

## Living Intentionally for Christ

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intentional

[in-**ten**-shuh-nl]

adjective

Done with intention or on purpose; intended:

*an intentional insult.*

When you go on a trip, especially one that is a vacation, you make sure everything is in order before you go. You make sure your neighbor gets your mail. The dog needs to be boarded or cared for. A hotel needs to be booked. You make sure you have tickets to the theme park you want to go to while you are there, usually at a discount that you found online while researching the park. You have a plan for what you want to do each day you are gone and definitely while you are at the park. You make sure the car is ready if you are going to drive or that you have the least expensive airline tickets for the flight. If you are flying, you make sure you have a rental car booked. You make sure that you have enough money to cover all the meals and such during the trip and lastly, you make sure everyone is packed.

That is a lot to do, but you do it gladly because you know that a well-planned vacation is the best. It helps things go smoothly. You do this without even giving it a second thought most of the time because you know that a little planning beforehand will pay off big time down the road. You are intentional in your vacation.

When Christ started His ministry here on earth, He was intentional in His purpose. He had a plan and He completed it. His plan culminated with Him dying on the cross for the sins of the entire world; being dead and buried; raised from the dead three days later once He conquered Death and Hell; and finally ascending into Heaven where He now stands at the right hand of God, the Father.

### **Acts 7:55,56 (“he” referred to here is Stephen as he was being martyred))(NKJV)**

55But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

Here we see that Jesus is still standing at the right hand of God. Why isn't He sitting? Because He still has work to do. He is waiting until The Father sends Him to come to earth again to redeem His chosen people. He is still being intentional in His ministry.

If Christ is so intentional, why are we not? Most people go about their lives with nothing more than circumstances to guide them on their way. Those with a plan usually only plan their professional life, but leave out their personal and spiritual lives. Why only have a plan for one aspect of your life when you have several aspects that make up the whole?

Being successful in business will not get you into heaven. It will not make you a better mother or father, and it will not make you a better person. Having a plan to be successful at your personal life will most likely make

you a better mother or father, but it will not necessarily make you good at business. If, however, you are intentional (have a plan and follow it) about following Christ, it will not only bring you closer to Him (always good), but it will have side benefits of making you a better parent AND it will help you be successful in your professional life. Intentionality in your walk with Christ has so many benefits that it is crazy to NOT do it and yet most people don't even give it a real try. Why is that?

The answer is simple. It is hard because Satan will attack you if he sees that you are trying to get closer to Christ. He wants to keep you feeling like you are doing enough if you go to church on Sunday. I mean, really...You have to sacrifice a whole weekend day by getting up at nine or so to get to church by 11 so you can have some social time with your friends before going in to hear the pastor give you an ear tickling sermon that doesn't really step on anyone's toes or convict anyone. Then you go out to lunch and by the time you get home, it is three o'clock or so and the whole day is shot. Right?!? That is unless it is football season and then the sermon better be done by noon so you can grab some drive thru food and be home by kick-off.

Real, intentional Christianity is a lot different than that. You must actually WORK at it. You must read His Word; otherwise how do you know what it says? One of Satan's favorite tactics is to add a little lie in with some truth, so you need to know what the Truth is in order to recognize the lie. A great example of this tactic is Eve and the serpent:

#### **Genesis 3:1-5 (NKJV)**

1Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " 4Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Satan allowed Eve to continue believing the lie that she added about touching the fruit. God didn't say that. So, we must not only read God's Word, but we must study it with the intent of knowing it.

We must also pray. True Christianity is NOT a religion, it is a relationship with Christ. If you don't talk to Christ, how can you expect Him to speak to you? If you don't read His Word, how do you know what is in it? How will you know what to do? How will you be able to recognize the lie if you haven't been exposed to the Truth? Part of intentional living is spoken of in Deuteronomy:

#### **Deuteronomy 4:40 (NKJV)**

You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you *today*, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time."

A pastor once said that he can spot a true Cristian by looking at their checkbooks and calendars. What he means by that is do they give their time and money to further God's Kingdom here on Earth? Do they intentionally set out to help others serve in the way God wants them to and do they, themselves serve others with their own time and energy?

There is an 80/20 rule in churches that states that 80% of the work will be done by 20% of the people. That is a shame, but it is accurate. Another pastor once said that if you are not comfortable being on the front lines

of ministry, then stand behind those that are and pass them the ammo. In other words, get off your bottom and DO SOMETHING. If you don't have a plan, find someone that does have one and help them accomplish theirs.

If you are waiting until things are financially comfortable or when you have more time, then you will never serve because Satan will always make sure that you are never comfortable financially and never feel like you have enough time. Make the time and if you tithe correctly (the FIRST 10% of your money, time, talents, and energy) then you will always have enough money.

In short, make a plan. The bolder the better.

A simple plan might look like this:

- 1) Read the Bible every morning for 15 minutes.
- 2) Pray every day for 5 minutes.
  - a. Make a list of who and what to pray for.
- 3) Think about what you read that morning and how you might apply that to your own life.
- 4) Get connected with a Bible Teaching church.
- 5) Serve in some capacity each week at a Bible teaching church.
- 6) Think of one thing you can do each day to make life easier for your boss.

Once you have a plan, ACT on it. Put it in motion. You may need to tweak it here and there, but get it in gear and act on it.