



In a nutshell, here's what the new life in Christ implies, as stated in Eph 4:17-32:

¹⁷ This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ. ²³ Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

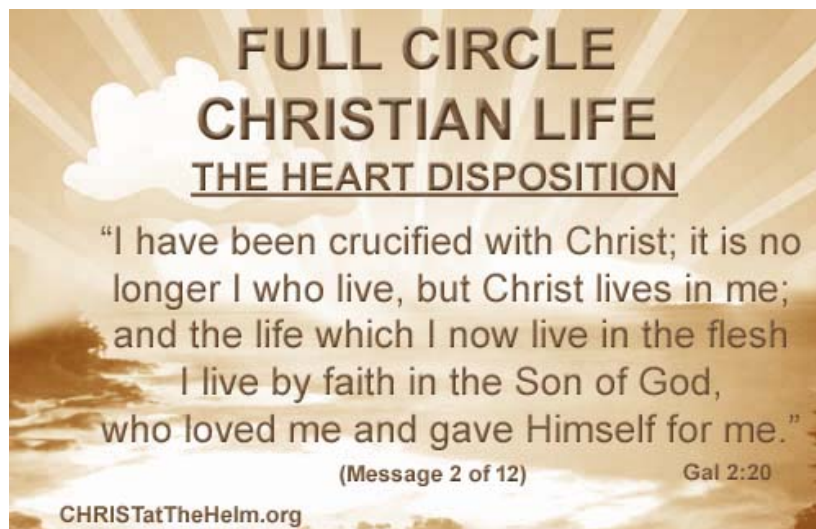
²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, "*Let each one of you* speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. ²⁶ "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil.

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. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

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

Ready for the "Full Circle Christian Life" characteristics?

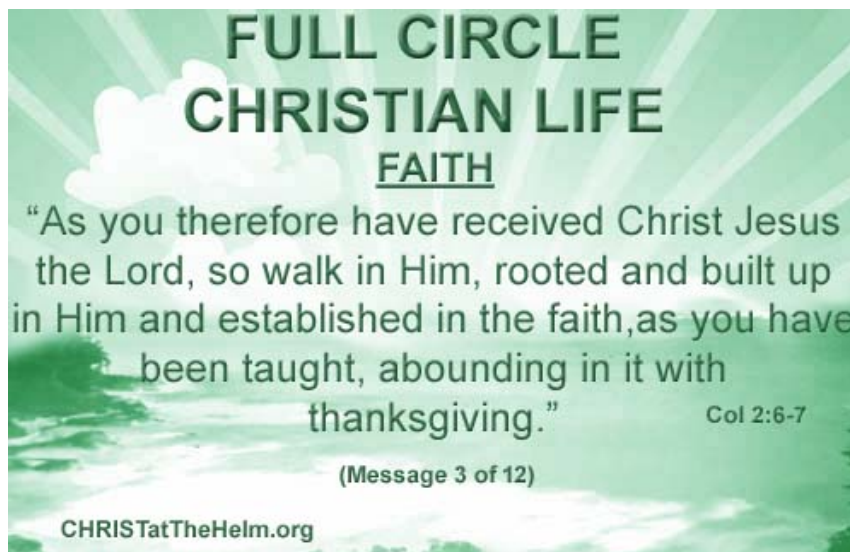
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To be a Christian obviously means much more than to say we're saved, as we must know what true salvation really mean. In other words, how can we claim to be saved if Christ doesn't live in us? In truth, when Christ does live in us, our life is completely realigned, day by day, to reflect what He taught us in His Word. 1John 2:5-6 says, "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." That implies we must daily adopt the path that leads us to Christ, just as Paul said in Col 3:2, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." In Romans 12:2 he added, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." It is truly a matter of the heart disposition, as to whether we really mean to follow Christ or just say we believe and live like the world. Heb 12:1-2 says, "Therefore we also let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith."

Are we truly following Christ?

