

The
Christian Disciple
And
Vocation

“...The world is the arena in which we are to live and love,
witness and serve, suffer and die for Christ . . .”

-- John Stott --

Christian:

A person who believes Jesus Christ is who He said He was

One who believes in the Triune God

Father, our Father, The Creator, God Almighty

Son, God's Son, Human yet Divine, our Savior

Holy Spirit, God's own Spirit, Indwells in us, Counsels us

Three separate beings, yet One

The mystery of the Holy Trinity

Disciple:

"A person who is a pupil or an adherent of a doctrine of another."

In this case, "any follower of Christ."

** The New Testament Greek word translated "disciple" is *mathates* which is described as a "learner on the way."

Vocation:

One's worldly work

"a particular occupation, business, or profession; calling"

Craft; Employment; Job

Table of Contents

1. Introduction...
2. Who He is...
3. We now are...
4. Who He asks us to be...
5. How He asks us to live...
6. What He asks us to do...
7. Vocation and Being a Disciple...
8. Some Occupational Temptations and Struggles
9. Evil Exists...People Suffer...The Church Must Engage
10. "That Day"
11. Our Faith, Our Hope
12. A Parting Note

Introduction . . . Why I Wrote This

I am writing this to fellow disciples in Christ. This is not written for non-believers or those who believe in “a God” or even those who believe Christ was the Son of God, either intellectually or supernaturally, but choose not to follow the life Jesus Christ taught us to follow. I’m writing this for those choosing to follow the Way.

This is written to encourage and remind fellow sojourners who are endeavoring to be who God called us to be and those endeavoring to live the life Jesus asked us (and taught us) to live. This is written to be a reminder and encouragement that we must choose between “who” the world and Satan wants us to be and the Kingdom of God, here on earth.

It is so difficult in our vocations to be a true disciple of Christ because of the demands and temptations of the world. What happens is many of us lead a bifurcated or dualistic life . . . one foot in the Kingdom and one foot in the world, instead of the holistic life the Word calls us to live.

I admit, I write this with some degree of fear as I am not a pastor or priest, not a theologian of any kind. I am simply a struggling disciple of Christ who God has extended His grace to repeatedly throughout my flawed and sin filled life. I am older and a still working businessman.

I started vocationally as a carpenter and ski instructor . . . spent years as an entrepreneur and businessman . . . served in a Governor’s cabinet and now I am a real estate broker, working with high net worth clients. I have had hundreds of employees, managed multi-million dollar budgets and experienced worldly success and failure. Always struggling with the demands of the world and yet ever aware of the call from God. Living with one foot in the world and one foot in the Kingdom does not work. That is not who God calls us to be.

In my late teens and early twenties the sins I committed while teaching skiing were the kind that were easy to identify. Drunkenness, sexual immorality, arrogance, disrespect . . . no doubt, I was no choir boy, though I had consciously and openly given my life to Christ in my early teens. I lived an openly, transparent, sinful life. A life I know regret. This time in my life my sin was very visible to any observer. Again, these were the easy sins to identify.

As I grew older, matured in my faith, I have lived the life of husband, father and businessman. I have tried to be more diligent to my faith in Christ, but frankly, my life in Christ and my life in this world have been very difficult at times (and admittedly incredibly blessed at others). My sins have been no less than my youthful indulgences but often easier to disguise, whether I was trying to or not. And many of my sins are found “acceptable realities” of living and working in the world by my peers, even my Christian peers. But I know better, God’s indwelling Spirit reminds me that like Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane I must choose . . . the way of the world or the way of the Word. Will I trust my life to God Almighty . . . the Triune God, or will I hedge my bets and choose the promises of the world and fall to the temptations of the enemy?

Like it or not, we all must choose . . . as a disciple you know this to be true.

You know when I wrote this I just decided to write what was on my heart. I have written a lot over the years, most of which just sits and collects dust. Fear has kept me from sharing most of my writings. Always afraid of my lack of theological training, afraid I would leave something important out, afraid that my sentences were awkward and lacked the gift of a word smith. Afraid I might offend someone or error in what I say. But then I thought about how important this is. Someone that has spent a lifetime in Christian work hasn't experienced what you and I have and what we face in so many cases. So you or I have temptations that they can only philosophically or intellectually understand, that they may have never experienced. It is tough being a worker in a capitalistic society and being obedient to our call as disciples. The influence of power, money and materialism dominate our societies. In many of our cases it is war out there every day.

