

THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN IS THE WORLD'S BIBLE

“I don’t want to be like some of the Christians I’ve known,” explained my unbelieving friend Greg. He had experienced confrontational dealings with a number of people in the community. He was the city building official. Enforcement of property code violations ultimately fell to him. He told the story of one man who cursed and ranted when pressed to clear his yard of broken down cars. A couple of months later Greg took his family to visit a church on Easter. There greeting everyone at the door was the junk car collector. Greg extended his hand. The greeter glanced at him, abruptly dropped his hand back to his side and turned away.

Greg didn’t remember anything about the message in worship that day. The silent sermon preached at the door rang more lastingly in his mind. He concluded, “So if that is how Christians live, I don’t want to be one.”

The life of the Christian is the world’s Bible. It is the only Bible some people ever read. In our post-modern world many people will give serious thought to our doctrines only after they see conviction in our daily living.

Jesus spoke about the powerful message you send by the way you live your life in the world. He said, “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” ([Matthew 5:16](#)).

Paul encourages us to live a life defined by, “love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” ([1 Thessalonians 1:5](#)). Martin Luther comments, “True love flows from a pure heart. God has commanded me to let my love go out to my neighbor and be kindly disposed to all, whether they be my friends or my enemies, just as our heavenly Father himself does. He allows his sun to rise and shine on the good and evil and is most kind to those who are constantly dishonoring him Why does he do this? Out of sheer, pure love, of which his heart is full to overflowing, and which he pours out freely over every one without exception, be he good or bad, worthy or unworthy. This is real, divine, total, and perfect love, which does not single out one person nor cut and divide itself, but goes out freely to all” (“The Sum of the Christian Life,” v. 51, p. 267).

While we strive to live this life of love we do stumble and sin against our neighbor. At that critical point our actions reveal how authentic our life in Christ really is. We pray, “Forgive us our trespasses” – and seek forgiveness from our neighbor! Luther comments that then your neighbor will say, “Very well, even though you have harmed me or failed to serve me as you should, yet because you have so humbled yourself before me, I will gladly forgive and pardon you I must admit that you are a good man, for you do not

stubbornly and willfully insist upon offending me, but rather turn in love . . . (“The Sum of the Christian Life,” v. 51, p. 274).

You wake every morning knowing that God your Savior has loved you with an everlasting love. Let that love fill your mind and heart and life.

You navigate the peaks and pitfalls of your spiritual life constantly assured that God forgives all your sins in Jesus. Don’t keep that wonderful and practical assurance to yourself. Let it live in your life as you ask your neighbor for forgiveness and as you express the joy of forgiveness.

You persevere through darkness and death confident of the eternal day to which God will welcome you in heaven. Let the rays of that confidence shine through even during the struggles and stresses of difficult days.

I asked a new friend who recently immigrated from China, “How acquainted are you with Christianity?” She replied, “We have a friend who is Christian. He is a very good person.” That’s all they knew.

Like that Christian, let the book of your life be open wide that Christ’s love may shine!

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