



A CHILD OF GOD (A TRUE CHRISTIAN)

1. When we study the history of Christianity, we come to the realization that those who called themselves — and still today call themselves — “Christians” have committed many inhumane and evil acts. In the culture in which I live today, the word “church” or “Christian” provokes revolt and anger in many individuals. And this happens for a reason. Centuries upon centuries of shameful and inhumane deeds have been carried out in the name of Christianity. And they have brought the modern person to a deep feeling of disgust toward that term.

1.1 This is one of the key reasons why, in this article, I will use the term “child of God.” I do not want the reader, as he or she goes through this article, to associate me with the label “Christian.” My intention is rather that the reader might know me as an individual who desires to sincerely promote the image of God.

1.2 I must be honest — I gave up on writing this article several times. Why? Because the topic of this article is extremely sensitive in nature. But the event in Montenegro left a strong impression on me. And because of that, I received the motivation to attempt to present the “true” characteristics of a child of God.

IT BECAME NORMAL TO ME

2. Before I do that, I would like to briefly share with you my life before God. The life I lived before I came to know Him was quite turbulent. My travels around the world and the professions I worked in allowed me to meet and spend time with all kinds of people. Living in America and Europe gave me insight into a world I had never known before.

2.1 My daily life — abroad — was surrounded by gay people. My coworkers were gay, friends I spent time with had other friends who were gay.

2.2 Surrounded by that reality, I decided to accept that being “gay” was something completely normal. Why did I “decide” to accept it? Because the culture in those cities persuaded me to accept it.

2.3 The journey toward that decision was not easy. My feelings toward the idea (“being gay is completely normal”) were negative in nature: I was confused, angry; a sense of disgust appeared in me. All of that eventually resulted in my public dissatisfaction toward gay people.

2.4 I never physically harmed anyone — thank God — but I clearly showed with my attitude: “Don’t come near me, because you will have problems with me!”

2.5 The people around me — my acquaintances and coworkers — those who accepted that reality as completely normal, criticized me daily for my views, calling me “closed-minded.” Of course, they did all of this in hopes of “opening my mind,” of helping me become “open-minded.”

2.6 As I spent more and more time abroad, it became completely normal for me to see a man kissing another man, or a woman kissing a woman. It even became somewhat charming when men in nightclubs started flirting with me. Some of them became my good acquaintances. In short, I surrendered myself to the mindset that ruled those cities. I became “open-minded.” I became cool.

EARTHQUAKE

3. A few years later, an “earthquake” entered my life — I was diagnosed with an incurable disease. And through that “process” of mixed events, experiences, anger, bitterness, depression, fear, and a sense of helplessness, I came to know myself. I discovered who I truly was at the core of my being.

3.1 Through the illness, the worst parts of me came out; “anger” was my best friend. Those who suffered the most during that time were the people closest to me.

3.2 Someone once said: *“When a man is confronted with death, his true self — his real colors — come out.”* I can confirm from personal experience that this statement is true. During that process, memories of the life I had lived before the illness came to me every day. My conscience gave me no rest. In the beginning, I fought passionately, refusing to accept the accusations of my conscience. Even though I was sick, physically crushed by pain, I still had the strength to rebel against my own conscience.

3.3 Thank God, a day came when I began to ask myself — but honestly — why is this happening? Why is this happening to me? At the beginning of that sincere self-examination, I started to realize that I had spent most of my life as a manipulator, a liar, an alcoholic, a drug user, and a sexually endangered human being. I felt genuine shame in my heart because of it and asked God to forgive me.

3.4 Now, from this perspective, I can say that it was “the most liberating and most earth-shaking process” of my life. I won’t call it an “event” because it wasn’t — it was a process. Why do I say that? Because even the worst part — the earthquake (my illness) — was necessary for me to come to this realization: the freedom that I now live in.

— My personal walk with God began at that moment. —

THE EVENT IN MONTENEGRO

4. Alright, now that you know a little more about me, you will better understand — or perhaps you won’t — the personal viewpoints I will present in this article.

