

Persevere

In persecutions. Persecution is promised to those who follow the Lord. Just as the world hated Jesus, Jesus promised the world will hate those who follow Him (John 15:18; 2 Timothy 3:12). Although persecutions can take many different forms and can be more severe in some places of the world and at different times than others, you must persevere no matter how severe it is! You can look to how Jesus persevered, as well as the apostles. Revelation 2:10 offers encouragement to those who would be persecuted.

In trials. There are going to be times when your faith will be put to the test (i.e. death, sickness, financial hardship, family struggles, etc.). However, you must not allow these trials to weaken you or cause you to lose your faith! Then, the Bible teaches that if you persevere through these trying times, your faith will become stronger and you can actually find joy in trials (James 1:2-4).

In temptations. You will experience temptation (1 Peter 5:8-9). Satan wants to destroy your faith – and he will try to lure you away from God any way he can. But, you can overcome temptation by utilizing the way God provides for you to escape it (1 Corinthians 10:13), following Jesus's perfect example (Hebrews 4:15), and putting on the armor God has given to enable you to be victorious over the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18).

In good works. Satan will try to discourage you from doing good. Yet, you must not lose heart in doing what is right (Galatians 6:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:58)! Always remember that God sees everything you do and be encouraged by the fact that He will not forget your good works (Revelation 14:13)!

Conclusion

God has called you to give your life entirely to Him. So, your focus in life must be completely set on accomplishing His will and offering your life as a living sacrifice to Him! These eight lessons have been intended to help you establish a solid foundation for your faith so you can do two things. First, if your life is not right with God, follow Biblical instruction to get right with Him. Second, continue using this foundation to build on in the future and teach others.

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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If you have taken the steps discussed in lesson 6, you are a Christian and part of Christ's church. But, God is not finished with you. In fact, it is possible to sin and fall from God's grace and be lost (Galatians 5:4). Yet, what are my responsibilities as a Christian? What should my life look like now that I am a Christian? Are there things God continues to require of me so that I might be saved? As a Christian, you are a "disciple" of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:26). A disciple is a student and imitator of the Master (Jesus). This is not a one-time decision; but an entirely new way of life dedicated to learning from and following the Master! So, Jesus taught people to count the cost of discipleship and make sure you are willing to do what Jesus requires in following Him, realizing the reward of doing so (Luke 14:25-33) Then, since you can fall from God's grace, you must remain faithful to Jesus throughout your life (Revelation 2:10).

The purpose of this lesson is to learn some basics about what God expects of you after you become a Christian.

Fully Trust In God (Proverbs 3:5-6; Jeremiah 10:23)

Trust God in prayer. Satan wants you to be worried about the things of this life (i.e. finances, security, health, etc.) and be distracted away from serving God. Thankfully, God provides you the blessing of taking your concerns to God in prayer (1 Peter 5:7) and says that your prayers are powerful (James 5:16). Still, prayer is only effective when it is accompanied by faith (James 1:5-8) and offered according to God's will (Matthew 6:10).

Trust God to provide. You must not put your focus on chasing after earthly things (Matthew 6:19-34). In fact, Jesus teaches you not to be worried about the things of this life (even the necessities of food, drink, and clothing, Matthew 6:25). Instead, you must seek God first and trust He will provide for those necessities (Matthew 6:33). So, rather than focusing on earthly things,

you must focus on the things of God (though this does *not* mean you do not have to work, 2 Thessalonians 3).

Trust that God will save you. No matter what difficulties and temptations you face, God promises everything will work out for you spiritually (Romans 8:28). In fact, Romans 8:37-39 teaches that there is nothing and no one who can separate you from God – no matter how much you are tempted or tried, no matter how severe the persecution you face, no matter how strong the enemy may appear, etc. For, they cannot make you sin! You are the only one who can separate yourself from God by sinning against Him (Jude 1:3). So long as you keep yourself in God's love, nothing and no one is powerful enough to steal your soul away from God!

Completely Devote Yourself To God

Jesus requires complete devotion. You cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). You are either completely with Jesus or you are against Him (Matthew 12:30). You cannot just serve Him when it is easy or convenient to do so. Whenever you commit yourself to following Him, you must not look back (Luke 9:57-62). Sometimes Christians look back by desiring the relationships, riches, pleasures, comforts, or ways of this life rather than focusing on God and His will. Yet, Jesus's point is that nothing and no one can come before Jesus Christ in your life (Luke 14:26-27, 33). There cannot be anything or anyone you love more than Jesus! Your complete commitment to Christ is called a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).

What this will require. First, you must practice self-denial (Galatians 2:20). You cannot live for yourself and for Christ (Luke 9:23). Second, you must love Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). You must let the love of Christ control your life by motivating you to live for Him and keep His commands (John 14:15). Third, you must focus on Christ throughout your life (Hebrews 12:1-2). You must lay aside the weight of sin that hinders you from running the race God would have you run, focusing on God and the prize of eternal life in Heaven and not get distracted by the temporary things of this world.

Walk In Newness Of Life

You have been raised to walk in newness of life. Christians must not continue living in sin, having died to sin, been buried in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-4)! Now, you are a new creation in Christ Jesus and must not continue living for the old ways of sin (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Walking in newness of life. Walking in newness of life involves three elements (Ephesians 4:22-24): Putting off the old person of sin, being renewed in your mind, and putting on the new person by patterning your life

after the holiness of God (Colossians 3:1-4:1). So, everything is impacted by your decision to become a Christian! Then, since you will work to put every sinful thing in your life to death and pattern your life entirely after God and His holiness, your thoughts, words, conduct, relationships, priorities, etc. will all be different and your focus will be on living according to God's standard of holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16)!

Be Diligent

In Bible study. God expects you to increase in your knowledge of His word (2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:2-3). This is important to know what God expects of you, to keep yourself from sin, and to teach others. Because studying God's word is so important, you should desire to study the Bible every day (Acts 17:11).

In spiritual growth. You are not "full grown" when you become a Christian. Rather, you are a newborn baby (spiritually speaking) and must develop into maturity! 2 Peter 1:5-7 is one passage (of many) that talks about growing, by indicating some qualities that must be added to your faith. So, God expects you to be continually growing stronger in the faith and become more Christ-like.

In good works. You have been created in Christ Jesus *for* good works (Ephesians 2:1-10)! So, you must always work to be fruitful in Christ's service by doing the good things He wants you to do, knowing there is victory in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:58).

In evangelism. God has given His people (including you) the responsibility to teach others the gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). So, just as someone taught you the gospel, you have the responsibility to teach someone else – who, in turn, can teach another (2 Timothy 2:2). This is a work every servant of the Lord (every Christian) must do (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

In church membership. You should join a local church that faithfully follows God's pattern. Then, you have certain responsibilities as a local church member. One responsibility you have as a local church member is to attend the assemblies of the church (not willfully missing any of them – although some things may be outside of your control, i.e. sickness, Hebrews 10:24-25). You must also participate in the work of the church by doing your part and fulfilling your responsibilities toward your brethren and being diligent in all aspects of your membership in the local church.

In keeping God's commandments. God expects you to be diligent in keeping all His commandments. For, God expects more from you than just saying you are His follower (Luke 6:46; James 1:22). And, if you really love Christ, you will keep His commandments (John 14:15)!