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Being in bondage is defined as being in servitude, being controlled or entrapped. It can relate to drugs or alcohol addictions, pornography, or the lust for money and its power to possess the things of the world. In other words, people become controlled by their lusts, and it therefore reduces them to a level of servitude to their bondage.

Along this line, have we ever considered that just like vultures ever circle the preys they intend to devour, evil spirits actually do the same trying to imprison people in their lusts, so as to control them?

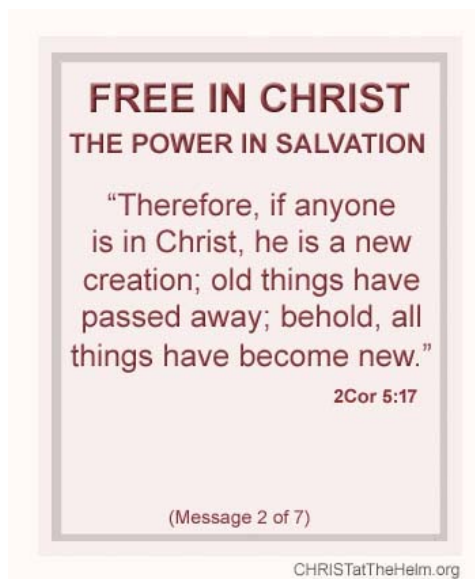
Paul in Eph 6:12 warned us, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

In all truth, those evil powers are like spiritual vultures always looking for a prey to attack and possess. And this is accomplished step by step in alluring people into bondage to the lusts of the world, to a point that they become controlled by it.

That's why Jesus in John 10:10 said, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly."

Will we choose bondage to sin, or freedom in Christ?

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If we profess to be saved in Christ, shouldn't it translate into a new life? As Paul said in 1Cor 6:19, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" In essence, if we have repented of sin, and surrendered our lives to follow Christ, shouldn't we reject the domination of the flesh?

Remember the rich young man who proudly stated that he had followed all the commandments in Mat 19:16-24? When Jesus told him to sell everything, give his money to the poor and follow Him, he went away sorrowful because he was rich and wouldn't give up his bondage to money.

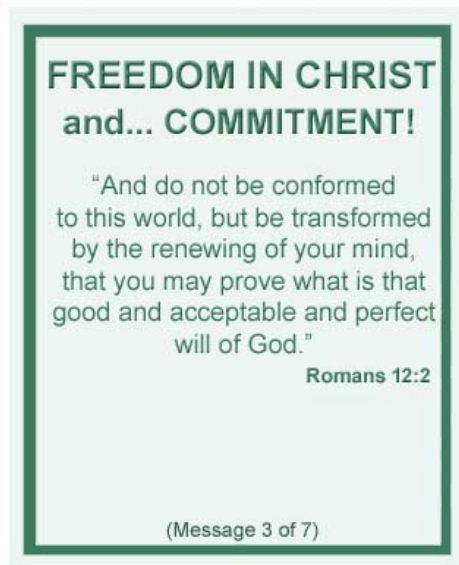
Paul in Gal 2:20 described what the new life in Christ is: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Why? "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Eph 2:10.

What's our solution? "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."

Will we believe, trust and commit to follow Christ from the heart?

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To commit is defined as to pledge, obligate and bind ourselves to a course of action, and very importantly, stick to our pledge and follow through. When we commit to follow Christ, we must follow through with discipline and dedication.

How? "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col 3:1-2)

What's more? "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring *it* to pass." (Psalm 37:5)

Then, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philip 3:13-14)

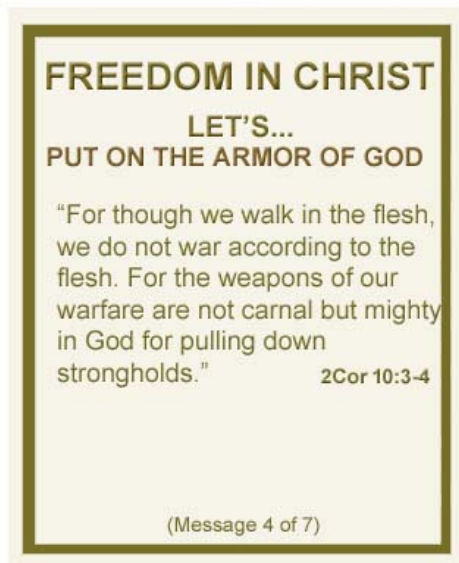
In other words, commitment requires an action of the heart, which demands that we design for ourselves a strict plan of action, discipline ourselves to follow the plan and move along by faith in Christ.