4.1 Let's return to the beginning. I will tell you about the event that took place in Montenegro. As I said earlier, it motivated me to write this article.

4.2 Recently in Montenegro, a young man was walking toward his family home to visit his mother. Several individuals decided to physically assault him. Knowing that he was a member of the LGBT community, they injured his genitals and carved a cross onto his chest with a knife.

4.3 Every possible public institution — the LGBT community, the Government of Montenegro, European leaders, the U.S. Embassy, and the Orthodox Church — publicly condemned that inhuman and perverse act. And of course, I join them in that condemnation.

A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION

5. Now that I am slowly understanding the true biblical perspective, I will try in this article to show what I, as a child of God, should do if I happened to appear right after that event and saw the injured young man lying on the road, wounded and beaten.

What would I do?

5.1 In Luke 10:29–35 we have an event where robbers attacked a man who was going down from Jerusalem. They beat him, robbed him, and left him half-dead on the road. I will not go into the wider context of that passage, but I believe we can draw an application for the situation I described above.

5.2 The Samaritan who passed by and saw the man lying beaten decided to show mercy, love, care, and responsibility toward another human being. He washed his wounds, placed him on his donkey, and brought him to a nearby inn. He asked the innkeeper to take care of the wounded man, give him food and a bed, and he promised to pay for everything when he returned.

5.3 I believe that I, as a child of God, have a duty to act just as the Samaritan did: to care for that young man. I would call the police and the emergency services; then I would try to stop the bleeding and dress his wounds. If I judged that I could reach the hospital faster than the ambulance could reach us, I would put him in my car and take him to the hospital myself.

5.4 If I stayed there, I would wait for information from the doctors — “How is he? Will he be alright?” I would tell them to take good care of him and then go on my way. After some time, I would visit him in the hospital — with the intention of showing who my Heavenly Father is.

— And He is the One who cares and the One who loves. He is a merciful God. —

WHAT PAUL TEACHES US

6. Let us continue with the hypothetically possible scenario.

6.1 When the young man left the hospital, he decided to call me and thank me for my help. Now I, as a child of God, have the opportunity to do what I believe I am here on earth for — to testify to him about the inexhaustible grace of God that has become the reality of my life.

6.2 Before I testify to the young man, I will quote the words of an Orthodox priest who publicly shared his view of the criminal act.

6.3 His words:

“With the greatest disgust and contempt, as a priest and Orthodox Christian, I condemn this inhuman and uncivilized act. The cross, which is a symbol of love toward our neighbor, especially those who are different, has in this case become a sign of blasphemy against the God of love. The One who was crucified on the cross forgives everyone and with outstretched arms embraces the whole world.”

6.4 The question follows: Is this the biblical perspective?

It is — but only partially. If we want to present the whole truth, we must deepen the meaning of the cross.

6.5 Today, as a child of God, I strive to learn true biblical teaching — the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles, not merely Christian traditions. And through studying Scripture, I have come to several important insights.

6.6 In reading Paul’s epistles (especially Romans and Corinthians), we see that Paul lists the unjust deeds of the people he is addressing and says: *“Such people will not inherit the Kingdom of God.”*

6.7 Paul says that those who are fornicators, drunkards, swindlers, thieves, liars, slanderers, accusers, those who engage in male-with-male or female-with-female relations — will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

THE WRONG WORLDVIEW OF CHRISTIAN TRADITION

7. Alright, this is what Paul says — now let us see what the Christian tradition I grew up in has to say.

7.1 Although our religious leadership would perhaps never publicly proclaim what I am about to say, they ultimately cannot hide it from the public.

Why not? Because the people are their megaphone — inside their homes and outside on the streets.

7.2 And that same people taught me — that being a homosexual is one of the greatest sins. That God cannot and will not forgive those who do such things. But we who lie, cheat, swear, slander, fornicate, drink without restraint, gamble — we are fine, God can forgive that!

In other words, we were taught to despise those who are homosexual.

