**WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN - 7
A Christian is…**

**INTRODUCTION** - The past several weeks we have noted several descriptions of what a Christian is – a citizen, a soldier, an athlete, a farmer and a priest. In our lesson today we want to notice some other descriptions, with a few less details. This is not to say that they are less important than the others we have addressed, but time will not permit a detailed study of every description of the Christian.

***DESCRIPTIONS OF A CHRISTIAN -***

 **I. A living stone –** [**1 Peter 2:5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Peter%202.5)

a.   Related to our priesthood. Last week we noted how we are priests to offer spiritual sacrifices to God.

b.  Under the Old Law, the sacrifices were offered first in the tabernacle and later in the temple. Both were built with instructions from God **-** [**Ex. 25:40**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ex.%2025.40)**,** [**1 Chron. 28:11-12**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Chron.%2028.11-12)**,** [**19**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Chron%2028.19)**;** [**Heb. 8:5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb.%208.5)

c.  **[1 Peter 2:4-5](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Peter%202.4-5%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)** - we find that Jesus is a living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious. We also “as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood…”

d.  In the New Testament, we are described as part of a building. Usually it has reference to the church and as such it describes how TOGETHER we are the church.

   i. [**Matthew 16:18**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matthew%2016.18) - Jesus said, **“*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*”**

   ii. **Eph. 2:20-22** - Jesus is the CHIEF CORNERSTONE upon which we are built up a spiritual house – upon Him we are built into a holy temple in the Lord.

   iii. [**1 Cor. 3:9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%203.9) – we are God’s building. Christ is the foundation. The idea of this text is that which we teach is based upon that which Jesus built – His church **Eph. 1:20-21**
**1 Cor. 3:16** - As such we are “the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

   iv. [**1 Cor. 3:10-11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%203.10-11) - Be careful how you build. Use “quality materials” for endurance (12-15).

   v. [**Eph. 2:20-22**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Eph.%202.20-22) - we are built together and fitted together.

e. Lessons from buildings –

   i. **Matt. 7:24-27** - I think of a solid foundation – Jesus (as we have seen). We need to build wisely

   ii. Being built together – no single brick is a building. The church is not one person, but all of us together. That is Paul’s point in 1 Corinthians 3.

   iii. **Eph. 3:10-11** - We must follow the pattern – the church is a demonstration of “the manifold wisdom of God” and it is “according to His eternal purpose”.

   iv.   [**Heb. 3:4-6**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb.%203.4-6)   - It’s God’s house - verse 4 tells us God built all things. Vs. 6 tells us that we are the house of Christ (i.e. church of Christ) if we hold fast our confidence and hope to the end.
[**Psalm 127:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Psalm%20127.1) -  **“*Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.*”**

f.   As a living stone, we are never complete this side of eternity. We need to keep growing in Him.

 II. **Part of a body** –

a.   The word “body” is a collective noun. A collective noun is a collection of things that make up something. It is a group of things. Often used of animals such herd, flock, pride, etc. Similarly, a body is a collection of parts that make a complete person.

b.   [**Ephesians 1:22**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ephesians%201.22)**,** [**4:12**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ephesians%204.12)**,** [**Col. 1:24**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col.%201.24) - The church is referred to as a body (BTW, “church” is also a collective noun) When this expression is used the point is that a church consists of many Christians who are working together. This is true whether we speak of the church universally or a local congregation.

c.   [**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Corinthians%2012.12-27) - Paul appealed to the church at Corinth to function with the unity of a healthy body. It is in the midst of a context addressing jealousy and the competitive spirit. Paul challenged the brethren there to work together even though every person is different.
A body has many parts, all part of the body and each with its own function. EVERY part is needed. And when one part is malfunctioning it affects the whole body.
Paul simply was us to work together like a body.
[**Rom. 12:4-5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.%2012.4-5) - **“*For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*”**

d.   The point of emphasis in describing us as a body is unity and cooperation.

 III. **A laborer, worker** –

a.   As Christians we need to be busy. We have seen this in many of the descriptions thus far. The farmer is to be hardworking ([2 Tim. 2:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Tim.%202.6)). Athletes are dedicated. It is also emphasized in terms like zealous, fervent, be doers, and the description of “works”. Laziness and apathy are qualities that are condemned in our lives.

b.   [**Matthew 20:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matthew%2020.1) -      One of the ways a Christian is described is as a worker or laborer. Jesus said, ***“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.*”** The parable describes how laborers are hired throughout the day and then paid at the end of the day equally. We are “hired” to work in God’s vineyard and we will be paid when we stand before Him. Other lessons apply, but this fits our description.

c.   [**1 Cor. 3:9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%203.9) - we are described as “God’s fellow workers.”

d.   **Rev. 2:2-3** - Sometimes churches are identified with laboring - Ephesus was commended for their labor in His name. Thessalonica was commended for their “work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ…”

e.   [**2 Timothy 2:15**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Timothy%202.15) – a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. When it comes to God’s word, we need to “study” or work at it.

f.   [**1 Cor. 15:58**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%2015.58)**, “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*”**

g.  **[Matt. 9:37](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.%209.37%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) – “*Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*** In a passage addressing us a farmers, Jesus reminds us there is plenty of work to be done and laborers are needed.

h.   [**Heb. 6:10**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb.%206.10) **- “*For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*”**

i.   [**3 John 8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/3%20John%208)**, “*We therefore ought to receive such that we may become fellow workers for the truth.*”** The point of being a worker is that we need to be busy in our service to God. There is also something to be said about working together

 IV. **Family** – the final quality we want to discuss this morning is that we are brethren.

a.   Family is a wonderful thing when it is as it ought to be. Our closest relationships are often forged in our families. Parent/child, husband/wife- incidentally this is how a NEW family begins. That is why our spiritual relationship is often described in terms of family.

b.   ***Children of God*** - [**1 John 3:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20John%203.1)**, “*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*”** This is a result of being “born of God” - [**1 John 3:9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20John%203.9)
[**Romans 8:15-17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Romans%208.15-17) – a passage which describes how we are children of God and therefore heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.
There are many privileges associated with this relationship.
One source described this as a “vertical relationship” in our spiritual family.

c.   ***Brothers/sisters*** – just as “child” refers to our relationship with God, “brother” or “sister” refers to our relationship with one another. This is sometimes described as “a horizontal relationship.”
We are spiritual siblings. And it is continually emphasized in the New Testament (and in the Old as well). It affects how we treat each other.
EVERY child of God is my brother or sister in Christ.
[**Matt. 12:46-50**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.%2012.46-50) - We find Jesus teaching and He is told his physical family is outside. Jesus describes His spiritual family **“*But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”***
We need to treat each other like brethren, which means different than we treat the world -
[**1 Corinthians 6:7-8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Corinthians%206.7-8) - describes brethren taking one another to court and what a failure such is.
[**1 John 3:10-17**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20John%203.10-17) - speaks of how we love one another as brethren and warns about hating one another.

[**1 John 4:20-21**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20John%204.20-21) - further emphasizes this.

d.  *Being brethren means we are there for one another.* We care and help each other. We prefer each other. We defend one another. So much more could be said, do we act like the brothers and sisters in Christ we ought to be?

**CONCLUSION** –

There are other descriptions that could be added to these, but what we have discussed is enough to give us a good grasp of what the Christian life is about.

In all the descriptions we have examined we see busyness and activity.

We see relationship.

We see a productive healthy life.

We have to work at being the Christian God wants us to be.

What about you?  How are you doing?