

“How to Be Christian Without Trying”

God’s Dream Series

Pastor Rick Shelton

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- If you don’t get the big picture, you will live your Christian life in fragmented ways. You will live a life of “trying and trying” to put it all together. It is fundamentally wrong to “try” to be a Christian.
 - You don’t try to be a Christian... either you are a Christian or you are not.
- Isaiah 53:5 (NKJV) *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.”*
- Look at the words in this and look up the original definitions:
 - wounded - broken
 - transgression - revolt
 - bruised - crushed
 - iniquity - perversity and moral evil
 - chastisement - correction and discipline
 - peace - safety, well being, happiness, health, prosperity, and peace
 - healed - mend by stitching, repair thoroughly, make whole
 - A Paraphrase of the scripture using the original definition:
He was wounded and broken because of our revolt. He was crushed for our perversity and moral evil. The discipline and correction for our safety, wellbeing, happiness, peace, health and prosperity was put upon Him, and because He was beaten, we are healed, mended by stitching, repaired thoroughly and made whole.
 - So many times we look at redemption in a narrow way. That it is just forgiveness and freedom of sins. But it encompasses so much more.
 - God wanted a family to enter into a giving and receiving loving relationship with Him. If love is not chosen by free will then it means nothing. God wanted a people with free will to choose for Him or against Him.
 - When Jesus went to the cross, it was to bring so much more than just forgiveness of sins. The cross came to restore us in all the ways spoken in Isaiah 53:5.
 - God wants your life to be a life of fullness and wholeness. This is the fundamental paradigm of the gospel itself.
- Matthew 1:21 (NKJV) *“He shall save his people from their sins.”*
- This is the prophesy of all that Jesus came to do. He came to “save” his people from their “sins”. Let’s examine those words.
 1. Save (Greek word sozo) – healing, health, prosperity, wellness, completeness, freedom, deliverance, etc.
 2. Sins – to err or miss the mark (as a target) missing the target altogether.
 - You either don’t understand what God wants of you, or you know but aren’t doing it.
 - The only sin is not believing in Jesus, all other sin comes out of a lack of faith in Jesus Christ.
 - How does this happen? As a pastor for 30 years, Pastor Rick has watched Christians who go through the motions, attend church, pray, etc – yet have never come to the place where they are comfortable in God’s love and who they are in Christ. Pastor Rick has seen so many Christians whose lives are filled with frustration, futility, confusion, fears, torments, etc. And somehow we have convinced ourselves this is normal. IT IS NOT.
 - In a nutshell – we need to understand what this relationship with God should be like. Our relationship with God is not to be legalistic.

- Being legalistic means saying things like, I have to pray, I have to read my Bible, I need to do this, I should not do that.
- Our relationship with God must be organic, natural, meaningful, fresh, connected, close, and intimate.
- Connect with God and the relationship becomes beautiful. We still may fight condemnation but when we come back to God, we know He is our “daddy” so we can come to Him in love.
- God is not a bad father – He is a perfect father. He loves us.
- Out of this nature of God, everything flows. This next verse is the “true” organic relationship God desires.

John 15: 4-5 (NKJV) *“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”*

- Abide means to settle down, remain, and make your permanent home.
 - Everything should flow out of our relationship with God.
 - Then out of this we will hear from Him – sometimes as peace, a nudge, or a hunch.
 - (i.e.: spend some time with the Lord, ask Him to speak to you, and then don’t expect some audible voice, just look for a peace on the inside. Then take a step forward. If it feels like there is more peace, keep going. If it feels like there is less peace step back and go a different direction.)
 - Then we respond in obedience to His voice.

John 15:7-8 (NKJV) *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”*

- Once you understand this, you begin to live out of this relationship with God, keeping Him involved in your life. Then after you have read His word enough and meditated on it and prayed over it, it becomes a living reality in your soul and you come alive to this word.
- Once you have accomplished this, then and only then does the second half of this scripture become applicable to your life.
- Prayer has been so completely misunderstood by the world. God gets accused of not answering prayers He had no intention of answering anyway. Because that prayer wasn’t birthed out of a consistency with the laws that God has laid out.
- But God is clear, you must “abide” in Him and “abide” in His word. THEN ask what you will and it shall be done for you.
- We know we have to study and apply ourselves in any other areas of our lives in the natural realm – pro ball, music, banking, etc – In order to grow and reap the benefits of the hard work we have done.
- It is the same in the spiritual realm – we don’t just pray and claim a scripture and expect it to be answered without a real relationship to back it up.
- But when we do have an honest and real relationship with God, then there is an authority that drops into our heart and our prayer carries weight and faith and authority.
- We should live in John 15 for a while until we get it. Then the last verse is so true – we become fruitful disciples.