Finally, knowing that many of the old saints that I read never had editors, wordsmiths, the help of publishers . . . the likes of Chambers, Murray, etc. gives me the courage to write to you. I am just joining you in the battle; I am encouraging you to have confidence in the Truth, the Word, in Jesus. We know His way is The Way. We may not understand where we are in life and why, but there is so much we do know and as a disciple, spiritually reborn, we need to be who He calls us to be no matter our work or station in life. Have faith disciples, He will never abandon you, as long as you remain in Him, for He will remain in you.

Who He is...

Let's think about who He is – this Triune God we believe in. This will be helpful as we think thru our work life. It is important for me to be reminded that God told Jacob "I am God Almighty" (Genesis 35:11) . . . that doesn't leave a lot for translation. It is pretty clear who He said He was. And as a disciple we believe that.

In Revelation He says, "I am the Alpha and Omega, . . . who is, and who was, and who is to come, ..." (Rev 1:8).

He says again in Revelation, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Beginning and the End." (Rev 22:13)

Jesus said, "...I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me..." (John 14:6)

He also said, "...I will ask the Father, and He will give you another counselor to be with you forever – the spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you..." this, the Holy Spirit of God.

Importantly the Apostle Paul reminds us, "**...No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.**"

This is a supernatural sealing in your heart that "you know, that you know." This is the telling of the Trinity.

The divine writings in scripture teach us that Jesus is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Teacher and our Intercessor.

And the Teacher said, "...with God all things are possible."

I don't know about you but I find that encouraging. As a disciple we know the need for our salvation and redemption. We long to be taught and we want God to hear our prayers and to be in relationship with Him. And we want to know the seemingly impossible is possible.

So think about these words . . . think about who He is . . . and then rest in that. There, I believe you will find hope, security and peace.

In Him, you will find the way to the life you are to lead.

He tells us to ...

"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10)

Sit with this for a while; let it soak in.

We Now Are...

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh (as your mother did for you) but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." The Spirit of God in you.

Paul tells us "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God." He further tells us "you have been crucified with Christ" and "you no longer live" but Christ lives in you. Paul goes on to say the life we live in the body, we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us. So, we, children of God, are new creations. Consider what that means. He is "Abba," our father.

Paul reminds us "don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." He teaches on, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?" "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, who you received from God? You are not your own: you were bought at a price."

You have been born again, child of God. You and your brothers and sisters in Christ are the body of Christ on earth – you are the church.

I share here with you what Andrew Murray teaches us about our new lives...

Christ Lives in Me

In these words, Paul expresses three great thoughts.

The first of these finds expression in the words "I have been crucified with Christ." When Christ died upon the cross, all of God's people were identified with Him and included in that death. As we all died in Adam and inherited his sinful nature, so we all have been crucified together with Christ. Moreover, the power of His death now works in us daily. In Christ we have died to sin, so that we can live to God. Our union with Christ is total and dynamic, in that the power of His death and His life are both active in us.

Paul's second thought is, "I no longer live." Having participated in Christ's death, he was able to say that. This is also the truth for every believer. My life has been given up to death on the cross of Christ. By faith, I see my old life, lived under the sentence of death, as now ended. While it may still reside and be able to operate within my sinful human nature, I have been set free in Christ, so that I am no longer obliged to serve sin.

The third thought expressed here by Paul is, "Christ lives in me." Herein lies the secret of living a Christlike life. Christ was not only crucified for me. Nor does He live in heaven only to intercede for me. *He actually lives in me!* As His Father lived and worked in Him, so Christ now lives and works in us.

Take time to meditate on this. Allow the Holy Spirit to cause these words to live within you, and to gloriously manifest Christ in you.

-Andrew Murray

Who He Asks us to be....

Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching."

Peter said, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."

In these short years of His ministry, Jesus taught us and asked of us many things, but who did He ask us to "be"?

We know He asked us to be loving, merciful, kind, compassionate, gentle, patient, humble, forgiving and self-controlled. He asked us to be servants. Cheerful-givers. We try to be these things and sometimes we succeed and often we fail. We are to be honest, people of integrity and good character. We should not gossip and we should grow in maturity; yes, spiritual maturity.

