

work within, let's endeavor to be content with whatever He sends us.

Accept Suffering and Distress as Gifts from God

Father love allows all the difficulties of life to come your way. They are designed as His cutting tools to release you from the things of the world and the flesh, and from the captivity of Satan into God's eternal love.

Let Contentment Rule

In our hearts we have a direction, an inclination toward God or away from Him. We can be content in Christ or discontent in ourselves. When we resist or resent anything, we turn our hearts away from God by rejecting His providential will for us. We must allow the Lord to teach us more and more not to resist nor resent anything He sends us, nor fear anything He might send us. We must, at the peril of our walk with Him, be content with anything and everything He permits to come into our lives.

To do otherwise is to turn our backs to Him and not our faces. When we rush, we run ahead of Him, and our backs are to Him, not our faces. We mistrust Him and His will in the timing, His competence to see that everything that should be done can be done in peace. This destroys not only the peace and the rest of heart, the contentment, but also the freedom and joy. To live on the positive side of this line with our faces to Jesus is to abide in Christ.

Know Your Position in Christ

Our position in Him and He in us gives us hope. In confident dependence on Him, abide, reside, and rest yourself in Him as constantly as possible. Abide in His righteousness, under His blood, in His life, at home in Him. There receive all He has for you of life and hope.

Be Quick to Be Wrong

Tremendous health, help, and healing is found in readily admitting to God and man when you are wrong. Confess it equally readily to both without pretense or defense. Some leave a trail of trouble behind them just because they have never learned to admit they were wrong.

Seek To Act in Accord with Your Conscience

Enlightened by the Word and the Spirit, your conscience is a gift from God. To act against it is self-destructive. However, for our old selves independent of God to try to live up to the demands of our consciences may be almost equally self-destructive, leading to failure, bitterness, and bondage. Again, let the Lord be your guide, teacher, and provider. Be patient with your own stupid stubbornness. Seek not so much to chop off its evidences as to live in loving harmony and unity with Him who is victor over all.

God's Principles Oppose the World's

Do not expect to live in harmony with this world or its principles. Expect to have to undergo a complete overhaul of your way of thinking, feeling, and responding.

Gladly Die to Self

Let God enable you to be willing to die to your independent desires so you can be free to live in Him and His will. In His love for us, God will do nothing to strengthen our carnal flesh, even when our motives for our actions seem good and right. The best we

can hope for is to be cast more on our God. In our weakness is His strength. In our death is His life made experientially real in its work in us.

We died with Him at the cross to any right to any kind of independence from Him. Let us give Him and His loving, living presence in us the preeminence in our thoughts as in our lives. To dwell on our assertions of independence, even disapprovingly, may give them room they do not deserve. To think and look to Him with a loving heart is always to profit.

Guard Your Mind

Feed the spirit. Starve the flesh. Especially guard the eyegate and eargate to the soul. This is more crucial than we give credence. We may say on the one hand we are giving God our heart's attention and affection and seeking to live in constant communion with Him. But if, on the other, we give unnecessary attention to the distractions of TV, radio, or the newspaper for instance, we are deceiving ourselves.

We are robbing ourselves of the fellowship, peace, and joy the Lord wants to give us. We are missing out on much that He would give us, teach us, and show us that may be far more important than we dream.

Forgive

You dare not hold anything against anyone. So long as you do, you will not be fully able to believe God has forgiven and delivered you. Start out by recognizing that you cannot forgive, not really. As every other good thing, the ability to genuinely forgive our enemies is only the Lord's.

Let everything go to Him including all your rights and all your defenses. Let Him work the fruit of the Spirit in you, including love for the unlovely and unlovable. You dare not pretend that those who aren't good, or respectable, or lovable are so. See them as they are in all their ugliness. Then remember that the Lord loved you and forgave you fully and freely when there was nothing lovable about you, when you were still in rebellion against Him. Accept His love, that love He has for you, as enough for them, too.

Know That Only God Can Do the Work

I may suggest things that you can do to find a Christianity that really works. But, in reality, it is He alone who instructs, initiates, and empowers anything that is of spiritual benefit. To try to do anything without coming to Him, looking to Him, depending on Him, resting in Him, or receiving of Him is to turn that supposedly beneficial activity into emptiness, vanity, frustration, and futility.

In fact, there is no Christianity that works. God alone works. In all things it's not so much what we do as what we let Him do.



By: Pastor Ron Marr

"We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Philippians 3:3

For you readers who desire a condensed version of this book and for you who diligently, prayerfully have been reading every page, here is a summary of key aspects of a Christianity that really works. We begin at the beginning, the starting point which is the basis for all the other principles which follow.

