

The Christian Life in Biblical Perspective  
7 Essentials Of the Christian Life – The Effective Christian Life Is Purposed  
Romans 12:1-2

By: Dr. Harry Reeder  
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We are beginning our new series on the Seven Essentials of the Effective Christian Life and I am looking forward to walking through this with you in the coming weeks. Also let me encourage you to make the Lord's Day evening a regular part of your life and your family gathering with God's people. It's a great time to do it, not only are the children's choir beginning but also we'll be starting another new series. It is one that I have been looking forward to preaching on the book of Daniel. It is Daniel's six memorable memoirs and his six messages and that will start this evening. Daniel and Zechariah are a real key for understanding the New Testament in general but the book of Revelation in particular so you'll want to come for this foundational study in Daniel. Now let's look at our text for this study in Romans 12.

Romans 12:1, 2 says, *I I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

The grass withers and the flower fades. This is the Word of our God. It abides forever, by God's grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

I am not trying to hype a series but I believe the sermons in this series on the Seven Essentials of the Effective Christian Life, by God's grace can be life changing for all of us, each and every one of us and I know of nothing more crucial than this very first one which is living my life purposed for Christ. What is that purpose? I realize with a series like this there are a couple of assumptions that I have made that may be dangerous. In fact, they are dangerous to make. So I am telling you upfront they are assumptions but I don't want you to make an assumption.

Whenever you start a series on the effective Christian life assumption one is that you are a Christian because you can't live a Christian life without being one. You don't live a Christian life to be a Christian. You live a Christian life because you're a Christian. So that's a dangerous assumption for me that you are one. One may be thinking, "Well, Harry I'm here at church." That doesn't make you a Christian. "Harry I've been baptized." That doesn't make you a Christian. A Christian is someone who has said, "I know Jesus Christ is the Son of God and He has done for me what I could not do for myself. What I have done for myself is produce a debt of sin and its payment before God but Jesus Christ has come and paid that debt for me and offers me the gift of Himself and eternal life and I have now received Christ as my Lord and Savior."

So let me stop here. If you have never made that commitment to Christ, please do not let this day go by, even this moment without saying, "Jesus, here I come just as I am, without one plea but Your blood has been shed for me." This is how you put your trust in Him.

The second assumption is as a Christian you want to live an effective life for Christ. You don't want to just pass through life being mediocre. You really want to hear

from the Lord, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” And you want to live this effective life for Christ which means by God’s grace you have been liberated from what is now plaguing not liberal, nominal Christian churches but evangelical Christian churches which is this notion that Jesus is this cosmic genie that went to the cross so that I could rub the bottle of religion and it’s all about me. So you actually by God’s grace have said, “No, my life has been bought by Christ. I have been brought to Christ and now I am in Christ, therefore this life I live, I not only want it to be effective but I want it to be effective for Christ. My Christianity is not is Jesus effective for me, I believe that. My Christian life is now I effectively am His. Wherever I’m not Lord please show me.” Those are the assumptions that are made; that you belong to Christ and that you want to live an effective life for Christ where Christ is your life.

So where do we start? I can tell you that I believe this series is going to be life transforming for you for a couple of reasons and not the least of which it is already doing in my life in preparing for it. Another reason why is I will not be bringing any innovation where nothing in this series is original. In fact, you will find out pretty quickly that I’m going back to the 1500 and 1600’s to start this series where God’s men who had been called by Him said, “What’s the first thing you need to nail down about your life as a Christian?” They came up with a teaching tool about how to live an effective life for Christ. They said the very first thing you need to nail down is what is the chief end or purpose of man? Why am I here? They answered, God made you, God saved you and God keeps you for this reason; that you might glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.

So the question is what is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. In other words, the Gospel is the good news that we who were lost have been found and been brought to Him. It is the Gospel of God. He has bought us to bring us to Him that we might glorify and enjoy Him forever. There are four things that all of us want to know and they are; who am I, where did I come from, where am I going, why am I here. So who am I? We are always asking that question. We will shake hands with somebody and say, “Hi there, and you are?” “I’m Harry Reeder, a pastor.” It’s amazing how many times we go to what we do to say who we are. I’m hoping that will change after this study. I’m hoping that you will not be identified by what you do or what you have or what you own or what people say about you but you will say, “I belong to Christ and Christ belongs to me. I am His and He is mine.” That’s who I hope you are.

