

How to Turn Beliefs into Behaviors

Accurately learning about Jesus Christ is the obvious and critical first step in deciding whether you want to have a genuine and fruitful relationship with Him, and we hope our website documents have been instrumental in this learning process. But gaining accurate knowledge is, as mentioned, just the first step.

In learning about Jesus Christ, we are introduced to numerous beliefs that are foundational for our relationship with Him. If we *wholeheartedly* adopt these beliefs, our behaviors will reflect their adoption. We need to ardently practice these behaviors in our everyday lives if our relationship with Christ is going to produce the results promised, i.e., eternal life with Him in heaven and enjoying Fruit of the Holy Spirit in this life. Below, we present core beliefs and the recognizable behaviors that will accompany them if these core beliefs have truly become part of who we are.

As Christians destined for heaven, we have a core set of beliefs rooted in God's Word. With our repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are forever changed by God. We are given the Holy Spirit to guide our everyday behavior so it will accurately mirror our core beliefs. When we choose to follow Christ, we are given a new nature, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, our behavior changes accordingly as we seek to be "Christ-like". 2 Corinthians 5:17 describes this transition:

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

We should warn you that this is the point where some professed Christians find out they are not Christians after all because for the most part, while they professed to believe, they never permitted God to change their behavior. They never became "new creatures in Christ". Jesus points this out in Matthew 7:21-23:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"

Those who remain lawless, failing to do the will of the Father (becoming sanctified) will not be welcomed into heaven.

In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus metaphorically describes how their day will end:

"And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom [Jesus] came, and those who were ready [who had done the will of the Father, becoming sanctified] went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'" Matthew 25:10-12

How do we turn our beliefs into behaviors so that Jesus will never say to us, "Truly I say to you, I do not know you"? In the tables below, we list what we believe are the core beliefs on which the foundation of our faith in Jesus Christ must rest and how they can be translated into the goals, attitudes and behaviors that mirror them. We then share numerous strategies designed to help us cement these behaviors into our everyday lives.

Before we begin to explore turning beliefs into behaviors, there are two very important things we need to know in seeking Christ's righteousness:

1. Christ knows by reading our hearts if our intent is sincere, and if it is, He will send to us the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us. We will not be alone in our journey. Jesus makes this clear when He tells His disciples:

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." John 14:16-18

"These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." John 14:25-26

2. Do not worry; God does not expect us to achieve perfection during our journey, for perfection is in Him alone. For us, our journey to Christ's righteousness is a process, not a destination. Even though Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins (past, present, and future) – and as a result, God now sees us as spiritually sinless – we are still human and thus will still experience sin.

But since God cannot abide sin in His kingdom, we must ultimately be reconciled to Him. Because of our abiding, enduring, and repentant faith in His Son, we will be perfected when Jesus gives us our imperishable (eternal) bodies so we can reside forever in His kingdom. We believe these concepts are best expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and 1 John 3:1-3:

“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory [over death and sin] through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 1 John 3:1-3

Welcome to your journey towards becoming Christ-like

The Core Beliefs I Need to Adopt and Stand Immovable In

- I Believe in the unimaginable and incomprehensible power of the one and only living and eternal God, the Creator of heaven and earth, sovereign over all, and that His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- I Believe in the Holy Trinity: One God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

- I Believe that with God, all things are possible.

- I Believe that God knows all – from the beginning to the end – and that nothing is hidden from God, including everything I do, every feeling I have, and every thought I think.

- I Believe in Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God, God in the flesh (God incarnate), the Messiah, and the second person of the Holy Trinity. I believe Jesus and God are one.

- I Believe that Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone, is the way and the truth and the life, and that no one can come to the Father in heaven except through Him.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The Gospel of Jesus Christ	I Believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for humanity’s sins (past, present, and future), mine included. I Believe that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead on the third day to prove He provides eternal life for those who believe in Him.
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- I Believe that my salvation, which guarantees my access to heaven, is a gift from God, by His grace, received from Him through my repentant, abiding, and enduring faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

- I Believe that Jesus Christ is my sole Lord and Savior and there is none other.

- I Believe that God and the power of His Holy Spirit will guide me in my journey to becoming more Christ-like.

- I Believe that the Bible is the inerrant (always correct) and occasionally metaphorical Word of God and is my guide to a Christ-righteous life.

