

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** The Deeper Life

**SERIES**

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**KEY SCRIPTURE** Romans 12; Colossians 1; Ephesians 4

**SYNOPSIS** What does a deeper walk with God look like?

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ The Deeper Life

We've been talking about knowing God more because only he can really satisfy the thirst of our souls. We don't just want more information about God, but we want to really know him. We want a deeper walk with him. What does a deeper life look like?

We live in a time that is marked with shallow Christianity. The world around us tells us that it's true. We are at a point for the first time in American history that our culture sees the Church as completely irrelevant to daily life. I know there are pockets here and there where this is not true, but overwhelmingly, it is true. The Church doesn't matter to the world.

We are called to be salt and light to this dull, dark world, but that doesn't seem to be the case in ☞ reality for most. **Shallow, entertainment-driven, self-centered religion is the hallmark of much of today's church**, and that mind-set is no different than a multitude of other options. Social clubs, bars, sporting events, concerts and so many venues offer the same things and often do it better than the Church, so, it makes us seem second-rate and irrelevant to most people.

We are not called to entertain the masses; we are not called to be another self-help or self-☞ improvement group. **We are called to a closer, deeper walk with God, which then overflows to make a true difference in this world.**

I think this concept of a deeper walk with Christ is so alien to today's world that I need to spend some time just identifying what this life looks like. We have become so comfortable with what we know that often, even the idea of something better is missing.

So, what does a deeper life look like?

Some would say it's more emotional, but that is not necessarily so. For some people, emotion is actually a sign of a shallow faith – when emotions drive your behavior. Others would say the deeper life looks more intellectual; the more you know, the closer your walk. But you don't have to be a scholar to go deep with God. Most of the early church was relatively uneducated. Still others would say it's in lifestyle - that we can make a list of behaviors that mark the deeper life.

Now, I agree that our behavior is a key factor, but it cannot be boiled down to a list of do's and don'ts. Adam and Eve walked with God until they ate from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Knowing the rules doesn't constitute a deeper life. They actually had the deeper life when they were dependent on God to direct their behavior.

**The deeper life comes from the heart**, not a set of rules. God told Samuel that he looked at the heart of man, while we tend to look at the outward appearance.

So, what is the deeper life?



## ☞ **The Deeper Life is Compliant**

That word “compliant” is not a fan favorite in today’s society. The American way is very independent and makes its own rules. We tend to buck against compliance. But it’s biblical.

### ☞ **Romans 12:1**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.

The NLT says to give your bodies to God... let it be a holy sacrifice...

The idea of compliance or surrender is the struggle for control. As human beings we live with an innate desire to control our destiny and our surroundings. From the earliest moments of life, we struggle for control of our world - first with parents, then with employers, and too often always with God. This idea of who is in control is probably the most important decision of your life.

☞ **As long as you believe that you are in control and you are calling the shots, you will be in conflict with God.** It’s only when we comply, surrendering control to Christ, that we begin to understand what real freedom is. It’s there that we find what we are made for and we begin to live the deeper life. Until God is Lord of your life, you will always play in the shallow waters of self-centered desire, and never find the fullness of experiencing the depths of God’s presence. The deeper life is compliant to God and his word.

## ☞ **The Deeper Life is Christ-Centered**

### **Colossians 1:16-18**

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that **in everything he might have the supremacy.**

These verses are emphasizing the centrality of Christ. It’s all about Jesus.

The lack of relevance we have in our communities today, and the personal lack of spiritual power we see, all stem from the same basic problem - Christ is not the center of our lives. We often try to simply add Christ into our already established life. He’s just another part we accommodate from time to time. Paul describes a world, a church and a heart that is centered on God. Like the planets that circle the Sun, our lives must find Christ as the center.

☞ **Our lives need to revolve around him.**

We try so hard to make God revolve around us. We even live our Christian lives trying to make God fit into the mold that we have made for Him. There is something comforting about



Christianity that makes us want to keep it around. It makes us feel safe, it feeds our positive emotions, but we don't want to give up our toys or our self-focus.

William Law writes "if you will stop and ask yourself why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you that is neither through ignorance nor inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it." In other words, **we are not deeper spiritually because, in truth, we don't really want to be.** It sounds nice, but in practice our hearts are simply unwilling to give up the toys to set Christ on the throne. The deeper life is Christ-centered.

### ☞ **The Deeper Life is Consistent**

#### **Ephesians 4:22-24**

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

The deeper life is a life that is completely consistent and cohesive. We live in a time where life often looks very different during the week than it does on Sunday. Sunday morning, we come and worship God and set Him on the throne of life, and say that we embrace His love and plan, then Monday comes and we are no different than anyone else. In fact, we are worse because we are not living what we believe.

Thomas A Kempis writes "On the day of judgment, surely, we shall not be asked what we have read, but what we have done; not how well we have spoken, but how well we have lived."

### ☞ **If Christ does not show in our conversation, our actions, our choice of entertainment, our relationships, and our lifestyles then what does it say about what we believe?**

The deeper life is consistent regardless of location or activity. Christ is allowed to permeate every aspect of your life. We will never know a deeper walk until all of life is consistently under His control. *Imagine you are jar of water. You can drop a cross in there from time to time, but it doesn't really do anything to the water. But if you drop some dye in there, it changes the water.* The deeper life is consistent.

### ☞ **The Deeper Life is Constant**

#### **Ephesians 4:13-15**

...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will **no longer** be infants, **tossed back and forth by the waves**, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.



Shallow Christianity is filled with fads, quick fixes, slogans, and flashes of brilliance. It feels like a roller coaster ride - a series of highs and lows both spiritually and emotionally. But the deeper our walk with Christ, the less the winds and waves are able to upset the serenity of the spirit.

If you're just living on the surface of Christianity, it's like the ocean whose surface is always in unpredictable, often chaotic motion. But as you plunge deeper beneath the surface there is a movement that is constant, continuous, and unaffected by the winds or even storms. Likewise, **☞ you can have deeper walk with God that is not so chaotic, but is consistent and constant as you center your life on Christ and comply with his leadership.** The deeper life is constant.

Do you want a deeper relationship with Christ? The reality is that it's not your knowledge or your ability that is holding you back - it's simply your real desire to live the deeper life. You can choose today to go deeper with God.

Comply, surrender to his leadership.  
Center your life around Christ.  
Be consistent, with Jesus permeating all of your activities.  
Be constant, unwavering in your convictions.

*--Dan Cale... This morning as I turned around in the driveway my young daughter came out the back door in her pajama's. "Honey it's cold out here", I told her. "I know," she said. "I jumped out of bed and ran as fast as I could so I could catch you and say good morning."*

How many of us can say that we jump out of bed and run to the Father's arms to say "good morning?" God wants a deeper relationship with us - He is calling us to that place deep in His heart - into the Holy of Holies where He is present. The question is, will we come? Will we give ourselves to the deeper life?

☞ **(Music starts)** Perhaps you've been calling yourself a Christian, but you haven't really surrendered your life to the Lord. You've been living a shallow Christianity. You haven't really centered everything around the Lord, allowing him into every aspect of your life. You've been running hot and cold; sometimes on and sometimes off. It's time to decide. Do you want the deeper life or not? Do you want Jesus or not?

Find a place to pray and let the Holy Spirit guide your thoughts. Repent if needed. Recommit if needed. Realign yourself with the Lord.