

God & Christian Faith Workbook

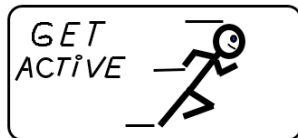
[Read Deuteronomy 30:11-20](#)

[Ezekiel 18](#)

[John 15](#) (note vs. 6)

[Philippians 2:12 - 18](#)

Read and find the similarities in scripture listed above and how they relate. To maximize our potential we aim to practice application, participation, experience, evaluation, introspection, testing, and observation. If we want to maximize our understanding of God alignment of our thoughts and actions into more agreement with God's ways, paths, principles, and character will be necessary. Now, let's learn from the Bible God's will and how Christians are taught to behave. Then, laying aside any contrary feeling or understanding, begin to do as the Bible says toward achievable goals.



Do we read instructions in the Bible thinking we ought to obey them? Do we believe it is God who has written them and that they are for us? Do we pick and choose which scripture is for us and which is not? Do we rely more on the Bible's teaching than from others people? If so, explain how our actions show it.

God's Character

We ought to align our thoughts and actions increasingly with God's character. We cannot be perfect and will always sin/miss the mark. So the journey is not about being perfect, but progressively moving toward inward perfection. We can get tired, confused, doubtful, and distracted. Yet we can rest, learn, grow in faith, and refocus. Growing continually and progressively with God is a life set on learning, applying, correcting, and teaching. Failure, hurt, success, and joy are part of the journey. Every character in the Bible went through challenges and struggles, before reaching success. We are no

different. Yet, just as others in scripture, we must choose our path. Everyday we will face ourselves with choices. Our spiritual battle will exist within the confounds of our prompting thoughts. We can learn new messages to prompt us into God's grace. Keeping our minds focused on Godly good can help us win such battles.

Christianity ~ Take time each day to read these sections while taking note how each one is titled. Imagine the author writing this letter to you and your spiritual family. Share with each other what thoughts come about as you read them together.

[Romans 12:9-21](#) NKJV, "Behave Like a Christian"

[Ephesians 4:17-32](#) NIV, "Instructions for Christian Living"

[1 Peter 3:8-22](#) NLT, "All Christians"

Philippians 4 [NCV/NET](#) "What the Christians are to do"/"Christian Practices"

[1 Thessalonians 5:12-24](#) NASB "Christian Conduct"



Do we want to be Christians as the Bible describes it? Are we willing to hold ourselves to these descriptions and to seek development within ourselves to grow such character and attitudes within our hearts, minds, strength, and souls?

Belief definitions

1. "Belief is the state of **mind** in which a person thinks something to be the case with or without there being **empirical evidence** to prove that something is the case with factual certainty."

2. "Another way of defining belief sees it as a **mental representation** of an **attitude positively oriented** towards the **likelihood** of something being **true**."

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belief>

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

James refers to the definition #1 above for belief. Simply believing something is not enough. Faith involves definition #2 where our attitude acts as though it is true.

Belief without action or faith without deeds is dead. To believe with all our heart, mind, and soul requires action with all our strength. The greatest commandment says to love which is action, not just thinking. If we actually love God with all our heart, strength, mind, and soul, then we are compliant to God's will. If we do it here and there, we will at best have "here and there" compliance. What does that say about our faith? Is that the faith of Abraham?

If we can trust in God's direction enough to commit ourselves to daily achievable goals, continuously, to grow in God's character, we can, over time, experience amazing grace. Each new experience can add to our understanding and increase our faith. Growing anything takes dedication, participation, practice, effort, correction, and time.

The work in 12 step groups comprise confession, repentance, correcting evil character, making right wrongs done to others, improving Godly thoughts, and helping others to do the same. Spiritual Principals are the goal. Many will not do it, but still show up at meetings. Those who do the work and continue at it, can sincerely & honestly experience God at a deeper level. Often times, due to Group Think and Heard Mentality people do not seek growth further than how they perceive the group to grow.

Instead of faultfinding, complaining, making excuses and blaming we can take responsibility for the choices we make. We do not rely upon the group as a final bench mark of our improvement with God's character. We can practice God's character more than others within our group. We can all be examples of God's good for others. We rely upon God, not people. Still, as we rely upon God, we are vessels to connect with others with sincere truth and love. This can be love that is freely given in accordance with God.

We can create new thoughts, attitudes, and actions that can move our hearts toward peace, truth, justice, patience, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and love. Finding spiritual good in others, offering help, speaking encouragement, giving compliments, expressing appreciation, can be some examples. Our growth in such actions ought to be sincere and in the truth. False flattery must be avoided. Being fake is not our goal.