If we are honest with ourselves this is tough stuff. Circumstances can and do force us to be different than who he asks us to be. Remember, He also said, "apart from me you can do nothing." Only in Him (and He in us) can we be who He asks us to be. Never forget that.

How He Asks us to Live...

"It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only" (Luke 4:8)

We are to love our neighbor:

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16).

We are to be a letter from Christ:

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor. 3:2-3).

We are to obey the Ten Commandments:

"And God spoke all these words:

'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God punishing the children of the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day made it holy.

Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything

that belongs to your neighbor.'
When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountains in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.'
Moses Said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.'
The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was." (Exodus 20:1-21)

We are to be a good Samaritan:

"On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'
'What is written in the Law?' he replied, 'How do you read it?'
He answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'; and, 'love your neighbor as yourself.'
'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied, "do this and you will live.'
But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'
In reply Jesus said, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'
'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?'
The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.'
Jesus told him, 'God and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:25-37)

We are to live a life of faith and deeds:

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

*But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."
Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what
I do" (James 2:14-19)*

We are to live a life in the Spirit:

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

*Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. **Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.**" (Rom 8:1-17)*

Divine instruction; listen well.

What He Asks us to Do...

Our first priority: *"..seek first his kingdom and his righteousness..." (Matt. 6:33)*

How we are to pray:

"This, then, is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven.

Hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:9-13).

Remember the sum of the law:

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12).

Don't be overwhelmed by all the teaching in scripture; it is reminding us here the sum of it all.

To be obedient to the Greatest Commandment:

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?'

'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these' (Matt. 22:35-40).

To participate in the Great Commission:

"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some

doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matt. 28:16-20).

Listen to his Lessons in Giving:

"As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'I tell you the truth,' he said, 'this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on'" (Lk 21"1-4).

"Then Jesus said to them, 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Matt 22:21).

"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (1 John 3:17).

To work out our salvation:

"...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil 2:12-13).

Our charge to help those in need:

"Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow" (Isaiah 1:17)

To understand The Cost of Discipleship:

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. **What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?** For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done" (Matt 16:24-27).*

To be Christ's ambassador:

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal thru us" (2 Cor. 5:20).

His words, not mine.

Being a Disciple and Our Vocation...

“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent” (John 6:29)

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Matt. 6:24)

This is the example Jesus gave, but our bondage can be to many things.

Who He asks us to be...how he asks us to live...what He asks us to do...who we are as a new creation and child of God shapes our vocational lives. We aren't to live as two different people – a son or daughter of the world while at work or engaged with the world, and then a son or daughter of the Kingdom as we live out the rest of our lives.

We are now sons and daughters of the Kingdom. When Jesus asks us to pray “His will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” we are a part of that prayer – His will being employed in our earthly lives including our vocational lives. As disciples we have chosen the Kingdom – our lives and actions should reflect that decision.

The whole point is that we are called to think and act differently. The non-believing world should see and feel a difference in how we conduct our work lives. People don't need lectures on Bible verses; they need to experience Jesus through us. Through our integrity, our compassion, our mercy, our kindness, our gentleness, our giving, our self control...our love. No matter your vocation...it makes no difference. The light and life of Christ is either visible in us or not. His grace and love extends through us or not. Our calling may be to a specific job, task or cause, or it may be to be His ambassador for His Kingdom. Our calling may be for others to experience His love through us.

The world promises us things that are so enticing we have difficulty not being captured by those promises.

The world demands things of us that we can come to fear that our submission to those demands is in fact necessary for our survival.

The world offers us things/ideas that are evil and dangerous. To choose the ways of the world over the ways of the kingdom could look naïve or insane to a non-believer or a nominal believer. To choose the ways of the Kingdom over the way of the world may feel to you dangerous or impossible or simply too impractical for our complex, enlightened, educated world that we live and work in each day of our earthly life.

Jesus had to choose between the temptations presented to him by Satan. He chose to trust in His Father.

Jesus had to choose, the day of his crucifixion, and the night before, as he prayed in Gethsemane, where to place his trust. Whom to believe...what to believe.

You, disciple, know in your heart he choose wisely or you would not be a follower of Jesus. You know this because He abides in you. He is there to guide you, to remind you; yes, even to protect you.