— Today, from this perspective, I can only say that I am sincerely ashamed that I shared the views of my culture. —

7.3 With that said, my question is: Is that the true biblical perspective? Is being “homosexual” a greater sin than the others? I do not think so. Paul never says:

“Liars and fornicators are lesser sinners, but you who have male-with-male relations — you are the worst and you cannot enter the Kingdom!”

7.4 No. Paul places all unrighteousness into the same category.

Why? Because every sin is an expression of our hostility toward a holy God. And in this, we are equal before God — whether we are liars, fornicators, slanderers, or homosexuals.

In other words, Paul wants to emphasize that in God's eyes all of us are sinners. No one is better than the other.

7.5 We should also not forget who is teaching us these things. Paul was a murderer, a persecutor, an unjust judge who imprisoned innocent families together with their children. And that man God entrusted to teach us — we who call ourselves Christians — about grace, forgiveness, and the righteousness of God.

— This is crucial. When we understand the power and magnitude of God's grace, then we know how we should approach those to whom we want to share our testimony. —

I WOULD TELL HIM

8. Alright, let us return to the theoretically possible encounter between me and the young man. The best way to introduce him to the depth of the cross is — to testify to him. With the intention of showing him what an incredible gift God has given me, freely.

8.1 I would tell him how, during my illness, I slowly began giving up on life — how I was tired of the surgeon's knife while the disease kept eating away at me more and more. I would tell him that in the most important moments of my life I realized who I truly was: a tired and worn-out man who had been at war with God his entire life.

8.2 My sins — sexual immorality, drugs, lies, schemes, criminal acts, money, titles, career success, the desire to be accepted by important people — all the things I once believed were the foundations of my personal fulfillment were now eating me from the inside.

8.3 I would tell him how I realized how shallow and empty it was to look at these things as the meaning of the life I had been given.

And because of that realization, I knew — in the deepest place of my being — "I cannot stand before God like this!"

8.4 Then I would tell him that at two in the morning, in a hospital bed, I literally sobbed (I had never cried like that in my life) and said:

"God, please forgive me. I can't do this on my own anymore. Free me from this burden I am carrying inside me — I am a miserable man!"

8.5 After that, I would share with him how God truly views sin. That God will never accept anyone as His child before he or she first admits who they really are before God.

GOD'S MESSAGE HURTS

9. You might ask: *"Why would you say something so harsh to that young man, especially after everything he went through?"*

My short answer would be: *"Because what matters to me is what God the Father requires of me — not what man requires of me."*

9.1 With that said, I believe I owe you an explanation of what I mean by that short answer.

9.2 After realizing that sin had been “devouring” me for most of my life — now, from this perspective — I understand what an incredible gift God the Father has given me. He gave me freedom from myself.

— Such joy cannot be hidden; you cannot stay silent. —

9.3 So no, I do not testify to the young man because I hate him.

I love him and respect him as a human being created in the image of God.

And because I desire to rescue him from the slavery he carries within himself — a slavery that devours him, even if he may not know it — I am obligated to tell him the truth.

9.4 Furthermore, I believe every human being, throughout their life, has been judged many times by their own conscience. The question is: did they choose to reject that inner voice, or did they act and change according to it?

9.5 Just as a liar knows deep down that lying is wrong, I believe that young man — in the deepest place of his being — knows that what he is doing is not right.

Has he, over time, dulled his conscience and convinced himself that what he does is good?

Perhaps he has — I do not know.

9.6 In that context — I know I dulled my conscience. And because of that, God sent an earthquake (my illness) into my life, intending to wake me up. And I thank Him for that.

9.7 Alright, let me continue answering why I would testify to the young man.

WHAT THE LOVE OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN LOOKS LIKE

10. In John 8:3–11 the Jews wanted to stone a woman caught in adultery. What did Jesus do?

10.1 In the text we read that after Jesus spoke, the Jews dropped their stones and walked away — they did not stone her.

Jesus approached that terrified woman and said:

“Where are they? Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more.”

10.2 If I am a child of God (a true Christian), one who follows his Teacher, then I understand that I have no right to condemn that young man for what he does.

Why?

Because I am the same as he is — a sinner before God.