Secondly, where did I come from? Am I just a chance collision of atoms and cells dividing and coming back together and mutating? Here’s me, here’s a turtle, here’s a lizard, here’s a maggot, here’s this and here’s that and by the way, I’m one of these chance things here. Where did I come from? Have I been designed by the hand of God in His image and put over His creation to glorify and enjoy Him forever? Who am I? Where did I come from?

Thirdly, where am I going? A day is coming. We know there is an eternity. God has put eternity in the heart of a man. We know its there. We know we’re not a cosmic accident. We know that there’s something significant by the hand of God that He’s done and there’s a significant purpose as to why I’m here. We sense that and we know that and where am I going, but here’s the fourth question.

Why am I here? Why did God make me? Why did God sustain me? Why did God save me? Those are three great acts of God. God creates, God redeems, and God

sustains. We call it creation, redemption and providence. God made us. God saved us from our sins and God upholds us by the Word of His power. Now why does God sustain me? Why did God save me? Why did God make me? It was for His glory and your joy in Him forever.

The writer of Romans, Paul of course, led by the Spirit of God brings this, I believe, as the pivotal verse in Romans but its pivotal in your life and my life. In the book of Romans you have three chapters where Paul is telling us everybody is lost in sin and they can't save themselves. He sums up the first three chapters with this statement in Romans 3:23; *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Then the Apostle Paul says God has given a solution to our situation but God demonstrated His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, while we were enemies and helpless Christ died for the ungodly. So here is this glorious message from Romans 4 all the way through Romans 11 of the Gospel of grace where we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We are delivered from the power of sin, penalty of sin and position of sin. We're being delivered from the practice of sin and one day we will be delivered from the presence of sin.

Romans 8:29-39 says, **29** *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ and in Him we are more than conquerors. What a glorious Gospel message! Now, that leads to a Gospel life. But before Paul ever gets to the Gospel life he gives us the foundation of that Gospel life. Romans 12:1 starts out, *"I appeal (urge) to you therefore, brothers..."* Stop right here. As Bible students would be taught whenever you see the word 'therefore' you ask what is it there for? The 'therefore' attaches what is about to be said to what has already been said. What has already been said? You're lost. You can't save yourself. Jesus saves you from your sins and brings you from your sins to Himself and you are accepted in the Beloved One. You are assured of that everlasting life through Him who loves you, holds you, keeps you and has saved you. So how did the Apostle Paul finish up this glorious exposition of the Gospel that saves us from our sins?

This is found in Romans 11:33-36 which says, **33** *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his*

*counselor?” 35 “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. So be it, forever. In light of this salvation it is of Him, He did it. It is from Him, because He loved us and it is to Him that I have been saved. In light of this which is beyond my understanding I can’t be His counselor, I’m not giving Him anything He hasn’t given me, His ways are beyond me, His thoughts are not my thoughts, He is beyond finding out and He is inscrutable. I can scrutinize but I can’t get hold of it completely. God is too much. Therefore what is the response to Him? To Him be the glory forever amen.*

Therefore, in light of God’s mercies I urge you. How do I give Him glory, to whom, from whom, and for whom are all things? I urge you, not for God’s mercy because that’s been done in Jesus, but in light of God’s mercies, in light of my salvation by grace, not for my salvation but for my Savior who has done all things necessary for me; in light of that what do I do? Romans 12:1 says, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”* This presenting of your body, your life and everything that you are comes from inside from Him who has done it all in you, to you and through you. Because of what He has done this is my worship. My life is worship and it’s for Him.

