

Why Christianity Is Worth It

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Introduction.

Just like anything else in our lives does, the level of our spirituality, the intensity of our relationship with Jesus, ebbs and flows. Some days, we feel like we're on top of the world spiritually. We're having no trouble defeating the usual temptations, we're setting a good example for our families and friends, and we feel like Christ is truly alive in us. Other days, though, things aren't going so well. The devil's really got his claws in us, we fear that everyone around us is convinced that we're either a loser or a hypocrite, and deep down inside, we despair of ever making it to heaven.

It's in times like that that we face our greatest temptation to fall away, and it's in times like that that we are least equipped to fight the temptation off. In those times, we don't usually have the kind of connection with God where prayer comes easily and naturally. Usually, as we've drawn away from the Lord, we've drawn away from His people too, so that our brothers and sisters aren't right there with us supporting us. We probably aren't even devoting the time to study of the word that we should. All those things put together make our spiritual down times perilous and even deadly, and if we wander into them with our guard down, unprepared for a fight, it may well be that the devil will triumph over us.

That's the biggest disaster that could ever possibly befall us, so we need to prepare now to make sure that it doesn't happen to us. Just like the farmers of centuries ago very carefully harvested and stored up the food and provisions they needed to make it through the winter, we need to prepare spiritual food to sustain us through our hard times. If we convince ourselves now that we must remain faithful to the Lord, we'll still have that understanding to fall back on when Satan is really after us to fall away. With this in mind, let's look at seven reasons why Christianity is worth it.

Benefits in This Life.

Even though our faith is focused on things of the spirit, it produces a number of benefits in this life. First, Christianity **MAKES US WISE**. In this vein, consider the words of Solomon in Proverbs 3:13-16. This context is a discussion of the value of spiritual wisdom. Despite all the praise that Solomon heaps on wisdom here, he's not overstating the case. If we are Christians who study the Bible, it will make us wise. If we are wise, we will make good decisions. If we make good decisions, it will make our lives happier, wealthier, and better than if we did not.

Just think for a moment about all the traps and pitfalls that the faithful child of God avoids. In every area of our lives, obedience to the word blesses us and helps us to prosper. If I'm a Christian, I know better than to gamble, so all my money doesn't end up down at the boats. If I'm a Christian, I know better than to drink, so I will never fall prey to the evils of drunkenness and alcoholism. If I'm a Christian, I know better than to chase around after other women, so I will never bring financial catastrophe and heartache on myself through adultery and divorce. If I'm a Christian, I know better than to lie, so the people I do business with will trust my word. The list is nearly endless, folks. Of all the things that the people in the world around us do to make themselves miserable, how many of those things would they avoid if they only followed the word of God? There's a false doctrine floating around called the gospel of health and wealth, that teaches that if we become disciples of Jesus, God will start throwing money at us. I don't believe that for a second, but I do believe that if we simply follow the wisdom of the word, that alone will lead us to prosperity and earthly contentment. This is not a guarantee, of course, but it is certainly a general rule. God's word leads us to better lives.

As part of this, Christianity is worthwhile because **IT REDUCES CONFLICT**. Look at what Paul teaches in Titus 3:1-2. True Christianity is a religion of peace, and it will lead us to be peaceable people. As I've told you before, when I was younger, I had a real big mouth, and got in all kinds of arguments with my friends and everybody around me. One year for my birthday, some anonymous joker bought me a copy of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. The truth is, though, that when it comes to getting along with people, Dale Carnegie was clueless next to God. The Bible is the most powerful book on interpersonal relations ever written. If we want to have good relationships with our families, our neighbors, our co-workers, and our friends, all we have to do is study the word, figure out how it relates to our situation, and put it into practice. Of course, this doesn't mean that the Bible is a quickie course on salesmanship. The point is not that it teaches us how to fake our way into harmony with everybody. Instead, what happens is that the Bible transforms us into the image of Christ, and as we become more like Him, we inevitably become more peaceable and loving.

Christianity is also the best choice because **IT BLESSES OUR CHILDREN**. This is something that takes place in two main ways. One of the ways is presented in Ephesians 6:4. Part of being a godly man is being a godly father, and part of being a godly father is instructing our children in righteousness. If we do that, if we consistently teach our children to live the way God wants them to, the blessing they will inherit from us in this life only will be incalculable. All of the good things we just finished talking about will be the core of the way they look at the world. They too will know to avoid sin and all of its consequences that are so terrible even in our time on earth. When they make their way out on their own, they'll have the kind of morals and work ethic that will help them to succeed at whatever they try. Likewise, they'll be gifted with the understanding of how to get along with people, so that they aren't constantly shooting themselves in the

foot by being abrasive. People spend thousands and thousands of dollars on helping their children get ahead, all the way from Baby Einstein CD's through college tuition. The very best thing we can do, though, is to teach them godliness.

