


The Normal Christian Life

Watchman Nee

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This classic work unfolds the path of faith and presents the eternal purpose of God in simple terms.

The Normal Christian Life Details

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From Reader Review The Normal Christian Life for online ebook

Carlos Montijo says

This book is a pleasant surprise, a very interesting and edifying read. I was under the impression that Nee was an imbalanced Charismatic (he is in some cases) with not much to offer, but he does have some very good insights. This book in part is a fairly in-depth study of Romans, which I didn't expect.

There are caveats, to be sure. Nee tends toward extremes when he derives his doctrine from isolated verses without considering the rest of Scripture. He has other tendencies that remind me of liberals like Tim Keller too.

I listened to the audio book and it was hard for me to follow because Nee has quirky arguments I'd never heard before: He seems to argue that Romans 7 refers to *both* believers in the flesh *and* unbelievers; that during the supposed rapture, believers who "look back" like Lot's wife did will be left behind; etc. I'll have to review this book more carefully in print. Some of his statements are downright troubling:

"We tried to point out that, just as he had done nothing for his justification, so he need do nothing for his sanctification" (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/nee/normal.v...>). If that is so, and since our justification is instant, then why is our sanctification a life-long process? Because God alone accomplished the first without our help, but we have a part to play in the second. Why else does the Bible say to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling"? (Phil. 2:12) Because "it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (v. 13). Because we are sanctified by applying the Word of truth to our lives (John 17:17).

"The Divine purpose in creation and redemption was that God should have many children. He wanted us, and could not be satisfied without us" (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/nee/normal.x...>). If the latter is so, then why does the Bible say that "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; *nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything*, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:24-25) and "if these keep silent, the very stones will cry out"? (Luke 19:40) Because, as Matthew Henry points out, "Pharisees would silence the praises of Christ, but they cannot gain their point; for as God can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham, so he can out of the mouths of those children perfect praise."

Your dog may be an intelligent dog, a well-behaved dog, and altogether a most remarkable dog; but the question is not, Is he a good or a bad dog? It is merely, Is he a dog? He does not need to be bad to be disqualified from being a member of your family; he only needs to be a dog. The same principle applies to you in your relationship to God. The question is not whether you are a bad man or a good man, more or less, but simply, Are you a man? If your life is on a lower plane than that of God's life, then you cannot belong to the Divine family. Throughout your life your aim in preaching has been to turn bad men into good men; but men as such, whether good or bad, can have no vital relationship with God.
(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/nee/normal.x...>)

The question is not whether we are human; Adam and Eve had a great relationship with God before the Fall. This completely distorts the biblical picture of God as a just and holy Judge and of man's universal problem-

-that all are vile, evil, wicked, rebellious sinners, for "There is none righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10).

It's nevertheless a worthwhile read. One of Nee's fortes is his ability to use simple yet powerful illustrations. The last two chapters in particular are very good.

Ron says

Nee's classic study of the book of Romans.

Everything positive I wrote about the ebook edition of The Normal Christian Church Life applies to this edition.

This is a new experience for me. Having purchased and read the ebook version of The Normal Christian Church Life, I purchased the hard copy and read it as well. (I bought it because of the frustration trying to find passages for reference and quoting. Immediately, I noticed how much better this edition was. I haven't done a line for line comparison, but the ebook doesn't seem to include all the text of the hard copy, and it certainly isn't organized as a ready reference.

Excellent book

Dave Johnson says

Oh. My. God. This is the best book I've ever read--and I absolutely mean that with all the sincerity that I can muster.

This book was so good, in fact, that it made me reevaluate how I rate books. There is absolutely nothing flawed in it. NOTHING. And Nee's message was poignant, timeless, and so powerful that it really affected my life. It changed me. I mean, it's almost unbelievable. His message of grace and of the blood, cross, and life of Christ is amazing. His message on the Holy Spirit--though I'm familiar with many charismatic messages on him--blew me away. The way he described the reliance on the soulish life versus the life of God living through us made me repent to God. His message on the Law of God and God's grace living through us totally upended my notions of God and of my service to him. And the way he ended the book with his points on wasting ourselves for the ministering of Jesus wrecked me. It WRECKED me.

I wish I could give it higher praise. I wish I could put this book in the hands of every new believer and make them read it and understand it.

I can't say enough. I believe I'll have to say "thank you" to Nee when we meet in heaven.