It’s not “I have Jesus for my family.” It’s my family is for Jesus. It’s not “I have Jesus for my children.” It’s my children are for Jesus. It’s not “I have Jesus for my job.” It’s my job is for Jesus. It’s not that I have a spiritual gift simply from Jesus. I now give all in what He gave me to Jesus. For to me to live is Christ as a man, a husband, as a father, as a citizen, as a member of the body of Christ, as a worshiper, as an evangelist, as a discipler. It is of Him, from Him, and unto Him. All things are there and it’s all an act of worship and praise to God. It’s all a statement of adoration and exaltation of Christ. It’s all to life Him up and enjoy Him forever. I have been saved to live an effective Christian life that is intentional. It is for the glory of God alone that He be lifted up. It is for Him alone that this life is to be lived.

Just in case we don’t get it, the Apostle Paul gives it to us in many places but before we leave text, in the rest of the book of Romans Paul will talk about how you love one another, you and your family, you and the church, you as a citizen, being a Christian man and woman, the fruit of the Spirit, the Christian family, the Christian life, the Christian and the spiritual gifts, Paul will run the whole gamut in Romans 12 through 16 but what he is doing in this pivotal text is, in light of being saved by faith alone, through grace alone, through Christ alone, everything I’m now about to tell you to do you do it as worship and praise to God. It’s all for Him. It’s not about me. Not unto us O Lord but to Thine own name give glory and honor and power forever more. It’s not that You’re enough to get me through so that I can enjoy these things. No, You are my joy and every joy that I have from You which is ten thousands upon ten thousands is only joyful because of You. None of these joys rival You or add to my joy in You and none of these things will I glory in but You alone. So this text is pivotal. Everything I do in and for Christ is set up in this text.

It is a life that is intentional that we glorify God by living a life of worship and praise to God in all that we do and say and in all that we acknowledge. So he emphasizes this. One text that this is emphasized is in Ephesians 1. Here the Apostle Paul does this doxological praise. This is one sentence with 227 words. I know in your Bible it’s

divided into a lot of sentences and paragraphs and that's just to kind of help you through it. When Paul wrote it, it was one sentence and he couldn't stop long enough to put a period. That doesn't mean it isn't chaotic. In fact, there is an amazing order to this sentence. I will bring out verses 3 through 6 and in these verses he will show that God the Father has authored your salvation and he will tell you why. Then in verses 7 through 12 he will tell you that Jesus the Son of God has accomplished your salvation and he'll tell you why. Then in verses 13 and 14 he will tell you that the Holy Spirit has applied that salvation and he'll tell you why.

So look at what he says in Ephesians 1:3-6 says, **3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,** (Why did God the Father author our salvation sovereignly and decreed it from all eternity out of His love?)

**6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.** The Greek word for blessed is where we get doxology, praise and worship from. He uses this word three times in this opening verse. God has blessed us, why? He has blessed us for His glory. That's why God the Father did that. Then God the Son comes to accomplish what God the Father has authored.

So let's continue in this passage. Ephesians 1:7-14 says, **7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.** (So what about the Holy Spirit?) **13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,** (Why did the Holy Spirit do that?) **to the praise of his glory.**

Why did God make me? It was for His glory. Why did God author my salvation through His Son and the Holy Spirit apply that salvation? It was for His glory. Why does God uphold me? Why does God give me my next breath? It is for His glory that I might live worship, adoration and exaltation to lift Him up. It is for Him is why His Son came, His Spirit brought me and the Father sent Them. It is that I might live that men and women may see Him in me, my family, my job, my school, my classroom, my friends, my words, in everything whether I eat or drink or whatsoever I do for His glory. I'd love to see that.

While I was gone I was handed an article by one of our young folks. In fact, I was given two things. One had to do with one of our young folks having an academic achievement where they were honored and the other had an athletic achievement they were honored for and in both of the articles they found a way to sneak in, "it's about Jesus." Praise the Lord. It was of Him, from Him and unto Him. It was every chance for them to get all the adulation but they did everything they could to get in and through and

they said it in such a way that the journalist has to acknowledge it. That it was for His glory.

So you have to be intentional because Paul says don't be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may manifest that which is good and acceptable, the perfect will of God. You have to be intentional about this because the world doesn't want you to give God the glory and it doesn't want your joy to be in Him. The world says, "Put your joy here because it's all about a pair of jeans. It's all in a video game. It's all in a different hair cut. It's all in what you own. It's all in what people say about you." The world keeps trying to take you away from God's glory and to the glory it gives which is no glory. Jesus said, "You can't understand Me because you seek the glory of men. I seek the glory of My Father." That's why the Father says, "In My Son I take pleasure." So Lord, we don't let the world conform us here and the world keeps telling us "joy is here...get drunk, have a party, immoral sex, perverse sex, promiscuous sex." Joy is in the Lord.