You will have a multitude of choices in your life. Seek Him and choose well.

When you fail seek Him and ask His forgiveness. It will always be there. There is no time limit or expiration date on His grace.

Your choices will affect your peace, your joy – the core of your living. Only His grace can restore these things once lost.

I know it is hard out there...I face these temptations daily or have in my past or will in my future. The work world can be a very difficult place – remember Jesus said this, “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Brother or sister, believe that.

There are sins and temptations common to all mankind; ones that are broad and deep. In the days of Pope St. Gregory and St. John Cassian, there evolved the list of “the seven deadly sins.” Few spiritual people would argue that list from any religion. Gandhi compiled his own list to be aware of...they are described as the “seven social sins.” Read these lists, contemplate them...some or all of these sins tempt us, capture us, destroy us:

The Seven Deadly Sins:

1. Pride vs. Humility
2. Greed vs. Generosity
3. Envy vs. Love
4. Wrath/Anger vs. Kindness
5. Lust vs. Self Control
6. Gluttony vs. Faith and Temperance
7. Sloth vs Zeal

“The other sins work together to deaden the spiritual senses so we first become slow to respond to God and then drift completely into the sleep of complacency.”

Mohandas K. Gandhi – Seven Social Sins:

1. Politics without principle
2. Wealth without work
3. Pleasure without conscience
4. Knowledge without character
5. Commerce without morality
6. Science without humanity
7. Worship without sacrifice

Most of us work at a job for a living. We work to provide for ourselves, our family, for loved ones and others in need. But whether we are employer, employee, trade person, academic, business person, professional, politician, government worker, entrepreneur, manager or leader – what the work world asks of us, suggests to us or demands of us is often at odds with the teachings of Christ and the commands of God. So, we must choose...and how difficult those choices can be! My world of business has many, many temptations and choices that all of us in this world struggle with. Your world would have a list with some of those same temptations but others specific to your occupation. I quickly listed 100 temptations/struggles . . . you can read them if you'd like. At first it seemed ludicrous to list 100 (however they came to me easily) and if you are so inclined read them.

These are 100 temptations out of more than one could possibly list. These are temptations I have found or watch my peers, my colleagues, and my friends struggle with. I am not expecting you to read all 100, unless you are drawn to do so.

I might suggest you make your own list, bring into the light that which tempts you, has tempted you or you have fallen pray to. If necessary repent, make new choices, ask for God's help and His protection. Ask the Holy Spirit to set off a warning signal in your heart when the temptations that come into your life, present themselves. I will say it is important you give time to this.

You are assaulted on a daily basis with thoughts and potential actions contrary to the will of God. I warn you not to take this lightly; just because other Christians may have justified some sin don't you accept their decision as the will of God. Do not be that naïve or lazy. If it feels wrong take it to the Lord...take the time to take it to the Lord. I cannot overstate how important this is.

It is so important that you know what scripture, the Word, teaches because Jesus promised that he would remind you of what he taught. How can you know what He taught, which would be the will of God, unless you study His teachings? Again, I cannot overstate the importance of this.

Nothing will spotlight sin like the Holy Bible and your time in prayer with your Savior and your Father.

“God has not called me to be successful. He has called me to be faithful.”

--Mother Teresa

Some Occupational Temptations and Struggles....
100...to start with...

1. *To hedge your bets with worldly security and decisions in lieu of placing your bets on the promises, teachings and commandments of the Lord God Almighty*
2. *To be owned or captured by ones occupation at the expense of God, family and others*
3. *Fear of the world and man . . . to worry about the future*
4. *To lead a bi-furcated or dualistic life:*
 - a. *Unholy business or professional practice/life*
 - b. *Holy avocational life (and giving)*
 - c. *Being two people as you live out your life - to have one foot in the Kingdom and one foot in the world*
5. *The temptation to lose a life's perspective, as a child of God, as you are swept into the pressures, promises and temptations of the world*
6. *Not to have confidence in the truth*
7. *To not seek first the kingdom of God... but to actually seek first the ways of the world*
8. *To practice Capitalism without conscience or love; to use this tool, this doctrine without the Kingdom of God in mind; without Christ in mind*
9. *The temptation to take the advice of man and not to listen to God*
10. *Believing your capacity to fend off temptation is great enough to ignore...*
 - a. *the need for time in scripture*
 - b. *contemplative time in scripture*
 - c. *solitude with the Lord*
 - d. *silence before the Lord*
 - e. *prayer/contemplation with the Lord*
 - f. *time in worship and teaching with others in the body of Christ - the Church*
 - g. *time in community with the body of Christ - the Church*
 - h. *life sharing and accountability with a small group of Believers*
11. *To believe that the world has evolved to the point where Biblical teaching doesn't address this "new world" and therefore can be outdated or incomplete*
12. *To believe that God 1) doesn't care about your vocation or understand it; 2) that you therefore can/need to lead a bifurcated life to survive in your vocation - live by the world's rules at work and by His way outside of work*
13. *The temptation to believe that God is not present and active in His church... the body of believers -- the "royal priesthood" - the holy temples that His believers are*