Cheryl says

This author spoke to my heart in powerful words on Romans 6-8 and helped me to understand the strength I have in Christ is the source of conquering sin. To live a "normal Christian life" is to live in the Spirit and reckon myself dead to sin. "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin

might be done away with..." Through the power of Christ I can live a righteous life in the Spirit!

Trice says

examines a truth you've heard a million times and takes it straight to the heart and soul. what a brother to know!

Ann says

Absolutely one of the best books ever on grace and living in freedom. Required reading for every Christian.

Bryan Robinson says

A thoughtful, deep book written about the Christian living in Christ, as opposed to living in our own efforts. Heavy emphasis on Romans. Watchman Née was a Christian in China that spent the last twenty years (1950-1970) in prison. He died in prison for his Christian beliefs.

It was difficult to narrow the book down to just a few points. Here are my favorite quotes:

1. p5 - The Blood deals with what we have done, whereas the Cross deals with where we are. The blood disposed of our sins, while the cross strikes at the root of our capacity to sin.
2. p11 - We do not wash and iron clothes that we are going to throw away. The "flesh" is too bad to be cleansed; it must be crucified.
3. p13 - A clear conscience is never based upon our attainment; it can only be based on the work of the Lord Jesus in the shedding of his blood.
4. p19 - The reason why we so readily accept Satan's accusations is that we are still hoping to have some righteousness of our own.
5. p46 - God's way of deliverance is altogether different from man's way. Man's way is to try to suppress sin by seeking to overcome it; God's way is to remove the sinner.
6. p51 - Here I feel is the secret: not asking how I can get sap out of the Vine into myself, but remembering that Jesus is the Vine - the root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit, all indeed.
7. p52 - If we recognize that fact that we are in, we make no effort to enter. If we had more revelation, we should have fewer prayers and more praises. We spend so much time praying for ourselves just because we are blind to what God has done.
8. p54 - "Knowing this," says Paul, "that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Rom 6:6), "Knowing this?" Yes, but do you know it? "Or are ye ignorant?" (Rom 6:3). May the Lord graciously open our eyes.
9. p62 - Those who say "God can" or "God may" or "God must" or "God will" do not necessarily believe at all. Faith always says, "God has done it."
10. p71 - Because Christ has died; and since "one died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor 5:14). Whether my experience proves it or seems to disprove it, the fact remains unchanged.
11. p79 - We do not try to produce fruit or concentrate upon the fruit produced. Our business is to look away to him. As we do so he undertakes to fulfill his Word in us.
12. p79 - How do we abide? Look at Christ and see yourself in him. Rest in the fact that God has put you in

his Son, and live in the expectation that he will complete his work in you. It is for him to make good the glorious promise that "sin shall not have dominion over you." (Rom 6:14).

13. p106 - Man's thought is always of the punishment that will come to him if he sins, but God's thought is always of the glory man will miss if he sins.

14. p127 - Experience will only come as we rest upon divine facts. God's facts are the basis of our experience.

15. p140 - The Corinthians problem was that they failed to realize the greatness of the One who had come to make his abode in their hearts. The remedy for their unspirituality was simply to know who he really was that dwelt within.

16. p141 - Christian, do you know, there are resources enough in your own heart to meet the demand of every circumstance in which you will ever find yourself?

17. p162 - God's righteous demands remain forever, and if I live I must meet those demands; but if I die the Law has lost its claim upon me. It cannot follow me beyond the grave. The all inclusive death of Jesus Christ has forever freed us from the Law.

18. p168 - When you are reduced to utter weakness and are persuaded that you can do nothing whatever, then God will do everything. A drowning man cannot be saved until he is utterly exhausted and ceases to make the slightest effort to save himself.

19. p185 - He is not a retailer dispensing grace to us in packets, measuring out some patience to the impatient, some love to the unloving, some meekness to the proud, in quantities that we take and work on as a kind of capital. He has given only one gift to meet all our needs: his Son Christ Jesus.

20. p193 - Many Christians endeavor to drive themselves by willpower, and then think the Christian life a most exhausting and bitter one. The very highest point the will can reach is willpower.

21. p 194 - Why do men use willpower to try to please God? a) They may have never experienced the new birth, in which case they have no new life to draw upon or b) they may have been born again and the life be there, but they have not learned to trust that life. It is a new revelation of what we already have. I feel I cannot emphasize this too much. It is not something fresh from God's hand, but a new unveiling of what he has already given. It is a new discovery of a work already done in Christ, for the words "made me free" are in the past tense. If I really see this and put my faith in him, there is no absolute necessity for the experience of Romans 7.