- I Believe that Satan and his demons exist, and they all seek to separate me from God through their lies and deceit.

- I Believe that I live in a post-Eden world, governed by sin and evil, and that I cannot survive righteously without God’s help. I believe that if I think I can do it on my own, it is only the devil deceiving me into thinking I don’t need God.

- I Believe in heaven, where the righteous will reside with God for eternity, and I Believe in hell (currently Hades and later, at the end of days, the lake of fire), where the unrighteous will reside for eternity with Satan.

My Goals for the Journey

- My Goal is to demonstrate God's presence through my behavior.
- My Goal is to obey God's Word.
- My Goal is to follow and keep Christ's commandments.
- My Goal is to seek Christ's righteousness and become more like Him.
- My Goal is to put my life in God's hands, submitting to Him and trusting Him to provide what is best for me.
- My Goal is to engage only in thoughts, feelings and actions that glorify God.
- My Goal is to hold all of my thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ and always resist and turn away from evil.
- My Goal is to make God happy with all I do, think, and feel and not let sin control my thoughts or actions.
- My Goal is to endure in my faith, persevering in tribulation, and never lose my faith regardless of the challenge.
- My Goal is to abandon and abolish my self-righteousness and embrace Christ's righteousness.
- My Goal is to be God-serving, not self-serving, and to submit my life to God seeking everything for His glory.
- My Goal is to be an ambassador for Christ and worthy of a place in His kingdom.

Behaviors I Need to Adopt to Become More Like Christ

- I Will love God with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength, and with all my mind.
- I Will love my neighbor as myself.
- I Will be loving without partiality, even to my enemies.
- I Will be joyful.
- I Will be peaceful and at peace with all.
- I Will be patient.
- I Will be kind and gracious.
- I Will be good: accepting, content, harmonious, and sympathetic.
- I Will be faithful.
- I Will be gentle and humble.
- I Will be self-controlled.
- I Will be grateful.
- I Will be empathetic.
- I Will be forgiving, especially to those who transgress against me and who cannot repay their debts to me.
- I Will be generous without notice or fanfare.
- I Will be of service to others.
- I Will abhor evil and cling to what is good.
- I Will seek refuge only in the Lord.
- I Will be truthful and never lie, even in the small things.
- I Will let the Holy Spirit guide me in my decisions and my behavior, always asking, "What would Christ do?"
- I Will overcome evil with good.

Action Items to Undertake That Demonstrate My Faith in Christ

- I Will repent – renouncing and rejecting sin.
- I Will read the Bible every day.
- I Will go to church on a weekly basis.
- I Will give financially to my church according to my means.
- I Will get baptized.
- I Will be of service to my church, to members of my congregation, to those in need, and to my local community.
- I Will engage in Bible studies and watch Scripture-oriented YouTube videos.
- I Will participate in Prayer Groups.
- I Will be in fellowship with other Christians.
- I Will pray without ceasing.
- I Will rejoice always knowing only good comes from God.
- I Will give thanks to God in all things, trust in His purpose, and know that it is *always* for my good.

Action Items to Undertake That Demonstrate My Faith in Christ

- I Will thank God for everything, especially for sacrificing His Son on my behalf and for my blessings.
- I Will not boast or be wise in my own eyes, and I will not lean on my own understanding.
- I Will in all things ask what Christ would do, think, or feel – and behave accordingly.
- I Will hallow the name of God.
- I Will share the Gospel with all, and when I do, I will know that Jesus is right there with me.
- I Will confess my sins and ask God (and God only) for forgiveness (Note: Jesus and God are one).
- I Will judge only myself and only regarding the purity of my relationship with God. I know God judges all others.
- I Will freely confess to all that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior – happily telling the world of our relationship.
- I Will think in terms of Scripture when addressing an issue.
- I Will not be a P&C (pick and choose) Christian, thinking I can choose which Bible teachings I will follow.

