

# CHRISTIANITY

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*“Not the Form But the Essence”*

# Essence

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- a: the *permanent* as contrasted with the *accidental* element of being b: the properties or attributes by means of which something can be placed in its proper class or identified as being what it is c: the most significant element, quality, or aspect of a thing.

**Question:**

**What are the permanent elements of *being* in Christianity?**

# The Foundation

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**By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, *his work will be shown for what it is*, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.**

# Discerning Maturity

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## Question:

**What are some reasons that the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the people rejected the Messiah?**

- ❑ **They failed to recognize the spirit (essence) of the Law.**
- ❑ **They valued *form* over *essence*, they failed to recognize the Person, the living fulfillment of it.**
- ❑ **They could not see that it is not the forms which constitute true religion.**

**Baptist despise Lutherans, Lutherans despise Methodist, Pentecostals despise Liturgy and more subdued worship, etc.**

# True Religion

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**James 1:22-25**

**Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does.**

# **Its Manifestation**

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**James 1:26, 27**

**If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**

# Avoid World Wisdom

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**I Cor 3:18-23**

**Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.**

# **IT's the Cross!!!**

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## **Galatians 6:14-16**

**Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.**

# The Rule is Unity

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## Phil 3:17-20

Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to *the pattern we gave you*. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

# The Pattern

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- **Phil 1:3 – (2)** then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being ***one in spirit*** and ***purpose***.
- **3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility ***consider others*** better than yourselves.
- **4** Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of ***others***.
- **5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
  - Made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,
  - He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
  - Do all things without murmurings and disputings:
  - Hold forth the word of life;
  - Care for the state of the church (preserve the good while establishing the new)

# Avoid Stumbling Blocks

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**Romans 14:7, 12-13**

- ❑ **For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.**
- ❑ **So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.**

# The Cross

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**Gal 2:20**

**I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**