This can seem silly or ridiculous at first, perhaps out of the ordinary. Yet isn't improvement out of the ordinary. Isn't God extraordinary? Therefore, if we believe God to be extraordinary, then we are to act extraordinary. We will need to practice and participate as sincerely as possible love, justice, truth,

patience, forgiveness, and mercy? Goodness and righteousness is within our reach, but we must diligently apply our hearts, minds, strength, and soul over with it each day.

My wife and I got two beagle puppies. They needed potty training. We were told to “throw a party” whenever they would pee in the right place. Neither of us were raised with praise or compliments so such actions were foreign to us at the time. This positive praise went against our understanding and experience. It just wasn’t who we were. We could not see the good in it because we did not experience it.

However, it made practical sense so we did it despite our understanding and personal bias. It felt awkward and stupid as we did it. We both felt fake, but we were not incorrectly praising the dogs. It was not false flattery, because we used it correctly. We applied the praise when the dogs did what they were supposed to do. After a while we saw the results. Seeing the results proved to us it worked. We were taught praise and encouragement does indeed work. Seeing is believing. We saw it worked and our faith in the praise process grew. We felt less stupid for doing it. We had more confidence in it. Confusion decreased through experience, testing, and proven results. Faith grew through our experience.

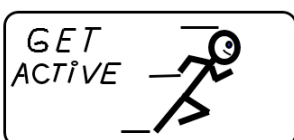
Even though we had disbelief or doubt, through the humbling of our pride, we became willing to take new action despite our disbelief, and follow instructions that enabled us to experience life changing results. This is the process that millions of people go through in recovery. Despite their fear and disbelief they apply new principles that prove better results.

Continued transformation requires such action over and over again. We must become willing to take new action despite our minds being against it. If we can do this objectively, with the willingness to be proven wrong, and readiness to do it correctly, we can transform, grow, and learn many great and wonderful things about God’s goodness.

There are different levels of learning and understanding.

- [Mary’s room - knowledge argument](#)
- [Webb’s depth of knowledge](#)
- [Piaget’s Constructivism](#)

Have you ever challenged yourself to test new

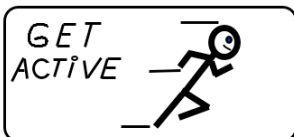


theories about your own beliefs to see if they are true? Explain. Sometimes societies and even church beliefs can benefit through testing to see if they are true. Is such testing encouraged with your groups?

God is invisible and intangible. We can't provide pictures or images of God. God is best understood through experience. It is the experience we have with God that teaches us and reveals God to us in bits and pieces. We have an inward ability to understand God if we can set ourselves right to be with God. We cannot improve our faith/belief/understanding in who God really is by only reading and praying about God any more than we can improve our understanding of our spouse through only reading or praying. Experience is necessary to learn intangible things even more than tangible. We must grow with love to grow with God and it needs to be God's love.

Jesus lays out a lot of instruction in Matthew 5-7. Jesus says in 7:24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them," meaning we need to do them to really be following what Jesus says. Jesus says in 7:26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them" meaning those who obey get something better than those who do not.

Let's take Jesus' word for it. Let's act like Jesus is smarter than we are. Let's do what Jesus says despite our struggle or disbelief. The instructions are clear enough to take some new action, it's the acceptance of the instructions that can become difficult. If we accept the instructions our whole attitude toward life can change; church, work, money, and relationships. Devisions might be created. Fear of change and the consequences that can come from it can block many of us from pursuing Jesus' truth that can bring freedom. Are we going to be controlled by fear? Are we going to let go of our control with following our own understanding and become willing to take more action with God's understanding?



What blocks us from stepping into a continuous process of practicing God's directions with truth, forgiveness, compassion, mercy, peace, generosity, patience, justice, and love? Is there fear? Is there doubt? Do we rely upon our fear more than God?

Many of us have heard the parable of the good samaritan. Yet there is one part of it that needs much more attention than the rest.

Luke 10:37 “Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.””

Each day we ought to set our minds and actions toward understanding God’s spiritual kingdom and seeking to sense it with our hearts. We ought to focus upon sensing compassion, empathy, love, intimacy, and connecting at a heart level with others. This can be a powerful and intimidating experience. Yet God is there. Humility, transparency, genuineness, and being real is the process to becoming movable clay for the potter. We humble ourselves into Godly activity, little by little, each day. The goal is to progress toward what is perfect. God’s ideas are perfect. In what ways can we become more patient, sincere, truthful, and loving? Do we have someone we can forgive or give mercy?