Strategies for You to Use in Turning Beliefs into Behaviors

- Have a clear picture of what being Christ-righteous looks like and feels like.
- Identify exactly who and what I am committed to.
- Identify those Christ-like behaviors I need to bring into my life and identify those devilish-like behaviors I need to cease doing.
- Pick easy behaviors to start with and build my Christ-like being one behavior at a time.
- Use a planner to map out my new behaviors (see our Christian Planner for a guide).
- Commit to practicing at least one behavior every day until that behavior becomes ingrained into who I am.
- Find an accountability partner from within my fellowship of believers and hold check-ins with my partner.
- Set goals, time frames, and milestones for cementing my new behaviors into who I am.
- Record my progress – both successes and failures.
- Reward myself.
- Do not compare myself with others.
- START!

When Dealing with Sin

- Know who my worst enemy really is – it is the devil trying to separate me from God by deceiving me into thinking sin is acceptable. Don't fall for the devil's deceit.
- Identify my sinful urges, know what triggers them, and have substitute actions and replacement thoughts immediately ready to initiate on cue. Think of it like martial arts training for the spirit:
 - Recognize the habits that support the urge to sin and eliminate them
 - Remind myself who and what I am deeply committed to
 - Prepare Scriptures to read that will get me back into Christ's righteousness
 - Prepare visualizations that I can call on to show me how evil or selfish my sin is and bring me back to being Christ-like
 - Have prepared questions to "test" the urge, e.g., "How will this action glorify God?" or "Is this worth upsetting Christ?"
 - Develop a list of replacement thoughts or substitute actions to call up whenever an urge to sin appears
- When the urge to sin occurs, pray for God's Holy Spirit to guide me away from the temptation and immediately initiate a "substitute action", e.g., take a walk, read the Bible; or immediately initiate a thought replacement, e.g., think of a beautiful picture or place or hear a song in my head.

Unrighteous Behaviors to Avoid

Remember - we cannot be Christ; we can only strive to be Christ-like

- I Will Not blaspheme the Holy Spirit (which involves a final and full rejection of Christ).
- I Will Not pursue false idols (other gods), sorcery, or devil worship.
- I Will Not worship, adore, idolize, or prioritize anyone or anything before God – and that includes money and fame.
- I Will Not deny the existence of, or my relationship with, the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.
- I Will Not take the Lord's name in vain.
- I Will Not be conformed to this sin-natured world (through money, sex, drugs, hatred, etc.).
- I Will Not cause another to turn away from God.
- I Will Not murder.

Unrighteous Behaviors to Avoid

- I Will Not steal.
- I Will Not cause strife among the brethren or create divisions.
- I Will Not covet what doesn't belong to me or be envious or jealous of what others have.
- I Will Not lie, bear false witness, slander, gossip, or participate in idle chatter or foolish and ignorant speculation.
- I Will Not deceive or say one thing while doing another (hypocrisy).
- I Will Not lust after another (real or imagined), commit adultery, or participate in sexual immorality.
- I Will Not engage in profanity, unrighteous anger, rage, or other enmities.
- I Will Not participate in drunkenness or carousing.
- I Will Not boast, be arrogant, or demonstrate conceit, pride, or being wise in my own estimation.
- I Will Not show partiality in my love for others (loving unequally or based on status).
- I Will Not pay back evil for evil to anyone.
- I Will Not take my own revenge, always leaving room for the wrath of God.

I will recognize I am a work in progress.

Help Is On The Way

If you feel that a lot of the above seems a bit overwhelming, you are on the right path. God's gift of eternal life and Fruit of the Holy Spirit are not to be taken lightly. Fortunately, God has no intention of making us get there all on our own. As we mentioned in the beginning of this document, God is going to send us a Helper, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will dwell within us, to protect us and to guide us towards creating a Christ-like life. It is critical that we learn to depend on the Holy Spirit to help us because we cannot become Christ-like on our own. Part of becoming a "new creature in Christ" is that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, gives us a "Spirit-filled" life, and through this Spirit, He becomes a new creature in us. Here are but a few of the Biblical Scriptures that demonstrate how vital the Holy Spirit is when He operates within us to help us become more Christ-like (emphasis added).

"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized 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

"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is [for us to be sanctified, i.e., made Holy]. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:15-18

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." Philippians 2:12-13

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." Colossians 3:1-4

And as the Holy Spirit indwells us, helping us become more Christ-like, He automatically draws us to Fruit of the Holy Spirit, which Galatians 5:22-23 defines as: ***"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*** We can see this at work in Colossians 3:12-17:

"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

With every step you take on your journey to become Christ-like, engage the Holy Spirit and mirror His Fruit.