

# Christ makes us active

# Ephesians

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## Introduction

The person who trusts in the Lord, who has been brought to new life in him, is active in doing the will of the Lord.

Read together **Psalm 112**, taking note of the actions of the believer whose heart is secure in the Lord.

A sign of life is activity. When activity ceases—when the heart is no longer pumping, the blood is no longer circulating, the lungs are no longer taking in air and brain activity has ceased—a person is no longer alive.

Jesus has given us life and brought us together. Now we need nourishment, activity and exercise in Christ in order to thrive. Jesus tells us that he wants us to bear much fruit, showing ourselves to be his disciples (John 15:8). The only way that we can do this is if we remain connected to our Savior and Lord. Christ's connection with us enables us to remain vibrant and active disciples of Jesus.

## Search the Scriptures

### *Active in the world*

Read **Ephesians 2:8-10**. Look back up to Ephesians 2:1-5, and cross-reference **1 Corinthians 12:3**. Why is it incorrect for a person to say that faith is a person's own contribution to his salvation?

According to Ephesians 2:10, once we have been saved, what is it that God wants us to do?

Since I'm saved by grace, through faith alone, why am I still concerned with good works? See **James 1:22-27**.

God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness. The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel highlights a different aspect of their behavior (in addition to their sexual perversion) which displeased God. Read **Ezekiel 16:49-50**. Describe similarities in attitudes found among us (not out there in society, but among *us* today).

### *Active in the body of Christ*

Read **Ephesians 4:11-13**. What is the aim of pastors and teachers?

What is the purpose of these works of service in the church?

What is the ultimate goal?

Every time you sit in church you participate in worship with people sitting all around you. Do you think about their spiritual needs? Expand on your answer.

When you see someone falling away from Jesus or exhibiting a weakness of faith, how do you respond?

React to this statement: *The spiritual issues of other people are a private matter, in which I have no business personally interfering.*

Using Jesus' life and ministry as a model, discuss ways to develop spiritual relationships with other Christians in your congregation, focusing on sharing truths and solving problems on the basis of God's Word.

### *Active in growth*

Read **Ephesians 4:14-16**. How does the Apostle Paul describe the spiritually immature?

With no firm anchor, what happens to the faith of the immature?

*Consider:* A compass is a useful tool for navigating. A compass is only helpful because it points to an external reference, *i.e.*, the earth's magnetic north pole. A compass that pointed to itself would be worthless. What is a Christian's external reference? Why would an inward-pointing spiritual compass be worthless for navigating through life?

Can you offer some reasons why Christians may not read and study the Bible regularly?

What are some factors in your life that keep you from having more contact with God's Word?

When we don't study Holy Scripture, our thinking soon becomes directed by natural human thinking and behavior, selfish and worldly thoughts, and secular ideas. Can you think of some non-biblical ideas that are practiced and accepted among Christians?

If we are not regular students of God's Word, what will our response likely be to attractive, worldly, false notions about faith and life?

*Respond to this objection:* Christianity must be a very weak philosophy if it constantly needs reinforcing. The fact that we need constant exposure to the Bible's teaching or we will lose our faith means that Christianity cannot stand on its own, and people must be continuously indoctrinated to stay in the faith.

### ***Active in sharing***

Read **Ephesians 3:7-11**. Through whom is the wisdom of God made known?

Since you have received the knowledge of Christ, what is now your privilege and responsibility?

## **Summary**

Read **John 15:1-17**. Every living thing either grows or dies. It is either growing stronger or growing weaker. What is the key to your remaining alive and growing?

Identify some practical steps you can take in your life toward achieving this growth.

## **Your walk with God**

For this section you may wish to mark your calendar for the upcoming week. That way you can get into the habit of taking time out of your schedule for a personal walk with the Lord.

### ***Day one***

**Luke 10:38-42** records the account of Mary and Marth. Jesus commends Mary for choosing the "only one thing" that is needed. Consider all the things going on in your life. How can you better make time for the one thing that you truly need?

### ***Day four***

Jesus tells the parable of the barren fig tree in **Luke 13:6-9**. What warning do you see for a believer (or a church!) that is fruitless?

