



What is True Christianity? Taken from *Grounded In The Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way*

by J.I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett

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Let us be clear on this. Christianity is not in essence a moral code or an ascetic routine, as so many down the centuries have mistakenly supposed. Rather, it is a supernaturalizing personal relationship with a supernatural personal Savior. Christianity centers upon Jesus Christ the Lord who, today and every day through the Holy Spirit, confronts everyone to whom the Gospel comes, summoning us to recognize and respond to him. He calls on us, not just to acknowledge his reality and the salient facts about him, but to exercise faith in him—that is, on the basis of the facts, to trust him—for the forgiveness of our sins; to repent—that is, to leave behind our present natural life of sin-driven bondage, and enter a new life of Christ-led freedom; and to become disciples—persons, that is, who conscientiously, as our life project, walk with him, learn from him, worship him and the Father through him, and maintain obedience to him, conforming ourselves to his recorded attitudes and example up to the limit of the Holy Spirit's enabling.

It is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead residing in each believer's inner being, who, having invisibly but effectually united believers to Christ, now sustains them in that union, working in them the motivation and compassion of Christ, and mediating to and through them the power of his risen life. He illuminates their minds to understand Christ's teaching, and biblical teaching generally, to see how it applies to them personally, and to envisage and pray for Christian advance. He reshapes their outlook, habits, and character by energizing their efforts at faithful obedience across the board. Every Christian thus becomes a work in progress, a lifelong reconstruction site, with the Holy Spirit as architect and craftsman at every point, first to last.

Following the Bible, we call the Spirit's engendering of faith, repentance, and the commitment to discipleship regeneration or new birth (John 3:1–8; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22–23; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18), and we speak of the consequent whole-souled pursuit of holiness and righteousness as sanctification, growth in grace, and glorification begun (Rom. 8:30; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Peter 3:18).¹

As we contemplate today's complex concerns, hopes, dreams, and ventures of Christian renewal, discipleship impresses us as the key present-day issue, and catechesis as the key present-day element of discipleship, all the world over. The Christian faith must be both well and wisely taught and well and truly learned!²

Notes

1. J.I. Packer & Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 14.
2. *Ibid.*, 16

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