10.3 Why do I believe this?

Because, unfortunately, before I met God, I was that self-righteous judge (like the Jews) who wanted to stone that young man.

Now I repent of that.

10.4 In other words, I do not want to walk away as the Jews walked away.

I will drop the stone to the ground and approach the young man (as Jesus approached the woman) and say: *“Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more!”*

— My testimony that I shared with him stands behind Jesus’ words: *“Go, and sin no more!”* —

10.5 But what drives — what motivates — a child of God to testify to another human being about the goodness of God?

In other words, what motivated Jesus to be bold and courageous when He said to the woman, and to many others: *“Go, and sin no more”*?

10.6 I am certain these words carry many applications.

Throughout history, Scripture and God’s messengers (preachers) have warned that the Day of Judgment is coming — the day when God will judge the world.

And if we truly believe in that biblical perspective, it will give us courage to speak even where we do not want to speak.

10.7 But in the life of a believer, that must not be the only reason we proclaim the gospel to others. *“If we have no love,”* as Paul says, *“then we have nothing.”*¹

— The love for God that we received when He forgave us is what gives us the greatest courage. —

10.8 In other words, when we have been forgiven, we want others to be forgiven as well — so that they may inherit the Kingdom of God.

10.9 And when I look at the life of Jesus Christ through that lens, I realize that one of His main motives was to find His true family — His brothers and sisters — those with whom He will spend all eternity.²

When He said those words to the woman, I believe He meant:

“I want you to be part of My family. The greatest tragedy in human history is that a human life ends. I do not want your life to end. I want you to share with Me the glory that the Father has given Me.”

UNIQUE IN THE CREATED ORDER

11. And what Glory has God the Father decided to give us freely, as a gift, through His Son, Jesus Christ?

11.1 The more I get to know who God truly is, the more my desire grows to be with Him. My desire to promote His image grows. The God who gives life has promised me eternal life. I love my God the Father and I surrender my life into His hands. And I could never have done this without first knowing His Son, Jesus — the light that God the Father sent into the world.³

11.2 I increasingly understand that people were not created to cease existing. People were created to live. Created to reflect His image. People sing, create, explore, communicate, love, plant, enjoy sound, color, and creation.

¹ 1 Corinthians 13

² Luke 8:20-21

³ John 12:46

—We have the ability to imagine something, and then bring it into reality with our own hands.—

11.3 There is so much evidence that we, as beings, are unique in the created order — and this is exactly the proof that we are created in the “image of God.”

11.4 But there is something bad in us, that moral corruption which steals our happiness — distorts the image of God. It devours us, makes us unhappy, and clouds what we were created to reflect.

11.5 This must be acknowledged, repented of, and fought against. If we do this, even now, while we are here, we can experience the sweet foretaste of the victory to come. Because when God resurrects us and transforms us in the blink of an eye, we will become what we are meant to be — morally perfect, good human beings.⁴

11.6 Can we even imagine life without the sin that we all carry within us? What would that life be like? People already have incredible potential, but just imagine what potential we will have when we become perfectly good beings.

11.7 Personally, I do not want to cease existing. I want to be that human being — a new race of people. I want to dwell with my Creator in His inexhaustible wisdom. Because if He created this reality — so beautiful and magnificent — I can only imagine what is yet to come.

THE FOCUS OF A CHILD OF GOD IS NOT ON “HERE AND NOW”

12. I believe the apostle Peter said: “*We are only travelers in this life.*”⁵

With that perspective, I approach that young man. As a child of God, I am aware that my task is not to fight for his rights here and now.

—My task is to care for his future.—

12.1 All of us carry some burden in this life, some sin that follows us. The burden of that young man is surely great — and I cannot even imagine what he goes through every day.

12.2 The key is to recognize ourselves: Who am I before the Holy God? Either we persist, struggle, and, like our Lord Jesus, bear the cross of victory; or we throw down the cross and tell God: “*I want to go my own way; I know what is best for me.*”

12.3 Furthermore, this event unfortunately shows how much hatred from this world the young man has felt on his own body. Yet, despite this, most people still want to be accepted here and now. Why? Because they do not want to look at the invisible — at eternal life. Their life is focused on the “here and now.”