14. *The temptation to believe that to "follow him" is vocational suicide in today's western world or at best forces you into a life's work of mediocrity*
15. *To be silent when you should speak up or out*
16. *The pressure, constant pressure, on acceptable profit, returns, timelines*
17. *Pursuit of money just for the pursuit of money*
18. *Use of intimidation*
19. *Manipulation of employees emotionally (or others) by employers*
20. *False carrots for employees, partners, others*
21. *Tax cheating*
22. *Financial reporting manipulation*
23. *To eliminate competition unfairly*
24. *Lack of self control*
25. *Use of anger as a means of intimidation*
26. *Coveting (what others have, or others' success)*
27. *Greed*
28. *Pride ("Pride is the chief cause of misery in every family and every nation since the beginning of time" - C.S. Lewis)*
29. *Shortcuts (when they are detrimental)*
30. *Selfishness*
31. *Corruption of power; Abuse of power*
32. *Deceit; lies; half truths; unspoken truths that are relevant*
33. *Abuse or impure use of others to achieve a means*
34. *Deceitfulness of wealth*
35. *Belief in the promises of the world*
36. *To believe the grass is always greener*
37. *Ignoring: "the work of God is to believe"*
38. *Ignoring: "make it your ambition to lead a simple life..."*
39. *Not giving yourself the time to hear from God*
40. *Not to be kind or compassionate when one should be*
41. *Believing you don't need God*
42. *Believing God doesn't care*
43. *Believing God is absent*
44. *Being involved in unholy commerce or practice of your profession*
45. *Believing no one will know or find out*
46. *To compartmentalize and not let our faith permeate our vocations*
47. *Believing there are no consequences to our actions*
48. *Believing God doesn't want your help*
49. *Believing God needs your help (can't do without you)*
50. *Revenge (pay back)*
51. *To rationalize wrong behavior because those you are dealing with employ wrong behavior*
52. *To take on a victim mentality*
53. *To measure success using cultural standards rather than Christ*

54. *"Bottom Line" over "right"*
55. *To believe your gifts are yours not God given and therefore His (possessions, finances, talents...)*
56. *To abuse your responsibilities or to not understand the impact of your responsibilities*
57. *To take the path of least resistance to the detriment of others or yourself*
58. *The temptation to be benevolent employers or decision makers to the point of jeopardizing the "enterprise;" false or misguided love*
59. *Jealousy*
60. *To confuse blessing with self fulfilled talent/skill*
61. *Slander*
62. *Entitlement*
63. *Arrogance*
64. *To represent your compensation (commission) vs. representing the appropriate stakeholders (clients, shareholders, the company, partners, investors, etc.) that hired you to represent their best interest*
65. *To isolate ourselves from other believers and disciples*
66. *The temptation to believe what you begin in the Spirit you can live out or do in the flesh*
67. *The temptation to prioritize your worldly life in front of or before your spiritual life*
68. *To ignore the lack of "the fruit of the Spirit" in your vocational life without asking - searching for the "why" (Gal. 5:22-23)*
69. *To believe that the "truth" can't possibly apply to your current dilemma, decision or situation*
70. *Exaggerate or embellish a point to attain what we want*
71. *To believe that God is not the same "yesterday, today and tomorrow..."*
72. *To forget about "that day" (you stand before him)*
73. *To convey partial truths to stakeholders*
74. *To not convey relevant info and data to stakeholders*
75. *To not put "risk" into proper or appropriate context for stakeholders*
76. *To not go thru appropriate "due diligence" when stakeholders are counting on you to do so*
77. *To ignore the Spirit's reminders when your flesh is raging, lusting or out of control or in fear*
78. *To not wait on God (ie: Dallas Willard - "you'll know")*
79. *To not be kind*
80. *To not be gentle*
81. *To not be compassionate*
82. *To not be loving*
 - a. *All these (in 76-79) when your business situation makes you want to be just the opposite or dispassionate*
83. *To not display mercy to a competitor, opponent, enemy when you can and should*

