volunteers for difficult service in the kingdom of God. Motivation to serve should be obedience to God, gratitude, gladness, forgiveness, humility, and love. Service will rarely be glorious. Temptation to quit will sometimes be strong. Volunteers must be faithful in spite of long hours, little or no visible results, and possibly no recognition—except from God for all eternity.”

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

“The greatest thing in all my life is knowing You...loving You...serving You.”

Joshua 24:15 ...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.