Devote the Rest of Your Life to Seeking God!

That He draws us is true. Without His drawing, there could be no genuine seeking on our part. We simply do not have it in us! Still, no less true is the fact that we need to consciously seek the Lord as fully as He enables us in every way He enables every day of the rest of our lives, regardless of distractions and disappointments.

The wonderful verse with which we began this chapter tells us how to walk with Him in a Christianity that really works. It seems to me to divide our seeking into three simple elements: first, worshiping God, seeking Him for Himself alone, rather than for any thing; second, living contentedly in Him in receptive rest, peace, and freedom; and third, dying to our independent selves, letting go of everything but Him. Into these three elements, all those that follow merge.

Christianity Is a Relationship

Our whole pursuit is to know God as the Person He really is in a personal relationship of growing harmony and intimacy. To do it we must shed our religiosity, our pretense, and our faulty views of God and what He is like. We must begin to see Him in His beauty, glory, might, wonder, kindness, love, holiness, infinite perfection, and absolute trustworthiness. He must become the center and focus of our lives.

Spend Much Time Alone With the Lord

Without this little hope of getting to know Him exists. Make it first priority. Worship Him. Adore Him. Love Him. Seek Him for Himself alone. Let go of everything to Him. Learn to be entirely open and honest with Him. Listen to His Spirit's prompting. Confess and forsake your sins. Know that no price is too great for the privilege of knowing Him in loving intimacy and bringing Him pleasure and praise. Relinquish everything into His loving care. Let Him give you His quietness, peace, tenderness of heart, rest, and contentment.

Commune with the Lord

Make it your goal to ever more fully commune with Him, worship Him, confess your sin and need. Whether in word, thought, or silently looking to Him, whether at home, on the road, or in your usual or extended times alone with Him, give Him your loving attention.

Don't push yourself. Let it be a restful response to the Lord. Be less concerned with what you do or say in prayer than with what He does

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or says. Trust His doing, saying, or silence. Be relaxedly at home with Him.

Be Emptied

Alone with Him, let Him empty you of your independent self. Look to Him until He brings you to the end of your rebellion, resistance, and resentment. Let Him break your heart that you would dare want to be independent from your Creator and God. Let your independence end, your dependence on Him be renewed. Let tears come if they will. Gladly accept the broken heart and transformed spirit and attitude He gives. Seek to carry it gently into the day.

Ask God to Make You Humble, Needy, and Dependent on Him Alone

Don't expect these heart attitudes to come quickly and easily. Recognize that they are opposite to attitudes you've maintained all your life, the opposite of your fleshly human nature. You'll spend the rest of your time on earth seeing them emerge, as God's grace works in you. Allow the Lord to teach you to be grateful to Him for all He deprives you of, and all the discomfort He sends your way to humble you and make you needy and dependent.

God Desires to Work in Your Life

God is far more eager to reveal Himself to you, to commune with you, and to transform you into His image than you ever could be to have Him do it.

In your quiet times commune with Him in tender-hearted receptivity more than seeking Him in excessive striving. Be less concerned to do than to let Him do. Let God be God in directing your devotional praying after His own pattern from moment to moment and day to day. Also, don't judge the success of your prayer times on the feelings generated.

Acknowledge Your Proper Place of Submission

If you have never placed yourself in an over-all position of willing submission and surrender to almighty God, your pursuit of the God of love will be a farce. However far you are from it now, you need to allow the Lord to bring you to that place of submission. However stubbornly resistant to Him your flesh may still be, you will know that to agree with Him in everything is your only proper stance. Tell Him now that, however poorly you may want to have and maintain this attitude, you really do need Him to work it in you.

Repeatedly Turn from Unacceptable, Destructive Responses

The Word shows negative reactions to be works of the old man, the flesh, the ungodly, independent self. Responses of bitterness, anger, hatred, strife, envy, jealousy, anxiety, and fear to people and our environment are unacceptable. They reveal our lack of trust in God to take care of us and displace the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. God asks that we turn our backs on them:

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”
Ephesians 4:31-32

Whenever tempted to give way to such behaviors, recognize them as destructive and sinful. In your spirit turn to the Lord. Seek quickly to

let Him turn you from resistance to non-resistance, from discontent with Him and your circumstances to contentedness, peace, and rest in Him. Let Him have control. Allow Him to replace your negative response with the corresponding fruit of the Spirit.

However, we must not pretend we don't have such negative responses, or that we will always be able to avoid them. We are not to deny our emotions, but rather to face them for what they are. We are responsible to quit justifying the negative and hurtful behaviors the Word condemns as though they were acceptable. Then we can confess and forsake our harboring of them as the sin it really is. We can be delivered from the curse of being in subjection to them. We may not be able always to avert the first surge of such harmful reactions, but we can disapprove them and seek God's empowering to turn from them.