84. *To strategize or contemplate apart from the Spirit*
85. *To not understand the impact you have on the lives of those who work for you or that look to you for leadership – the temptation to be insensitive to this tremendous responsibility*
86. *To become prideful over earthly success*
87. *To have your competitive/survival instincts override or ignore the Spirit of God that dwells in you ... so your flesh controls your actions and thoughts rather than the Holy Spirit*
88. *To ignore or be thoughtless of those lives affected by your business or professional actions or practice*
89. *The temptation to not think that your call to holiness and purity applies to your business or professional life*
90. *To imply you know more than you do*
91. *To make a decision that affects a life or lives and tell yourself “it is not personal, it is just business.” If someone is hurt of course it is personal*
92. *To judge the life of another, when there is no way for you to have the knowledge or insight to be that judge*
93. *To let fear rather than faith drive/consume your life*
94. *To believe that knowledge and/or education trumps wisdom – God given wisdom, found in the scriptures, prayers and through other disciples or believers of the Triune God*
95. *To believe you can serve both God and money (or anything else) . . . one must rule*
96. *To not recognize how short sited the lies of the world can be*
97. *The temptation to ignore or follow or engage in the lies of the world no matter how deadly they are*
98. *The temptation to accept the lies of the world no matter how ludicrous or shallow they are*
99. *To underestimate the enemy (Satan) and the tactics at his disposal*
100. *To forget that: “... the one who is in you (the Triune God) is greater than the one who is in the world (Satan).” (1 John 4:4)*

Evil Exists, People Suffer, the Church must Engage...

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6:11-13)

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17)

A Reality is evil exists...people suffer...

We all struggle with the temptation of evil, the knowledge of evil and that there is tremendous suffering in our world -- both emotional and physical.

As a mature, or maturing disciple of Jesus we all contemplate this reality. The fact is there is much we don't understand. If you know someone who can explain evil and suffering, be sure they don't really know.

However, we do know some things...Satan and Satan's agents are active and everywhere, devoted to evil and in opposition to the church, the body of Christ, and His disciples on earth.

We do know there is a spiritual battle, spiritual warfare that is never ending in the heavenly realms. From the time our children are born until we die there is a battle for our hearts and minds. We should not forget this or ever underestimate the ramifications of this war. Here our prayers are needed and our Lord should be able to count us in, in our opposition to the enemy.

Also we must consider what we, as disciples, as followers of Jesus, can do to fight evil and lessen the plight of the suffering. Does the church, Christ's body, do all we can for those in hunger? Do we in fact fight injustice, encourage and help the oppressed, defend the fatherless and take care of the worlds widows? These are tough questions, but fair questions to any disciple.

So, if we all found the way God would enable us to help (and we are all called differently), would evil and suffering be wiped from the face of the earth? We know the answer to that is probably not, but would it lessen the evil and suffering in the world? Of course it would. So, where are we? How are we doing . . . as the church? Fair question, I think.

That Day...

I am trying to think of a day, a time, that will be more important than that day we stand before our Lord and account for how we chose to spend our lives.

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.’”
(Matt 7:21)*

Hear these words:

“But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matt 12:36-37)

Listen to the parable of the Sheep and the Goats:

“When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?

When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’

Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

*Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”
(Matt. 25:31-46)*

Did we choose His Kingdom or the world?

Did we choose disobedience or obedience?

Did we choose self or others?

Did we choose love or not?

Aren't these questions worthy of our consideration?

Our Faith, Our Hope . . .

“Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading”

-- Oswald Chambers

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age – and Sarah herself was barren – was enabled to become a father because he considered himself faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, ‘It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

By faith Moses; parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as the greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. *By faith* he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger, he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. *By faith* he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

By faith the walls for Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.

