

The POSITION of the Christian Life

What do we mean by 'position' of the Christian life? Absolutely fundamental to the Christian life is your understanding of union with Christ. Without this understanding, we will fail to experience the process of the Christian life, practise its disciplines successfully, and thereby reach its priorities.

Introduction

The idea of living life with completely new priorities can seem daunting. How can we possibly change our whole approach to a life of worshipping, knowing, and loving God? We have seen that it comes through knowing God as we live in His presence. Love comes through exposure to God's beauty. But how do we do that? This section helps us understand how and why we can live in God's presence.

Question 17: What has God done to enable us to abide in his presence?

The Triune God lovingly does a work of grace in us, enabling positional and experiential union with Himself (Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33-34; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 2 Corinthians 3:3).

God does two things to make such a life possible:

1. He changes our position with respect to Himself;
2. He changes His position with respect to us.

? Question 18: What is this changed position?



Once we are born again, God takes up residence in us, while we are simultaneously placed in Him (John 14:20, 23, 17:21). We are in Him, and He is in us.

If we are to learn what it means to 'abide in Christ' - which is the process of the Christian life - we must learn what it means to be "in Christ" and for "Christ to be in us".

Understanding our union with Christ is sometimes called 'becoming what you are' - by faith believing what is true of you in Christ, and working out what is within.

Memory Verse Ephesians 1:3

Application

It reflects the idea that your position has changed.

- You are no longer 'in the world', in the sense of being part of the world and being identified with the world. Instead, you are now in Christ.
- You belong to Him, and are a part of His Body.
- The way God sees you is 'in Christ'.
- Christ is your 'clothing', or 'appearance'.
- Christ's merits before God now define your merits before God.
- God's attitude and actions toward His Son now define His attitude and actions toward you.

? Question 19: How secure is a Christian's position in Christ?

The position you receive in Christ is a permanent position. Your experience of living out that position may change, but it does not affect the permanence of that position (Romans 8:31-38).



Consider a marriage: If the bond of marriage was continually on probation or in doubt, what effect would that have on the stability of that marriage or the confidence of the people in that marriage?

It would be an uncertain journey, to say the least. No one could build a marriage on such shaky ground. But marriage is not like that. Your experience within that marriage may change, but it does not affect the permanence of the marriage bond.

What you believe to be your position will always come out in your practices.

When someone believes his position is vulnerable, he acts like it. When he thinks he is invincible, he acts like it.



Question 20: How will believing our position in Christ affect our Christian lives?

1. ***Believing in our position before Christ removes the focus from our performance onto Christ's perfection.***

We are not to meditate on how much we deserve, but on how worthy we are counted, being in Christ. Therefore, Christ continually gets the glory, because even when we think of ourselves in relation to God, we are directed back to thinking of Christ.

2. ***Believing our position in Christ enables us to love God without guilt and fear.***

A looming threat of danger, a crushing sense of accusing guilt destroys the ability to serve out of a joyful, loving, grateful heart (I John 4:16-19, Romans 8:1).

We know we can come to God, have direct access to Him, and can grow in love for Him (Hebrews 4:15-16).

3. ***Believing our position in Christ spurs us on to greater Christlikeness.***

Much of the secret of the Christian life is to 'become what you are'. You are to flesh out what is already true of you. You are to practice your position. However, you can only do this to the degree that you understand and believe your position in Christ. Romans chapter 6 is the best example of the Bible's logic that we must 'become what we are'.

4. ***Believing our position in Christ gives us boldness to serve Him and make Him known to the world.***

If a sinner tries to announce the merits of a holy God on his own merits, he will fail dismally, or become a sophisticated hypocrite. If we stand on our own righteousness, we will correctly feel completely unfit to serve God.

When we recall that God has called us and equipped us, we feel ready and authorised to serve Him (2 Cor 3:5).

5. ***Believing our position in Christ fends off Satan's attacks and lies.***

Satan is the accuser. That means he accuses us before God and accuses us to our faces – decrying how unworthy we are.

It is at that point that we must face him with our position in Christ, not with our own righteousness or with feeble excuses. This is one of the primary ways that we resist Him, we remind him and ourselves of our position 'in Christ' (see James 4:7).

Question 21: What has the Father done to enable us to abide in God's presence?

The Father lovingly

* chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2), and so will never condemn us (Ro 8:1, 34) or forsake us (Heb 13:5; Jo 10:27-29),

* begat us (1 Peter 1: 3 -4John 1:12), and reserved our inheritance (1 Pet 1:4).

* adopted us into his family (Eph 1:5)

With this knowledge, we can feel welcomed and loved, and desire to dwell in God's presence. We are prompted to commune with God.

Question 22: What has the Son done to enable us to abide in God's presence?

The Son's perfect life, death, resurrection, ascension and High Priestly work has

* propitiated God's wrath (1 Jo 2:2),

* forgiven our sins (Col 2:13-14; Eph 1:7),

* enabled us to be justified (Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 5:21),

* reconciled us with God (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21; 2 Cor 5:18),

* given us eternal life (Col 2:13, Jo 1:12),