

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation; old things have
passed away; behold, all things
have become new.”

2Cor 5:17

What does it mean To be in Christ?

(Message 1 of 6)

DISCIPLESHIP IN ACTION

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A true born again believer is without fail a disciple of Christ, seeking to learn from the Lord and apply His teachings to our life. The very reason Jesus said in Mat 6:33, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” This is true in all aspects of our lives, so we won’t have blindfolds applied by the world to deceive us.

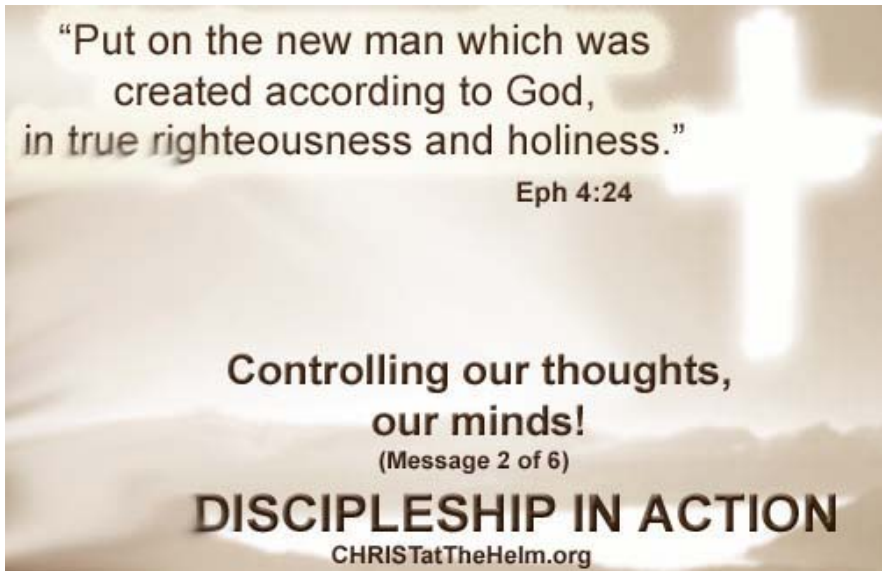
We also find in Pro 3:5-6 this command: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” When we do, we reap, as Jesus said in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

In other words, true peace is only found in Christ, just as Paul also confirmed in Col 3:15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

In essence, true disciples seek to adopt the traits and characteristics of Christ applied to their lives so as to honor and serve the King of kings and Lord of lords. The reason Jesus said in Mat 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

In light of this, where do we stand with Christ?

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“Put on the new man which was
created according to God,
in true righteousness and holiness.”

Eph 4:24

Controlling our thoughts,
our minds!

(Message 2 of 6)

DISCIPLESHIP IN ACTION

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Where do we start with becoming a true disciple of Christ?

Paul in Eph 4:22-23 tells us, “Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” In other words, it all starts in the mind, where the enemy of our faith always tries to deceive us.

Why must we be vigilant in our thoughts and minds? Rom 8:5-6, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.”

What else must we do? 2Cor 10:5, “Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” In truth, our secure source of inspiration for Christ is the Word of God.

How do we stay on the righteous path of God? Pro 16:3, “Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established.”

The end result is that if we do keep our hearts and minds on the Lord, He says, “You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on* *You*, because he trusts in *You*.” Is 26:3.

Does God’s peace reign in our hearts right now?

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Without a doubt, words spoken can either have a blessing effect or destructive consequences. We actually witness this day after day in our world that is presently so polarized, that it is difficult to make any sense of it.

As disciples of Christ, how are we to control our tongue, our words? Jesus in Mat 12:36-37 warned us, "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

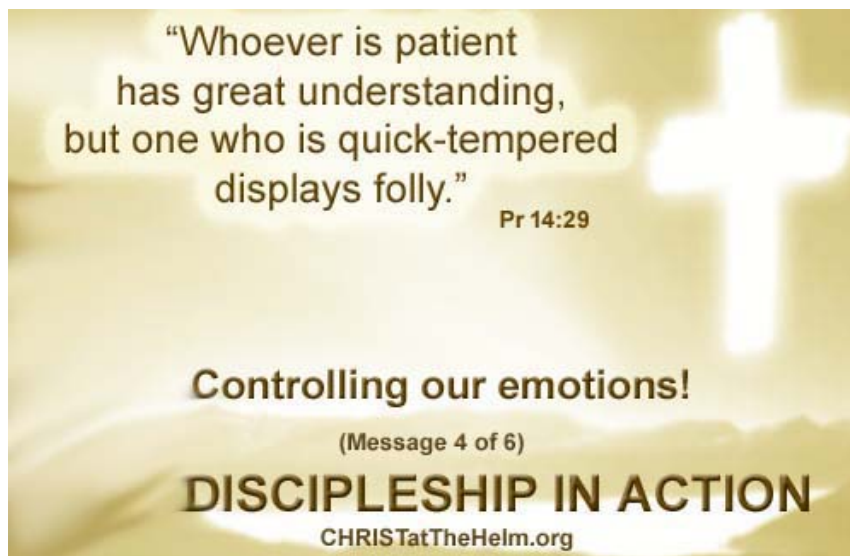
We must always remember that our words carry a serious responsibility, as we are His witnesses to the world. The reason Paul said in Eph 4:29, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

Then in Col 4:6 Paul added, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." As well, Pr 25:11 adds, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver."

A clear indication that while we may speak the truth of God, it should always be an attitude of love.

Do we share Christ's characteristic of being truthful in love, and understand our responsibility to be His witnesses and disciples?

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Emotions are defined as the part of a person's character that consists of strong feelings, as opposed to thoughts. In other words, emotions can become uncontrolled displayed reactions to momentary feelings, as opposed to well thought out decisions. The reason we oftentimes witness people's swift and even explosive reactions to life's challenges.

What does the bible teach us about controlling our emotions?

James 1:19 puts it this way: "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." In other words, we must think, evaluate, and always understand that we must control of our emotions as we carry the cross of Christ in our lives to the world.

That's why Pr 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Ecc 7:9 add, "Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools." Obviously, if we let our emotions control our behavior, we are indeed fools, and in the process provide a shameful testimony for the Lord.

Our solution is found in Eph 4:31-32, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

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True disciples of Christ must stand by God’s Word to seek freedom from the bondage of sin.

How? It all starts with an attitude of humility, as Jesus said in Mat 5:3, “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” In essence, we must be humble and submitted to God, just as Christ clearly demonstrated in submitting Himself to the Father’s will.

Next, we must forgive, just as Christ did and Paul told us in Eph 4:32, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Rom 14:17-18 adds, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God.”

Then, Heb 13:5: “*Let your conduct be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Finally, if we are to trust Christ for our lives, shouldn’t we ensure we aren’t deceived by false teachings that contradict God’s Word to please the flesh? The reason Jer 17:5 says, “Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.”

Have we freed ourselves from the bondage of sin?

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Jesus oftentimes said that we would be recognized by the fruit we produce in our lives, whether for good or evil, even as He talked about false prophets in Mat 7:15-20.

James 2:14 says, "What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?" In verse 17 He added, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." As well he added in James 1:22, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

What is the fruit that we as disciples must produce to the glory of God? Paul in Gal 5:22-23 described the fruit we should produce in our lives; "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

In essence, true disciples of Christ should produce fruit to His glory, so that the world can be convicted and seek the great joy of salvation through Christ.

Why? Didn't Jesus say in Mat 16:26, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Does our life testify to our discipleship to the Lord, through fruit produced to the glory of God?

A BLESSED & SPIRITUALLY PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL!

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