Give No Place to Pretense

God is the all-pervasive Reality and Truth. He cannot stomach any lie or pretense. Nothing is more destructive of our relationship with the Lord than pretense or unreality. So let your heart long for Him to reveal your true self and expose all dishonesty, cover-up, and pretense. Seek His enabling to turn from it as quickly and fully as He makes possible.

Without Him You Can Do Nothing

If something has any value at all, God originated and empowered it. If He didn't, it doesn't. Do not be deceived for a second. Seek His enabling to live in this truth.

Live at Home in Him and His Love

Live as God enables in the consciousness that He is your loving Papa God, always on the lookout for your welfare. This frees you to live at home in Him, trust Him, rejoice in Him, worship, honor, praise, and thank Him.

Cast yourself on Him in every time of need. Reckon on the reality that as you are in Him, so He is in you. Let His all-sufficient life flow freely in yours as you trustingly rely on Him to freely provide everything you need.

When your life is in His charge, you need not be perturbed or anxious. He is caring for all your concerns, providing His own life to meet all the needs of your life and being, so that you may always live content in Him, His rest and peace, without fear and anxiety. Seek His quiet confidence that He is in control of all your circumstances, working them together for your good and His glory.

We may well doubt our love for Him, but we can never doubt His love for us. It is in His love and tender care that we live and move and have our being. Only in full assurance of His love do we have hope, peace, and joy.

Repeatedly Return to the Place of Sensitivity of Heart to Him

Return to the chapel of your spirit when-ever you find yourself malcontent, restless, stressful, or striving. Return in times of distress or temptation to where the Lord resides and reigns in peace. Relinquish your troubles and needs to Him, as well as your entire life! Accept the peace you find there as His gift of love to you. Seek to live in Him in peaceful non-resistance, not in self-striving. Recognize contentment or peace in the Lord as the monitor of your responsiveness to Him.

Know the Awful Depravity of Your Heart

Until we know the deceitful treachery that lies in the heart even of the re-deemed soul, we'll continue to be unnecessarily victimized by our flesh, our

selves independent of God. Invite the Lord to remove your mask and show you yourself as you really are so you no longer need to pretend or defend. Acknowledging our sin, guilt, failure and need goes a long way toward spiritual release, help, and health.

This will require confession and restitution to men occasionally, as well as repentance toward God, but it must be in recognition of our constant certain failure apart from Him, His mercy, and His transforming power.

Admit Your Spiritual Idolatry

Anything that is dearer to your heart than is the Lord is an idol. Your love for it is spiritual adultery. These idols need to be put to the cross and gladly forsaken for Jesus' sake. Long-entrenched habits may sometimes require the special grace of God for deliverance. Start out by admitting your sinful bondage. Let Him teach you that you don't have the power to deliver yourself. Give Him freedom to use whatever means He will to effect deliverance. Wait in quiet contentment in Him. Peacefully at rest, trust Him to work in your heart the changes necessary to enable you to please Him.

Learn Right Obedience Motives

Obey God because of the desire He works within to please Him, not out of the law's demand. As we mature, there should come times by His grace that we long to die to all that self prefers over God and His perfect will, just that we may give Him pleasure.

God Is Everything

He is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. Your objective is to be united with Him in purpose and love, dependent on Him for everything, independent of Him in nothing. Your great purpose is to praise, honor, and glorify Him alone, to give Him pleasure.

Elevate Him in your heart to the glorious place of total lordship in your life. Become enamored of your God to the extent that no other goal is worthy of your best attention, time, and concern. Let Him be your great life-interest. He should be the major concern of your daily times alone with Him and increasingly of your every thought.

No failure to achieve this objective must be allowed to deter you from continuing to seek always to keep Him as your life center.

Know the Lord to Be Absolutely Trustworthy

He has nothing ever in mind except your best good for all eternity. To think anything less of Him is to malign Him and mistrust His Word in Romans 8:28. We can depend on His loving omnipotence, and on nothing else.

Not finding Him trustworthy incapacitates you for any other spiritual response. Without trust in Him, your love, worship, praise, and thanksgiving will be insincere and just empty words.

Learn to Worship, Praise, and Thank Him

A heart that sings praises, worships, and gives thanks to our loving heavenly Father and almighty God in all things would be a heart to which all things are possible. However, any attempt to work this up is doomed to failure. We come to Him, and come again, and keep on coming, simply seeking only Him. As we do, we find Him giving us a thankful heart and every other good thing. Until He works this holy