

Some faith groups believe the Bible promises health, wealth and prosperity for all who live a godly life.

But this teaching is false. Jesus never taught this to his followers. You may experience these blessings in your life, but they are not a reward for godly living. At times we experience tragedy, pain and loss in life. This is not always a result of sin, as some would claim, but rather, for a greater purpose that we may not understand immediately. We may never understand, but we can trust God in these difficult times, and know he has a purpose.

Rick Warren says in his popular book, *The Purpose Driven Life* - "Jesus did not die on the cross just so we could live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: He wants to make us like himself before he takes us to heaven."

1 Peter 1:6-7 *So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honour on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.* (NLT)

5 - Christians always feel close to God

As a new Christian you may feel very close to God. Your eyes have just been opened to a brand new, exciting life with God. However, you should be prepared for

dry seasons in your walk with God. They are bound to come.

A life-long walk of faith requires trust and commitment even when you don't feel close to God. In these verses, David expresses sacrifices of praise to God in the midst of spiritual times of drought:

Psalm 63:1 *[A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.] O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.* (NIV)

Psalm 42:1-3

As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
My tears have been my food
day and night,
while men say to me all day long,
"Where is your God?" (NIV)

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So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. - John 8:36 ASSOCIATION



Five Misconceptions About Being A Christian

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Five Misconceptions About being a Christian

I read a recent article that listed ten misconceptions about being a new Christian. I have chosen to consider five.

New Christians quite often have many misconceptions about God, the Christian life and other believers. This look at the common Misconceptions of Christianity is designed to dispel some of the myths that typically hinder new Christians from growing and maturing in the faith.

1 - Once you become a Christian, God will solve all of your problems

Many new Christians are shocked when the first trial or serious crisis hits. Here's a reality check -- get prepared -- the Christian life is not always easy! You will still face ups and downs, challenges and joys. You will have problems and troubles to overcome.

These two verses offer encouragement for Christians facing difficult situations:

1 Peter 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.*

But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. (NIV)

2 - Becoming a Christian means giving up all fun and following a

life of rules

A joyless existence of mere rule-following is not true Christianity and the abundant life God intends for you. Rather, this describes a man-made experience of legalism. God has amazing adventures planned for you. These verses give a description of what it means to experience God's life:

Romans 14:16-18 *Then you will not be condemned for doing something you know is all right. For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God. And other people will approve of you, too.* (NLT)

1 Corinthians 2:9 *However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" -* (NIV)

3 - All Christians are loving, kind, and perfect people

Well, it doesn't take very long to discover that this is not true. But being prepared to meet the imperfections and failures of your new family in Christ can spare you future pain and disillusionment. Although Christians strive to be like Christ, we will never obtain complete sanctification until we stand before the Lord. In fact, God uses our imperfections to "grow us" in the faith. If not, there would be no need to forgive one another.

As we learn to live in harmony with our new family, we rub each other like sandpaper. It's painful at times, but the result brings about a smoothing and softening to our rough edges.

Colossians 3:13 *"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* (NIV)

Philippians 3:12-13 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead ...* (NIV)

4 - Bad things don't happen to truly good Christians

This point goes along with point number one, however, the focus is slightly different. Often Christians begin to wrongly believe that if they live a good Christian life, God will protect them from pain and suffering. Paul, a hero of the faith, suffered much:

2 Corinthians 11:24-26 *Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers.* (NIV)