Then you have to be on guard within the church because even the church will fall prey to the world to take our joy away from the Lord. They'll say, "The joy is in your spiritual gifts. If you have this gift you'll really be joyful. The joy is in this or that." Even the good things of the Lord are put in place of the Lord instead of enjoyed of the Lord, for the Lord and by the Lord. So you have to be intentional.

The second thing is it's also relational. Do you know why Jesus saved you? It wasn't to take you to heaven, that's a benefit. It was to bring you to God. The Apostle Paul knew and understood this. He shows us this in Philippians 1. Paul says, "I'm going to rejoice as I give glory to God, as my life is worship to God, I will rejoice in the Lord." He says "Rejoice in the Lord always" in Philippians 4 but look what it says in Philippians 1:18-23; **18** *What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,* **19** *for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,* **20** *as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.* **21** *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* **22** *If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.* **23** *I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.* He had a little taste of this on the road to Emmaus but now he wants to go be with Him.

Paul says, "I want to depart to be with Him. Now if He wants me to stay that my life is in Christ for you, then I'll do it." So the effective Christian life is relational. The Gospel of saving grace in Jesus Christ is life transforming, life saving, soul satisfying, sin erasing, righteousness giving, mind renewing, why? It is so that I might present myself in joy to Him who is my joy and my life might worship Him in every sphere, every responsibility, every relationship and none of the joys of this world that He has purchased and given to me do I need. I only need Him. What He gives me I will enjoy in Him and for Him. Thank You, Lord, for my wife and children. Thank You, Lord, for all these ten thousands of joys. Thank You for a taste palette. Thank You for a body that can function. Thank You for all of these things but I don't thank You because without them I can't live for You. I thank You because You are enough. You are my joy, You are my life, You are everything for me. Now Lord, these things that You have given me I'll

enjoy them for You and unto You. I will worship You with them. I now bring them to You, You who gave them to me because You are enough.

I want to give you three life takeaways. The first takeaway is on living our life with one purpose where the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever but notice it has two objectives but one purpose. I am very grateful for these sermons of Jonathan Edwards where he emphasized this and of course the work of John Piper which is renewed and made applicable for our age from what Jonathan Edwards said. We look at this and see the chief *end* of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him where it looks like two objectives and we think “O I guess the writers of the Westminster Confession must have made a mistake. They meant to say the chief *ends* of man...” No, they said it the way they meant to say it. I have one purpose in life which is to glorify God and enjoy Him and the more I enjoy Him the more I will glorify Him. The more I glorify Him the more I will enjoy Him. One theologian put it this way – the chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever and the chief end of man is to enjoy Him forever by glorifying Him. The more I am satisfied in Christ alone, the more my joy will flow unbounded. The more my joy flows unbounded the more I’ll glorify Him. When I am satisfied in Christ alone He is my joy, then I can glorify Him. When I glorify Him alone then my joy is beyond comprehension.

Your joy is not sin. It is only sinful to find our joy anywhere other than Jesus. If you don’t pursue your joy in Christ you’ll destroy your ability to give glory to God. If you don’t desire to glorify God then you’ll never find the joy of Him who has loved you and loves you and has loosed you from your sins. It is two categories not two objectives. There is one objective and that is to glorify God and enjoy Him. The more I glorify Him the more I will enjoy Him. The more I enjoy Him the more I will glorify Him.

This is football season so I would like to use a football illustration here. In August I was away for a week and I remember smelling the grass and thinking of my days in High School playing football and my line coach, Baker Hood. There was a running back Coach and a head Coach in which I never had the chance to talk with them but I remember showing up my sophomore year having to run the 40 yard dash. When I ran it, it was not a dash, believe me. A 40 yard lumber would have been more like it. When everybody else finished they called out their time but when I finished they laughed and then pointed to where the line coach was. So I went over there. This is what Coach Baker Hood said every year; “Three things boys – one, know your job and execute, two, at every play run to the ball and three, play to the whistle. Don’t quit.”