12.4 Only those who have wholeheartedly decided to seek the “pearl,” those who have decided to come out of darkness into the light — they are the children of God.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 15.51-52

⁵ 1 Peter 2:11; 1:17

12.5 Because of all that has been said, I want to be a candle that will show the young man the path to the true light — the eternal blessing — where “he, I, and Jesus” can one day be a family.

—To a child of God (a true Christian), I believe, this must be the main motivation.—

12.6 But if that young man wants his best life here and now, if he wants to reject the cross and accept that being homosexual is something completely normal — unfortunately, there is nothing I can do in that case.

12.7 I hope I have at least somewhat helped you with your question: why I want to witness to the young man and motivate him to repent before the Holy God.

12.8 My motivation does not come from my righteousness, nor because I think I am better than him. I am not.

It comes from understanding what God wants to give us — if we only sincerely repent and return to Him.

12.9 Finally, I hope that the Orthodox priest will have the opportunity to share that truth — the true biblical perspective — with that young man.

12.10 But if that priest has not known himself, if he has never wept before God, if his faith in the cross has never cost him, if he has not lost himself to gain Christ — then he cannot witness to the true power, depth, and richness of the cross.

THE CHURCH AS A LIGHT THROUGH HISTORY

13. To conclude, in the first section I revealed the truth about the church (see §§1–1.1) and its dark side throughout history, but that is not all that it is. For all of us who only look at one side of the coin and, because of it, conclude that the church should not exist, I want us to also look at the other side of the coin — perhaps it will convince us that the church has often been a light to others, showing how to treat individuals and even whole communities. In other words, much good has come from the church. I will list a few examples:

- a) Throughout Christian history, different church traditions — Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant — have left a deep mark in caring for humanity, especially during times of war, disease, famine, and social crises. In the early centuries, Christians established the first organized hospitals, such as the complex of St. Basil the Great in Caesarea (4th century), which included care for the sick, the poor, and displaced persons, and became a model for later institutions both in the East and West. In the Middle Ages, Catholic and Orthodox monasteries ran infirmaries and shelters, caring for the sick during epidemics such as the Black Death (14th century), when many monks and priests died serving the infected. Protestant communities, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries, developed systems of education and social care in Reformation cities like Geneva, Wittenberg, and Edinburgh, where public schools, social funds for the poor, and hospitals open to all citizens were introduced.
- b) During times of famine, the Churches played a key role in organizing aid. During the Great Irish Famine (1845–1852), Catholic and Protestant communities across Europe and America sent food and monetary assistance, while Orthodox monasteries in the Russian Empire

repeatedly released grain reserves during famines in the 18th and 19th centuries. On the African continent, from the 19th century to today, missions of various denominations — Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Orthodox — participated in opening schools, hospitals, and food distribution centers, especially during the famine in Ethiopia in 1983–1985.

- c) During wars, the Churches acted as places of refuge, negotiation, and aid. In World War II, numerous Catholic and Orthodox communities hid the persecuted, while Protestant churches in the Netherlands and Denmark were crucial in saving Jews, organizing hidden routes, and issuing false documents. During the Balkan Wars and World War I, Orthodox monasteries provided medical and humanitarian care to the wounded and refugees, while Protestant organizations such as the YMCA and later World Vision developed one of the first modern systems of international humanitarian aid.
- d) At the individual level, the actions of the Churches have left an indelible mark on the lives of millions of people. St. John Bosco in the Catholic tradition, George Müller among Protestants, and numerous Orthodox elders and spiritual leaders, such as St. Luke of Crimea (a physician and bishop), cared for the poor, orphans, the sick, and marginalized persons. Today, Christian Churches — through Caritas, Orthodox charitable foundations, the Lutheran World Federation, Adventist and Anglican missions — remain among the world's largest providers of education, healthcare, social aid, and spiritual support. This continues the tradition in which the Church, regardless of denomination, acted as a strong and often decisive force for good in moments of human suffering and historical crises.