

Some people spend more time reading the newspaper than reading the Bible. Too many people spend more time listening to the radio or their iPod than listening to God. Do you spend more time watching TV than in worshipping Christ? Are you playing more often than praying? **Do you worry more about what people think of you than what God thinks of you?**

It is no wonder that so many people are spiritual skeletons and '*Christian corpses*'. If you were as enthusiastic about spiritual matters as you are about sport! If you spent as much money supporting church or missionary work as you do on entertainment and holidays! If the Christians of today invested as much time, talent and energy into evangelising this world instead of into political agitation - then this world would be a different place!

But, no! Selfishness, envy, covetousness, bitterness, hatred and greed are destroying the ministry of many churches and killing spiritual life in many hearts. **If every member was like you, what kind of church would you have?**

If I followed in your footsteps would I find Jesus? (1 Peter 2:21). If not then it is understandable that you have no joyful peace of mind and soul (John 14:27; Romans 14:17).

When last did God speak to you? (John 10:27). Are you close enough to God to hear Him when He speaks? And would you recognise His voice? If you continually neglect to read His Word, the Bible and if you avoid church services, Bible studies and prayer meetings, if you never get alone and have a quiet time with God - how can you expect to know His will - if you do not hear His voice?



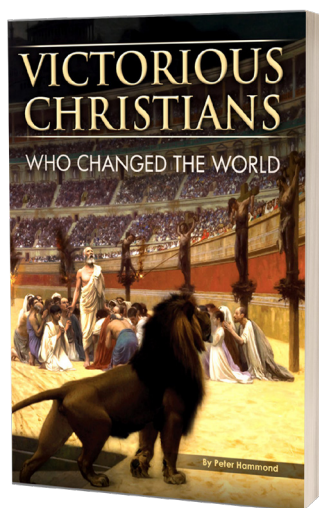
The root source of all spiritual growth, fruit and success is in our personal relationship with Christ (John 15:1-5). We can trace all spiritual failure back to lack of prayerful devotion and obedience to God. No man is greater than his prayer life. We cannot give more than we

receive. We have nothing to share with others unless we have first received it from God. We must love and honour our Creator, the Sovereign Judge of the universe, with all our hearts. Nothing less than wholehearted surrender to the Lordship of Christ is enough. The successful Christian is Christ-centred. He seeks to please God, asking *“What would Christ do in my situation?”* (Colossians 2:6,7)

The successful Christian is Bible-based. How can a person be a Christian for a full year without having read the whole Bible through? We must be soaked in the Scriptures (Psalm 1). ***“Christ’s message in all its richness must live in your hearts”*** Colossians 3:16. The Bible must become our best friend as we seek the truth of God’s Word, submit to this revealed truth and apply it wisely and fearlessly. We cannot be effective in fighting evil, in spreading the Gospel, or in serving Christ unless we are submitted to God, studying the Scriptures and seeking His Will (Jeremiah 15:16). This is the foundation for a successful life, studying God’s Word — prayerfully, thoughtfully and obediently.

The victorious Christian knows the joy of true repentance. It is that disgusting habit of tolerating sin that keeps us in our half-dead condition. Sin is death and it separates us from the Lord (Isaiah 59:2). Jesus never died to make it easy for us to sin and get away with it! ***“The Son of God appeared for this very reason, to destroy what the devil had done.”*** 1 John 3:8. The Gospel is ***“the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins”*** Luke 24:47. We must die to sin, self and the world (Mark 8:34) and be born again to righteousness, under the Lordship of Christ.

We must deal thoroughly with sin. It is selfishness, prayerlessness, unbelief, materialism, unfaithfulness and disobedience that needs to be rejected, confessed, forsaken and repented of (Psalm 51). In order to succeed in our Christian walk (Hebrews 12:1-2), we need to be clean (2 Timothy 2:21).



The dedicated Christian is sensitive to the Holy Spirit. We must know from personal experience the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), filling us with joyful praise and a submissive spirit (Ephesians 5:18-21), guiding (Romans 8:14) and controlling our walk and witness for Christ (Romans 8:6). We must be Holy Spirit-led.

To be wise we must first fear the Lord (Proverbs 9:10). Only once we understand the Holiness of God and appreciate His wrath against sin will we have spiritual understanding (Deuteronomy 32). Reverence and awe for the majesty and glory of Almighty God is essential for true worship. We must have a vision of how great God is (Isaiah 6:1-8).

Single-minded devotion to serving God is essential (Acts 20:24). God is not interested in blessing the selfish. Only those who live to serve God's Kingdom first will know God's mightiest blessings (Matthew 6:33). Hard work is healthy, worthwhile and essential for our spiritual lives (Colossians 3:23). Living for God (Philippians 1:20-21), making sacrifices for the Lord's work (Mark 10:29-30), generosity, hospitality and persistence — these are the things that make for strong Christians.

*“Only one life, it will soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.”* C. T. Studd

Give up your small ambitions — and follow Jesus!



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