

proud but he gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; 1Peter 5:5).

4. Gentleness: It means that we are to have a mild and kind nature or manner about us. We are to exercise sensitivity and discernment when approaching any situation, especially in regard to the needs of others.

5. Patience: We are to be patient or long-suffering to all. Patience is the ability to endure waiting, delay, or provocation without becoming annoyed or upset. We are to be controlled by the Holy Spirit rather than our impatience (Galatians 5:22).

6. Longsuffering: The NIV says we are to 'bear with each other.' The idea here is a willingness to suffer the wrongdoing of others against us. To 'put up with' their idiosyncrasies, so that we can be of help to them. God tolerates sinners, as He holds out to them his offer of love and salvation. We are to do the same (2Peter 3:15).

7. Forgive: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, not holding our sins against us, we are to forgive others. Forgiveness frees us from revenge and bitterness, but not from accountable behaviour. Jesus taught forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35) and lived it (Luke 23:34).

8. Love: Christian love is different from natural love. It always has the idea of sacrificing for others. The giving of oneself in every way that benefits another. God reached out in

love to undeserving sinners, to forgive us and bless us with an eternal relationship with Himself (John 3:16).

The greatest act of love was seen in Jesus dying and giving his life for us. (John 15:12-13). God wants us to love one another with genuine interest and true commitment. The first fruit of the Holy Spirit in us, is love (Galatians 5:22).

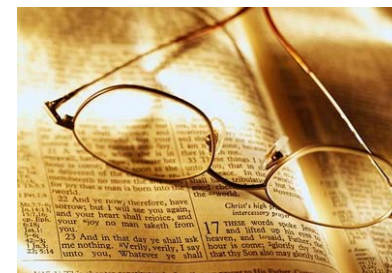
So, how then should a Christian behave? By submitting himself and his will to God's will, as we have just read in his Word. We must learn and practise these qualities until they are seen as Christ-like character in our lives (Ephesians 2:10).

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

How Should A Christian Behave?



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HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BEHAVE?

As Christians we are asked to live to a higher standard because we are representatives of God on Earth.

Everything a Christian does influences what people think of Christ, God and Christians. If you are "in Christ" You are a representative of God, and your behaviour is part of demonstrating your relationship with Him.

Does this mean you will be perfect? No. We all make mistakes and sin.

However, it is important to keep living 'like Jesus', by letting the Holy Spirit lead us (Philippians 2:5).

Look with me at Colossians 3:12 -14, *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity"* (Colossians 3:12 -14).

These Biblical verses contain detailed instruction from God on how Christians should behave.

1. It Helps To Know Who We Are (Colossians 3:12)

By taking the name 'Christian' people reflect Christ, God and the Church. It is vital that we think about 'who we are in Christ'. As we look at what God has done for us we become empowered to be all he wants us to be.

• **We are Chosen:**

Being a believer in Jesus Christ means you are chosen to be part of Jesus' family. Your present purpose and future life is locked in to your new relationship with God and Christ. The Bible says, *"You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your body (life)"* (1Corinthians 6:20).

• **We are Holy:**

The proof that our faith is genuine is our desire for holy living. Holy living is doing what God says we should do. Every Christian is to seek to live a clean, holy or Christlike life.

• **We are Dearly loved:**

We are 'dearly loved' by God. He showers us with unconditional love. This is based on the fact that Jesus has made full atonement for our sins. His love overshadows our every moment. Therefore, we should delight to reflect his love to others.

2. It Helps To Know How We Are To Behave (Colossians 3:12)

Paul tells us to clothe ourselves with

several qualities in order to glorify God. The verb 'clothe' indicates that this is a command requiring immediate action on our part. It is a definitive act we must engage in after we are saved.

He lists certain *inner* attitudes which are to be manifested *outwardly*. We are to clothe or cover ourselves with these attitudes and actions. They are to be our new persona, our Christ-likeness that is evident to all. We are to be transformed in thought, word and action.

The apostle lists eight Christ-like virtues that we, as true Christians, are to manifest in our lives.

1. Compassion: This word is used to describe a heart yearning for the wellbeing of others. The Biblical idea is that when we see another in need, we long to help them (1John 3:17). Jesus was filled with compassion (Matthew 9:36); we should be too (2Corinthians 1:3-4).

2. Kindness: This is the practice of being thoughtful toward others; the tendency to be sympathetic and compassionate. As Christians we are to express to others the grace God has shown us (Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 2:4; Ephesians 2:7; Titus 3:4).

3. Humility: This is the attitude of 'others first' and 'ourselves last'. This means to consider ourselves as being less important. God resists the