

5 Vital Instructions Every Spirit-Filled Believer Must Embrace

When we think of commands or instructions in Scripture, we automatically think of the Ten Commandments.

There are commands all throughout Scripture. The Bible is God's way of communicating Himself to us. Through the Bible we get to know God, His character, His plan for our lives, and what He wants from us as His disciples.

This is why throughout the Bible we see these life lessons and instructions mingled between the stories of great heroes of the faith and the life of Jesus.

If we want to be true disciples of Jesus Christ we must read Scripture. We must study Scripture.

I fear that many people who have become Christians view this decision the same way they view becoming a Sam's Club member: They signed their name, they got a membership card and they got some cool benefits out of it.

Becoming a Christian is way more than just signing our name on a church membership form and getting an "I'm a Christian" badge that comes with some really cool benefits—like escaping hell.

The prayer of salvation was just the first step.

Christianity isn't club membership; it's a lifestyle of discipleship and dedication to God's will and God's Word, and the only way we understand what true discipleship is and means is if we study His Word.

Among the many commands and instructions in Scripture, we see

five very important ones in the book of Romans.

5 Instructions for Every Believer

As get to the end of Romans, let us remember that Paul opened this vitally important letter by reminding us that Christians are not better than anyone else.

We are all equally lost without a Savior.

We are all equally in need of the same grace.

And often we, through our passive participation, still approve of the same sin that nailed Jesus to the cross.

He then moved on to remind us why salvation is important and the depth of its meaning. He reminded us that the Law—while important to lead us to the Savior—cannot save us. But that the work of Christ purchased for us a whole new identity.

Now he is wrapping up this letter by letting us know how we, as disciples of Christ with a whole new identity, should live.

Because if we call ourselves after Christ's name and have been given a new identity, we should also begin developing new behavior patterns.

1. Be Renewed in Your Mind

"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

The only way we will move from being a convert to being a disciple of Jesus Christ with a new identity and new behavior patterns is if we begin actively renewing our mind.

We renew our mind by reading, studying, memorizing and

meditating on Scripture.

As God's Word is truly "hidden in our heart"; when it becomes the hub of our life—the central part of our life that holds everything together and causes all the parts of our life to move with precision—we will begin to see our life conform to its principles and precepts.

Our old worldview will submit to God's worldview. Our actions will submit to God's instructions.

2. Be Christlike

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).

Actually, the whole passage of Romans 12:9-21 is a set of instructions in Christ-like behavior:

- Love without hypocrisy
- Hate evil
- Cling to good
- Love and honor one another,
- Fervently serve the Lord
- Rejoice in hope
- Be patient in trials
- Pray steadfastly
- Be generous with one another
- Bless those who persecute you
- Be joyful with those who are joyful, bear the sorrows of those who grieve
- Be unified as a body—don't elevate your opinions or allow your knowledge to make you arrogant
- Don't retaliate
- Live at peace with all men
- **3. Be Submitted to Governmental Authority**

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God,

and those that exist are appointed by God” (Rom. 13:1).

I am often shocked and dismayed by what I see Christians post on Facebook regarding our president. And not just President Trump. I was equally shocked and dismayed by some Christians’ behavior toward President Obama.

It doesn’t matter what party you support or what candidate you voted for, the man or woman who currently occupies the seat of the president is the one we should submit to.

Notice here that Paul gives no qualifiers for their personal moral code, for their political opinions, for their behavior. As we read on, we see: “So it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for the sake of conscience” (Rom. 13:5).

I fear that at times in our fight for justice and morality, we become a bad testimony because we fail to do so while honoring Scriptural command at the same time.

Being subject to authority and maintaining our moral and biblical convictions are on mutually exclusive. And we don’t prove the level of our convictions by how much we speak out against our president’s and politicians’ behavior or political platform.

Remember those who were the political leaders in Paul’s day.

4. Be Loving With One Another

“Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8).

When you look at the Ten Commandments, you can divide them into two categories:

- Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength
- Love your neighbor as yourself

In fact, every command in Scripture falls into one of these two categories, "... for he who loves another has fulfilled the law."

It's quite simple.

And from this verse, Paul goes on for two more chapters to talk about love:

- Don't allow yourself to get embroiled in needless debates (diet, personal convictions, which day we observe as the Lord's day)—it destroys the love and unity of the body.
- Don't judge another Christian because of their personal convictions. They are living to the Lord, and you are being a stumbling block.
- Don't judge another because you have a personal conviction. You are judging and will be judged.
- Don't allow your opinions to get in the way of unity. This destroys the work of God.
- Be patient and support those who are weak in the faith. We are one body, and if the strong don't support the weak, then the whole body is weak.

Paul is calling the church to a life of mutual respect and honor.

Those who have a personal conviction about a behavior or food shouldn't feel demeaned because of that conviction. Those who don't have that particular conviction need to honor those who do and encourage them to remain obedient to the Lord.

However, those who have a personal conviction about a behavior or food shouldn't judge those who don't as being weak or carnal. Their conviction is personal

between them and God, and those who don't possess such a conviction shouldn't be given a burden God didn't mean for them to carry. They should be respected and honored, and those with their personal conviction should encourage and edify them to walk in freedom.

5. Be clothed in Christ

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Rom. 13:14).

- Paul is emphasizing here that what we wear says a lot about who we are.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us take off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly, as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in immorality and wickedness, not in strife and envy" (Rom. 13:12-13).

People can tell a lot about us from how we dress: whether we are indulgent or thrifty, whether we have a lot of money or not, whether we care about ourselves or not.

Our clothing also tells a lot about our tastes: when we wear T-shirts with our favorite singers on them, a funny quote, a provoking statement or a cartoon character.

Paul is instructing us to put on clothing that depicts who we are.

Our behavior is our clothing—and he is reminding us that those things we do or don't do clearly reveal who we are and with whom we identify ourselves.

- If we entertain ourselves the way the world entertains itself
- If we participate in the same activities the world participates in

- If we use the same language the world uses
- If we respond in the same way the world responds
- If we hold the same philosophies the world holds

What do these things say about who we are and our identity?

It is time to cast off our old identity and our old clothing and start depicting who we really are! We need to put the armor of light because we are children of light!

Don't let your old clothing dim your light. {eoa}

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