Of course, the blessings of this life are only the smallest part of the blessings we pass on to our children if we are faithful to the Lord. Paul illustrates this in 2 Timothy 1:3-5. Lois and Eunice didn't just pass on their features and personality quirks to Timothy; they passed on their faith. By being devout themselves, they set his feet on the path to eternal life. Parents, just think for a moment about how centrally, amazingly important this is. Children, of course, make their own choices, but the single biggest factor that determines whether a child will obey the gospel is the spiritual influence of his parents. For those of you who are still raising children, consider how tragic it would be for even one of those children whom you love so much to spend eternity in hell. Isn't that the most awful thing you can imagine? Wouldn't you be willing even to die to prevent such a disaster? Then be willing to live to prevent it. Live a life that is wholly devoted to the Lord, so that your children can learn from you how they need to be devoted to the Lord too.

Benefits in the Life to Come.

Just as is true for our children, it's true for us too. As useful and good as Christianity is in this age, it's even better and more useful in the age to come. The truth is that in the next life, Christianity **REWARDS US SPECTACULARLY**. Consider Paul's words in Romans 8:18. Remember, folks, all of the things that I've described to this point are probabilities, not guarantees. It is possible that like Paul, we can do everything we should but end up in all kinds of bad situations and have all kinds of people hating us. Every life has suffering in it, and it is possible that devotion to the Lord may increase our suffering rather than diminishing it. Even if so, folks, even if our lives are rotten here because of Jesus, the grief we endure now isn't even fit to be put on the same scale as the glory of heaven. Which one weighs more, a few decades of unhappiness or an eternity of bliss? Whatever we go through, the reward will be unimaginably greater. And folks, even if we have the blessed lives that most Christians experience, even if we don't make a lot of enemies, even if we persuade our children to follow Jesus too, eternity is still going to be a million times better than the best day we ever had.

All this is possible, of course, because Christianity **PROMISES ETERNAL LIFE**. We have this promise from the lips of Jesus Himself in John 10:27-28. Brethren, this is the solution to the biggest problem that mankind has got. The specter of death is always walking behind each one of us, and the older we get, the closer he gets, and we quite naturally fear that. Let's say that Bill Gates fell ill with some dread disease, and the doctors came to him and said, "If we let this disease run its course, it will kill you in six months, but if you go through this treatment, it will prolong your life for another five years. The thing is, the treatment is incredibly expensive, and it's going to cost you five billion dollars." Do you think that he would even hesitate to buy five more years of life at the cost of a billion dollars a year? And yet, as Christians, we have been promised by God Himself that we can have eternal life, and Jesus has paid the price for it already. We get into heaven free of charge. That, brethren, is the most amazing deal ever promised, and all we have to do to take advantage of it is live the simple, righteous life that God describes in His word. It doesn't get any better than that.

It's also worth our while to be Christians because **IT LEADS US TO JESUS**. This is part of the promise that Paul makes in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. When we go to heaven, we get to be with the Lord. One of those questions that shows up in college entrance exams and things like that goes, "If you could pick one famous historical figure to eat dinner with, whom would you pick and why?" As with most Christians, more than anybody else, I'd like to share a meal with Jesus. If I actually got to eat with the Lord and spend an hour talking with Him, that would be the highlight of my life. I'd get to ask for all kinds of stuff: personalized tips on what I need to do better if I want to go to heaven, how I can do a better job of reaching the lost, what He was trying to get across with that whole book of Revelation thing anyway, and so on. But more than that, I'd have the chance to actually get to know the Son of God, to learn from personal interaction what He's like. Wouldn't that be neat? If I'm a faithful Christian, though, I get to go to heaven and be with Jesus not for the time frame of a meal, but forever. Eternity is a big long time, friends, and I'm sure that no matter how badly we all want to pester Jesus, He'll have more than enough time for each one of us. That's a wonderful thought to dwell on.

Finally, though, Christianity is worthwhile because **IT GLORIFIES GOD**. Notice how Paul describes what he wants to happen to the Thessalonians on the day of judgment in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. From the very beginning, God designed the human race to glorify Him, and He sent His Son to earth to die to make it possible. That's what we are meant to do, and we do it in some small measure here, but we really accomplish our purpose when we rise to heaven to forever praise Him. Hell is not just a place of pain. It is a place of failure. Only through Christ can we have success.

Conclusion. If all of these things make Christianity sound worthwhile to you, become a disciple of Christ today.