The ultimate plan is love. We are to be learners, encouragers, and teachers of sincere love. All our hearts, all our minds, all our strength, and all our souls each and every day ought to be focused to love God and God’s ways. Anything else is sin. Sin is to miss the mark. The mark is God. If are not doing God’s will, we sin. No one is perfect, but we out to be seeking that which is perfect, meaning we are in the process of being perfected. We can be growing and improving with God because through practicing God’s will each day.

At the end of each day we can see how we grew in the development of God’s character. What new understanding or experience have we gained? Did we connect with someone in a loving way? Were we more patient? How much effort did we apply. Did we meditate upon it or plan for it? Are we really seeking to serve God or ourselves?

Definition of the greek word belief used in the Bible

“pisteuy: to believe, entrust

<https://biblehub.com/greek/4100.htm>

3982 /πειθη, "persuade, be persuaded")

How is your belief persuading you? Within our minds exists a system of rational that will defend its understanding. When contrary information is presented our first reaction can be defensiveness and we can instinctively

seek to prove it wrong. Our minds are biased and can quickly move to defend its current beliefs whether right or wrong. We ought to test our thinking with God's truth and struggle toward the truth even when it goes against our own beliefs.

Becoming Ready - being convinced

Many people who seek God in recovery circles hit what they call a "bottom." Their way of doing things fail them to such a point they realize continuing to do things the way they know will lead to disaster. They reach out for help only because they become convinced they have no other choice. Rarely will people live differently because it sounds like a good idea or even because the Bible says so. Taking action against our current beliefs involves struggle and resistance. It can be challenging to let go of developed habits and lifestyles.

To really get convinced means we will need to gain experience that it works. Through experience we can witness evidence that God's ways do work. It can feel like choosing to jump into a pool of cold water and then finding out it's really not as intolerable as we believed. It's the choice and taking the action that is the most difficult because of our own thinking. Going against the fear within us can be a constant theme with growth.

Wheel Barrel Story

The evidence is in the work. Like the 'Wheel Barrel Story' we cannot know what it is like unless we give ourselves to God. The level of personal investment we make within ourselves toward God can be related to the affect of spiritual understanding we receive. There are cause and affect relationships. God opposes the proud, but gives favor to the humble. We ought to humble ourselves. This begins with a choice followed by thought messages which affect our attitude and ultimately leads to action.

Read the instructions Jesus provides in Matthew 6 and practice it for a week. It's just one week, right? We can learn about our resistance, how it feels to give in to God's ways, and perhaps a bit of God's grace. As we trust God our eyes can be opened in ways that reveal our fear, denial, anger, vanity, idolatry, and shame. What we seek to change is our principles. Nothing external changes, just us. Yet as we do, we can witness many spiritual benefits.

Matthew 6 Do these with an attitude of love and compassion.

Do charity each day, but tell no one. (Experience it with empathy)

Pray privately daily. (Listen to inwardly for reactions)

Forgive everyone, hold no grudges. Have mercy. Stop arguing and faultfinding.

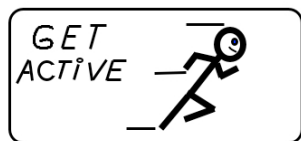
Do not lie. If you do lie, confess it and make amends.

Seek peace. Move patiently and gently with mind, heart, attitude, and actions.

Fasting: Give up anything that distracts from focusing upon God.

We rely fully upon God's character and spiritual goodness. We do not seek our own desires, but the will and grace of God.

See how the collective good of God work together. Sincere honest compassion, empathy, and connection with others toward peace with patience, truth, forgiveness, generosity, mercy, and justice is our goal. Living spiritually involves more attention to such things.



Do we act as if we value God, God's ways, and God's character? Will we persevere daily for a week? The only way God can teach us is if we listen and then do what God says. What is it like to teach someone who won't listen or follow the instructions?

Collaborate with others about the experience (this is essential). We must work together. Our minds are full of self deceptive tricks that can fool us. Through our personal sharing we can encourage others, give and receive empathy, create bonds, and learn where we may still need more growth through personality conflicts. Patience, forgiveness, mercy, and compassion must be practiced. We can all learn from each other. Sharing with a partner or mentor about our impatience, fear, anger, shame, or pride also can provide bonding and encouragement. We all sin, but not all of us move toward correction. Correction is a choice.

Matthew 5:19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

Matthew 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

Matthew 16:25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 23:12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Mark 3:35 For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”

John 12:46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

Acts 10:35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

1 John 2:5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

1 John 3:6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.