By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

(Hebrews 11:1-34)

Oswald Chamber further said . . .

“The greatest fear a man has is not that he will be damned, but that Jesus Christ will be worsted, that the things He stood for – love and justice and forgiveness and kindness among men – will not win out in the end...

Then comes the call to spiritual tenacity, not to hang on and do nothing, but to work deliberately on the certainty that God is not going to be worsted.

If our hopes are being disappointed just now, it means that they are being purified. There is nothing noble the human mind has ever hoped for or dreamed of that will not be fulfilled.”

“That is the test of faith: to live every moment in dependence on that new life given us by the Holy Spirit”

--Andrew Murray

Consider these words of hope . . .

“... Everything done in the world is done by hope . . .”

-- Martin Luther

“Life is the only cure for death,” he said, ‘not the prescriptions of duty, not the threats of punishment and damnation, not the arts and refinements of education, but new, spiritual, Divine Life.

Perhaps that is the prescription we most need today.”

--Christmas Evans (Wales 1766-1838)

Here is a marvelous story from and about Charles Simeon (a British Evangelist in the Anglican Church (1759-1830) and a conversation he had with John Wesley):

“The great controversy over doctrine, at that time, centered around John Wesley the Arminian and George Whitefield the Calvinist. Simeon had a delightful personal meeting with Wesley on December 20, 1748. Wesley recorded in his journal: ‘I went to Hinxworth, where I had the satisfaction of meeting Mr. Simeon... He gave me the pleasing information, that there are three parish churches in Cambridge, wherein true scriptural religion is preached; and several young gentlemen who are happy partakers of it.’ But Simeon has left us with a more complete record of the conversation.

‘Sir,’ said Simeon to Wesley, ‘I understand that you are called an Arminian; and I have been sometimes called a Calvinist; and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers. But before I consent to begin the combat, with your permission I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction. Pray, Sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God if God had not first put it into your heart?’

‘Yes, I do indeed,’ Wesley replied.

‘And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?’

‘Yes, solely through Christ.’

‘But, sir, supposing you were first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works?’

‘No, I must be saved by Christ from first to last.’

‘Allowing then that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?’

‘No.’

‘What, then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother’s arms?’

'Yes, altogether.'

'And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?'

'Yes, I have no hope but in him.'

"Then, sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance: it is, in substance, all that I hold, and as I hold it: and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree."

"Yes, I have no hope but in Him."

This is where all we disciples place our hope . . . in Jesus Christ, the Savior who redeemed us. The One who gave us our lives back.

"I wait for the Lord, by soul waits, and in his word I hope . . ." (Psalm 130:5)

"Aren't you, like me, hoping that some person, things or event will come along to give you that final feeling of inner well-being you desire? Don't you often hope: 'May this book, idea, course, trip, job, country or relationship fulfill my deepest desire.' But as long as you are waiting for that mysterious moment you will go on running helter-skelter, always anxious and restless, always lustful and angry, never fully satisfied. You know that this is the compulsiveness that keeps us going and busy, but at the same time makes us wonder whether we are getting anywhere in the long run. This is the way to spiritual exhaustion and burnout. This is the way to spiritual death.

Well, you and I don't have to kill ourselves. We are the Beloved. We are intimately loved long before our parents, teachers, spouses, children and friends loved us or wounded us. That's the truth of our lives."

--Henry Nouwen

Hope is this . . .

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

- Jesus, Immanuel -

A Parting Note...

"Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani?"
-- *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34)*

What disciple has not cried this out to God, just as Jesus did?

Where are you Lord, I need you Lord! How can this be happening to me Lord...to my child Lord...to my loved one Lord? How can you allow this to happen in our world, to these helpless victims? Why won't you answer me Lord? Why won't you reveal your will? I am begging you.

Jesus had to choose to trust God; aided by God's spirit. We are no different. His Spirit abides, indwells in us. We too can cry out! He will hear us.

Our world, our vocations put us in and present us with circumstances and choices where we need God's help and His guidance. We must choose, like Jesus, to call on Him.

So disciple, my story is still being written, as I suspect yours is too. Choose well and remember...

Jesus said, *"Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).*

Paul reminds us, *"The one in you [the Triune God] is more powerful than the one [Satan] in the world."*

This should comfort you.

His peace and grace to you.

Scott Darkenwald