What does it mean for me to execute as a Christian? For me to execute is not simply ‘be the right husband, father, pastor, preach the sermons, pray, worship, evangelize, disciple’ but what it means for me to execute is in everything glorify and enjoy my Savior. The more I enjoy Him, the more I will glorify Him in every sphere of life. The more I glorify Him the more I’ll enjoy Him through the pleasures of life and in the God gifted suffering in life that I might enjoy Him, that I might glorify Him. Whether in life or death, to me to live is Christ that in this body Christ will not be put to shame but in this body He might allow me to lift Him up. If He is lifted up He will draw all men to Himself.

If that is what it means to execute, what does it mean to run to the ball? Life takeaway number two is to keep the main thing the main thing. Never let good things replace the Main thing. Yes, I am concerned that God would get you to glory in

something other than Jesus. I am concerned that God would get you to glory in all kinds of things other than Jesus, from drink to illicit sex, to all of those things. I'm afraid that you will buy into the vanity of the emptiness of the things of this world as Satan brings it and masquerades it and tells you its joy. I'm afraid you'll think that you'll find joy in a dark night alone with a computer, surfing through and looking at those things that ought not to be looked at. I am also concerned with you and I who would say, "Lord, keep me from that. My joy must be virtuous. What I glory in must be right." I am fearful that we will take those good things – spiritual gifts, worship, evangelism, disciple making, His church – and put them in place of the Main thing and the Main thing is Christ alone is enough and He's my joy. In Him I glory and I want Him to be lifted up in my worship, in my evangelism, with my spiritual gifts, in my family, all of those things that I thank God for do not rival Him. I do not boast in, or live for and by the way I can even live without them because He is my life, my joy and He is enough.

I want to look at one final verse found in 1 Peter 3 to see what Christ has done. 1 Peter 3:18 says, "*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...*" Why was Jesus put to death in the flesh? Why did Jesus pay for my sins? It wasn't to take me to heaven because that's a benefit. It was to bring me to God. God came for me to bring me to Him. Now He is my life, my joy, my glory and that brings me to the final, crucial word of encouragement that really is an exhortation.

Sadly, we have within us this insatiable thing that we try to make the grandest, gloriest things of our Lord into us and we try to make it all about us. Here's the way we think. God gave His Son that I might have life. God gave His Son that I might have eternal life. If God gave His Son that I might have eternal life, boy that must mean I'm somebody. I'd like to rephrase what another pastor has said but in the same gist, "God did not give His Son to make much of us. God gave His Son to allow us to make much of Him." God gave His Son that we, having been rescued can now make much of Him. He is our life, our joy and our glory.

Dear God, please allow me for this Savior who gave so much for me, who died on the cross to pay for all of my sins for all of eternity, please, don't let me take that and lift me up. Please let me grasp that You are my joy and You are lifted up. You have sent Your Son to bring me to You now You are my life. This is why I was made, saved and kept. I will run to the ball. I will play to the whistle, until the trumpet blows and I go to be with Him. Lord, until then my life is worship. May my life be a sermon that proclaims the glory of God in Christ even though it will falter with this frail sinful life that I'm living. May my life be a song of worship and praise to my Savior even though the notes will not always be clear because of my sins, my failings and my frailties. May my life be an offering of praise to You even though what I bring You brought to me. O Christ, may my life be worship to You as I rejoice in You forever. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all of you here below and may God alone be praise and may your joy in Him be full. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, everything that we are going to study in this series flows from our understanding that life is doxology, blessed, praise be to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. So Father if anyone reading this has not yet come to this Christ as Lord and Savior



may they come today. May all who are reading this who know Christ as Lord and Savior ask You, "Lord, give me this life in Christ, for Christ that it is Christ" and dear Savior, may this life effectively be a praise statement, may my life be a sermon, a song and an offering, may my life be a worship forever to You. You are my life, my joy and my glory. O Lord, speak to my heart. Praise God. All the people praise His Name, Amen.