22. p197 - But God has never told us to force ourselves to be what we are not naturally; to try, by taking thought, to add to our spiritual stature. "Consider the lilies...they grow." He is directing our attention to the new law of life in us.

23. p221 - "God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith", but alone in isolation man can never fulfill God's purpose. It requires a complete Body to attain the stature of Christ and to display his glory. Oh, that we might really see this!

24. p233 - Every day we are learning these two lessons: a rising up of the life of this One, and a checking and a handing over to death of that other soul-life.

25. p235 - Our subconscious thought is that really we can do it quite well ourselves, even if God does not ask us to do it nor empower us for it. Too often we have been caused to act, to think, to decide, to have power, regardless of him. Many of us Christians today are men with overdeveloped souls. We have grown too big in ourselves. When we are in that condition, it is possible for the life of the Son of God in us to be confined and crowded almost out of action.

26. p240 - Origin determines destination, and what was "of the flesh" originally will never be made spiritual by any amount of "improvement." The flesh profiteth nothing.

27. p243 - Psalm 36:9 - In thy light shall we see light. The first light is the light which belongs to God but is shed upon us; the second is the knowledge imparted by that light. No turning within, no introspective self-examination will ever bring us to that point.

28. p247 - Light has one law: it shines wherever it is admitted. We may shut it out of ourselves; it fears nothing else. If we throw ourselves open to God, He will reveal.

29. p263 - We shall eventually recognize where the will of God lies, and shall discover there, and there alone, our heart's true delight.
30. p270 - It is not that you can derive a certain satisfaction from preaching or for doing this work or that work for God, and therefore you do it. No, you do it now because it is the will of God, and regardless of whether or not it gives you conscious joy. The joy you know in doing his will lies deeper than your fluctuating emotions.
31. p272 - When the body becomes our life we live like beasts. When the soul becomes our life we live as rebels and fugitives from God - gifted, cultured, educated, no doubt, but alienated from the life of God. But when we come to live our life in the Spirit and by the Spirit, though we still use our soul faculties just as our physical faculties, they are now the servants of the Spirit; and when we have reached that point God can really use us.
32. p283 - I am afraid we lay too much emphasis on the good of sinners and we have not sufficiently appreciated what the Lord has in view as his goal.
33. p286 - What are we seeking? Do we seek usefulness as the disciples did? Our whole question of "usefulness" to God is in our terms of things that can be measured and put on record. The Lord waits to hear us say: "Lord, I do not mind about that. If I can only please thee, it is enough.
34. p292 - No true work will ever begin in a life without first of all a sense of need being created. But how can this be done? We cannot inject spiritual appetite by force into others; we cannot compel people to be hungry. Hunger has to be created, and it can be created in others only by those who carry with them the impressions of God.
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Dustin says

This is a book that is in a handful of life-changers on my shelf. Watchman Nee so clearly communicates the Gospel message and the effect of Christ's atoning death on the Cross. Before reading, I wouldn't have been able to articulate the Gospel message effectively, but after, I finally felt I had something to stand on.

The book is timeless, a joy to read, easy to understand, and highly recommended to everyone, especially those new to the Christian faith.

I was also ecstatic when I found it for sale for a dollar at the local thrift store. I first read it by finding the pdf and printing off a chapter at a time.

We need Christ's blood to save us from what we've done, and His Cross to save us from what we are.

Sarah says

[Each chapter is a pearl. For example, the last chapter is entitled, 'The Goal of the Gospel' and concentrates on the action of Mary who took the alabaster box of precious 'spikenard', broke it and anointed the Lord. To Judas and even the Disciples this was a terrible *waste* (should have been sold to help the poor, etc.), but Jesus rebuked them and said

Nathanael says

I am rather biased about this book because I read it during a cross-roads in my life and it influenced me in a way that has only brought joy and fulfillment.

Nee does an incredible job of exploring the scope of what Christ spiritually accomplished in His death, resurrection, and ascension. Having been raised Christian, I knew all the stories and could repeat what Jesus did for us, but most of that was conditioning and I had no personal identification with any of it. Through this book I was able to throw out a bunch of junk and actually have an encounter with the Living God. I don't credit that experience to this book, but this book definitely set it up.

It is theologically sound, very accessible, and practical. The attitudes it encourages WORK and have made my life look and feel much more like the normal Christian life.

Dave Borders says

This book is almost too good. It is not an easy read by any means. I usually can only read a paragraph or two before I have to stop and reflect. Watchman Nee was an amazing man as well, as I learned reading a biography. He never answered any of his critics even when they told outright lies about him. He was always confident that God would vindicate him.

