

## 1 Living Beyond Self means recognizing the emptiness of this world

Jesus said, “*Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness*” (John 8:12). These simple words teach you to imitate His life and character. Living Christ’s life must be the focus of your life if you want to have an amazing relationship with God. Living in the light means you’re free from spiritual blindness.

The good news of Jesus Christ is higher than all human understanding, religious and otherwise. Those who follow the leading of the Holy Spirit learn this and discover the *true* Bread of Life. Sadly, many hear the good news taught by Jesus, but it doesn’t change them. They choose not to walk by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It doesn’t have to be this way! You can know deeply in your heart the living words of Christ. This kind of knowing comes from choosing to mold your life completely and uncompromisingly to the life of Christ. Keep in mind that a deep spiritual life doesn’t come through head knowledge alone. What good is it to you, or anyone else, if you can debate the beliefs about the Trinity and yet you are not a humble person? Lack of humility is displeasing to the Triune God. Big words and spiritual arguments do not make you right with God. Love and obedience please God. True spiritual

conviction is more important than understanding the definition of a big religious word. Knowing the whole Bible by heart and understanding the teachings of world-renowned philosophers mean nothing if you don't truly know the love of God and live a grace-filled life.

You must believe that the Christ-filled life is the only real life. It is a selfish waste of time to seek the world's recognition, the affirmation of people, and positions of influence. It's a selfish waste of time to focus your thoughts and plans on how to please your sinful desires. Besides, you'll only suffer from guilt and its consequences by doing this. It's a selfish waste of time to worry about living a long life when you have no clue how to live an abundant life. It's a selfish waste of time to worry only about what is going on in your life right now without having a greater vision of what God wants to do in and through your life. It's a selfish waste of time to desire anything that is not part of God's purpose for you, whether it is a person, a plan, or a possession. These things are only temporary.

Be eager to love those things that are part of God's purpose, because that is where you'll find everlasting joy! As often as you need to—daily, hourly, or every minute—remind yourself of this truth: *"The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing"* (Ecclesiastes 1:8). The things of this world only make you happy for a moment. If you try to find lasting happiness in them, you'll end up empty and craving more—like an addict. Quit trying to make the visible things of this world meet your need. Turn to the invisible reality of God's gracious care, which is more real than what your five senses (taste,

touch, smell, hearing, and sight) tell you. Those who try to please their five senses alone end up trying to please themselves, but this stains their conscience and loses God's favor.



## 2 Living Beyond Self means keeping a humble perspective about yourself

It's natural for humans to desire knowledge. But what good is knowledge if you aren't in awe of God's knowledge? A humble farmer that serves God is better off than a proud thinker who neglects his or her own soul in order to become an expert scholar. The person who knows himself or herself well grows in humility and doesn't seek the praise of other people for his or her identity. If you know all things in the world but do not understand how to love selflessly, what good will that do you when you stand before God—the One who will judge you by what you have done with your knowledge. Turn away from the pursuit of getting knowledge for its own sake. This will sidetrack you from what is most important and make you a prideful person. Many scholars love degrees, awards, and to be sought out as experts. There is a lot you can learn which is of little use to your spiritual life. It's unwise to pursue these things with more passion and interest than you do your relationship with God. New ideas alone will not satisfy your soul. Only a good life brings peace of mind and a clean conscience and assures you of peace with God.