How do we follow through? "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

Where does our power come from? "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Jer 29:13

Are we in?

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We know that military people wear armor for protection against attacks, and offensively to conquer.

Paul brings this notion to a spiritual level in Eph 6:10-18 when he said to "Put on the whole armor of God". In verses 14 to 16 he says, "Having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

He concludes in verse 17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Would anyone think of going to war without the proper equipment? Yet, as believers in Christ, we are in a constant spiritual war against the forces of evil, the reason Romans 13:12-13 says, "Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

What's our best protection? "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb 4:12)

Do we realize that without the knowledge of the Word of God, we face a deceiving merciless enemy without protection?

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FREEDOM IN CHRIST
Then Let's
RESIST TEMPTATIONS

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
Col 3:5

(Message 5 of 7)

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Temptations to sin are constant in this world. Someone might say, "Well you don't understand! I go through such difficult temptations!"

1Cor 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

There's nothing new under the sun, as we're ALL tempted. The difference lies as to whether or not we are committed to resist temptation.

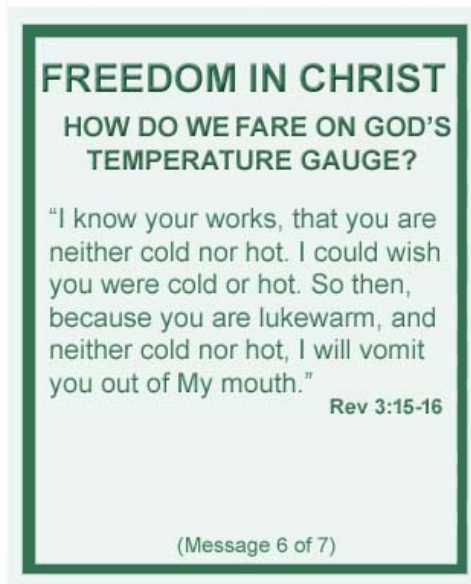
1 Cor 6:15 says, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot?"

Then, whom do we keep company with? 1Cor 15:33: "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits."

1Cor 6:19-20 adds: "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

What's our solution? "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) Will we, as Gal 5:16 says, "Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh?"

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Perhaps one of the most terrifying scripture for a double-minded person is to face the fact that Christ will vomit the lukewarm, so-called believer.

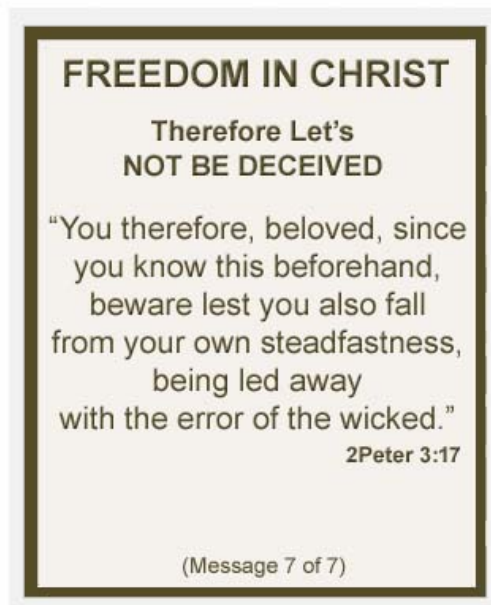
In all truth, we must make a decision as to whether we will follow Christ or the world. We can't walk one foot by the gospel and one foot in the world. That's why Jesus said in Luke 9:62, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." We walk one way or the other, right?

James 1:22 adds, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." In essence, to be double minded is to deceive ourselves into thinking we are what we're not. The time for decision to follow Christ is now, not later.

That's why Gal 16-19 adds: "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."

Our solution: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2Cor 7:1) Are we determined to follow Christ and serve God, or are we cold or worst, lukewarm?

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Are there stern warnings about living for the pleasures of the flesh, and the lusts of the world? Here are scriptures with warnings and consequences to expect if we ignore them.

James 1:14-15; "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

1Cor 6:9-10; "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

Mat 7:21; "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

Why should we as believers heed the warnings? Eph 2:1-2: And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."

Let's heed all warnings, be discerning and wise, commit to follow the Lord our Savior, and choose true "FREEDOM IN CHRIST".

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