Give this book a shot.

Dana Roberts says

A GOOD BOOK FATALLY FLAWED.

I read this book five times. Underlined and yellowed. Finally the binding went and I relied upon an ebook. As I read more I realized that is just one, often repeated, form of Keswick and Brethren sanctification. Some have called Nee's theology gnostic and that's what appealed to others. We have our own Dalai Lama. We don't have to think. I found the great teacher. To disagree with Nee is immediately labeled as 'unspiritual.' Well maybe it is but maybe it isn't.

The key to the normal Christian life and being spiritual is in understanding principles. You repeat, reckon those principles and you become 'normal.' But there are two important elements missing. Christianity is more than having the facts and principles. It is working out our salvation (Phil 2:12). It is a running a race (Gal 5; Phil 2; Heb 12), it is remaining like a soldier and the working hard/cultivating like a farmer (2 Tim 2). It is having burdens. It is being a Christian and bearing one another's burdens. It is discerning the truth, and not trusting one teacher, whether that is Paul, Peter or Watchman Nee.

Normally a Chinese Christian pastor teaches and preaches standing up. Nee sat down and did not have a close relationship with anyone in the church. He was seen as 'the teacher.' People found comfort in not using their mind, not questioning what he said, not listening to another Bible teacher. And there's the problem, hubris. He was a good teacher but after The Spiritual Man debacle his teaching was not to be questioned. If anyone in the church in Shanghai or Fuzhou read other authors outside Keswick or Brethren teachings they

might have seen what was missing.

"Brother Nee; doesn't the spiritual walk include a struggle with the assist of the loving and godly fellowship/Kononia of the whole church, prayer, and Holy Scriptures?"

That's what Paul repeats in nearly all his letters. It appears in the works of many Christian authors throughout the Christian centuries. But whenever anyone questioned his teachings he would either get angry, or says nothing. In 1936 he wrote about disagreements as the cross he shares with Christ. NOT!

Read The Normal Christian Life. But also read the thoughts and teachings of Eric Lidell, J. I. Packer, John Stott, and even Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. Meditate first on Scripture.

If you resond, even disagree with my review I will thank you, consider its wisdom, and NOT consider it suffering.

Joe Dantona says

Watchman Nee had a profound understanding of the normal Christian life, which is wholly different from the 'average' Christian life. The normal Christian life consists of realizing and acknowledging the divine fact that Christians were (not will be) crucified with Christ in the first century A.D. In a way that we do not yet understand, God has included us in the death (and resurrection) of His only Son, and by doing has made many sons. The Christian life goes off-track when it forgets these facts or, more often, when the Christian attempts to live by his own will-power. Nee gives the example of the great saint Paul (surely none but the haughty would claim superiority to that titan of the faith) who said, "That which I do not want to do, I do." Paul found that on his own strength he could not properly control himself.

But Paul saw that "we have been crucified with Christ" and if so we shall also rise (or as Nee would put it, are risen) with Him. The Christian life must be a continual outworking of the Spirit of Christ in us, living out the life of Christ in our lives. We must not try to die to our sin but realize that we are in fact already dead to it. We must not try to obey God on our own power (for we will always fail) but to let Him work out our salvation and redemption in us. There is no other way. "For it is no longer I who live, but Christ liveth in me."

Gayle says

If I could give this book more stars I would. It spoke to me in ways that I never anticipated and I've fallen in love with Watchman Nee's writings. I will definitely be reading more of his books. I highly recommend this for Christians who are seeking to grow in their understanding of their walk with Christ. There is depth that is understandable; something not always found.

Austin Zhang says

"God shows us through His Word that He has only one answer to every human need: His Son, Jesus Christ."
~Watchman Nee

I've been meaning to read this book for a while now and I finally got the chance this year. I did try to read this book, though, a year ago, but nothing really came out of it, so I stopped. But after reading it this year, I was truly amazed by the various aspects that are required of us to live a normal Christian life which just focuses all on Jesus Christ Himself.

Watchman Nee presents the truths of the Bible in a very practical way, including personal experiences that help in understanding them. The book is focused on the aspects of a Christian's living found in the New Testament and portrays them in simpler words, but still holding to the deep meaning behind it. I can say this book has already begun to change my life. Many times after reading, I sometimes just stop and think about what I just read and offer a fresh and new consecration to God after receiving this vision of my normal living.

This book is amazing (to say the least) and would recommend to any Christian, new or old.
