

LIFESTYLE

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

Being a Christian is way more than just going to church or being baptized. Taking the name of Christ (CHRISTian) means that you represent Him in all that you do and say. I know that sounds like a heavy responsibility, and it is, but the deeper you know Jesus, the easier it becomes. So what does it look like to live as a representative of Jesus? There are many different areas of life that can represent Him well, or can represent Him poorly. We'll use the Bible to be our guide, and since it talks a lot about a Christian lifestyle, it's a great place to get us started.

1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you _____ or _____ or whatever you _____, do it all for the glory of God."

The Bible says that everything we eat, drink and do either gives glory to God, or it takes away from Him. That means that it matters what we put inside our bodies, even food and drink! That may sound kind of funny, but our physical health and how we choose to use our bodies DOES reflect our Creator. In fact, the Bible talks about what is inside our bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the _____, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your _____."

Our bodies are where God lives...inside our hearts and minds. And so because we are the home of God, it's important to honor Him with what we choose to eat. It may sound funny, but God is actually pretty specific with what He says about what goes into our bodies. Originally, before the flood, God offered Adam and Eve a special diet. Here's what the original diet was:

Genesis 1:29: "Then God said, 'I give you every _____ plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has _____ with seed in it. They will be yours for food.'"

The original diet for humans was made of fruits and veggies! It was a diet that was made to be healthy and nutritious. But then, after sin came into the world, and after the flood happened, Noah and his family get off the ark and there is NOTHING! There are no plants or trees that have fruit with seeds. They have nothing to eat! And so God offers them an alternative food source, meat.

Genesis 9:3: "Everything that _____ and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I [God] now give you everything."

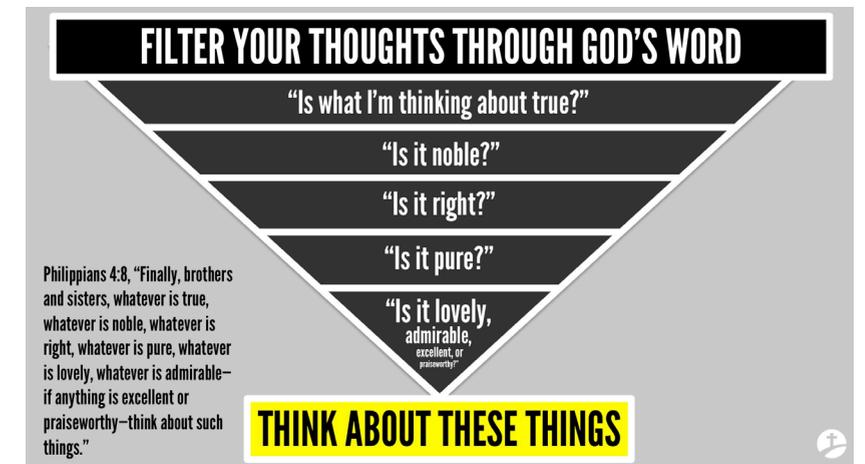
So God allows humans to eat animals in order for them to survive. But, not all animals are the best choice to eat, and God gives some incredible specifics on which animals are better to eat than others. Read through **Leviticus 11** to see the specifics of what clean and unclean meat looks like.

But, a Christian lifestyle goes far beyond what you eat and drink. It's really about everything that you **DO!** And that makes me think about how everything I do either honors and glorifies God, or it doesn't. That means how I act, what I say, where I go, what I watch and listen to, who I spend time with, and how I live all either honors God, or it doesn't.

There's a Bible verse that gives a very broad and yet very specific view of what a Christian should focus on. Here's what it says:

Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is _____, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is _____, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--_____ about such things."

I have always loved this verse as it gives a framework and guideline to living a life that honors God. It doesn't give specifics, but it gives a filter to help you decide if what you are doing is what God would want you to do. Although some things are so blatantly wrong, the way our society spins things, we often times need something that will guide and direct us as we strive to live a Christian lifestyle.



This filter really helps when it comes to all the different specifics that we may face like what we watch on tv, what we listen to, what kind of books we read, what words we choose to say, and all other aspects of life.

BASIC POINT

God cares about us enough to tell us how to live the **best lifestyle** ever!

And I think it's cool that He even tells us specifics all over the Bible...

Like what we watch with our eyes:

Psalms 101:3, "I will not set before my eyes anything that is _____."

Like what we say:

Ephesians 4:29, "Do not let any unwholesome _____ come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others _____ according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Psalms 34:13, "...Keep your _____ from evil and your lips from telling lies."

Like everything that we do:

Romans 12:2, "Do not _____ to the pattern of this world, but be _____ by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Living a life that honors God isn't the easiest. In fact, if we aren't careful and don't think about everything that we do, it is easy to live a life that no one would even know that we love Jesus! It takes effort and a humble heart to ask the Holy Spirit to guide your choices and decisions for all that you do.

One of my favorite Bible verses talks about this as it says,

Matthew 5:16: "So let your light shine before men that they may see your _____ works and praise your Father in Heaven."

There is another piece of a Christian lifestyle that also builds our faith in God as He works in life. It's what we do with our money! Do you often feel like you don't have enough money? I know I catch myself wishing I could buy something if I only had the money. I believe that's the Devil's way of making us discontent, and when we aren't content with our situation, we tend to not represent God very well. I think that God knew that being content would be a struggle for all of us, and so He gave us a way to become generous and grow a generous heart. He called it Tithe. Tithe is the same as ten percent. God laid this out to His chosen people.

Leviticus 27:32: "Every _____ of the herd and flock—every _____ animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the Lord."

It's a tenth of our increase, or anything that we gain. So, whenever we get a paycheck, God asks that the first 10% be given to Him and for His work. It's not like He needs our money, but it's really for us. It's for our hearts to become giving hearts that aren't focused on receiving but giving.

I love how God describes someone that lives a Christian life including how they give. He says,

2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each of you should _____ what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a _____ giver."

God gives us the opportunity to give back to Him with the money that He's blessed us with. He asks for 10%, but often times, many people feel like it's not enough!

My family and I have decided that because of the uncountable blessings that God has given us, that we want to give more than just what He asks. So, in order to help our hearts grow deeper and more generous, we give an offering too! There isn't a specific amount that God asks for when it comes to offering, but we usually give about 5% of our income. It may not be a lot of money, but it makes a huge impact on our lives as we strive to be cheerful givers.

Living a life that honors God can be difficult. It can feel like a burden, but as you ask God to help you know how to live that kind of life, the Holy Spirit will guide you and direct you in the areas where you need change. And then it no longer is a burden to represent God, but it's a delight to honor Him! I find it very rewarding to know that my choices can directly affect how someone sees God. What an honor!

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God is pretty specific with us on how to live a Christian Lifestyle?
 2. Is it hard for you to live up to His life? Why?
 3. What do you think about tithe and offering?
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LESSON 11: LIFESTYLE