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In the same way we believe that Christ is our Savior by faith, we must as well walk the righteous path each day by faith, knowing He is always present to lead us through His Word.

Paul in 1Tim 6:12 put it this way: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” In all truth, to stand with God by faith is indeed a constant fight against the powers of hell all around us in the world. The reason 1Cor 2:5 adds, “That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

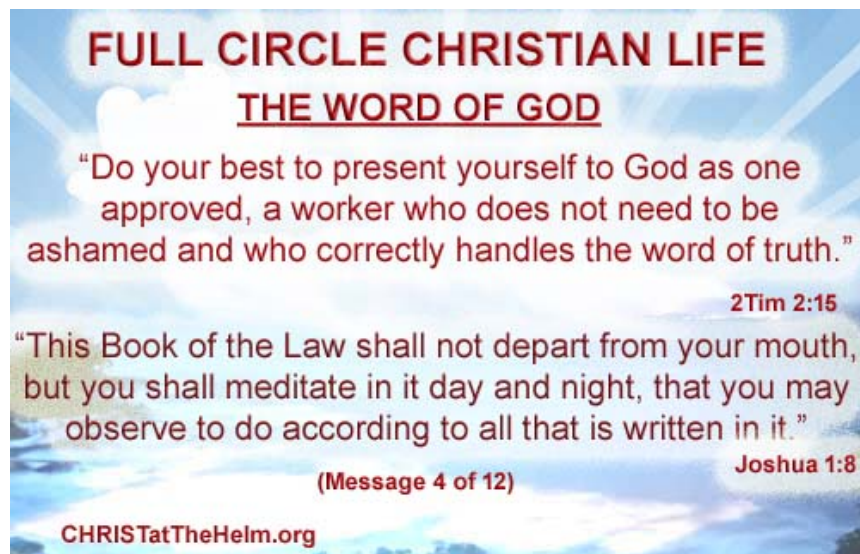
Why do we need faith? “But without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” (Heb 11:6)

How do we exercise faith in God? 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.” (Pro 3:5-6)

If we bring this down to a simple common denominator, we can say that faith is to simply believe God at His Word. The big question then is: “How can we believe God if we do not know His Word?

Can we claim that ignorance of the Word is an excuse to not follow Christ?

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What is the purpose of the Word of God in our life?

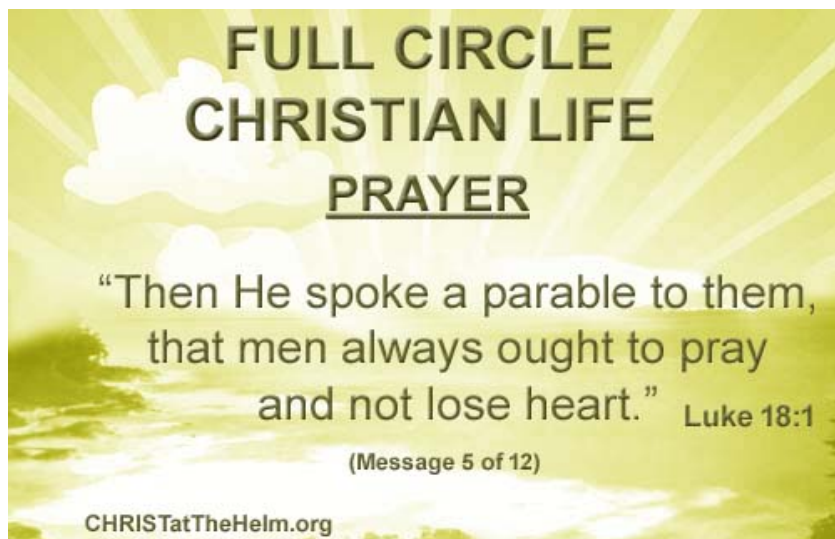
Psalm 119:105 says; “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” In other words, God’s Word is meant to guide us, step by step, into our daily living, while shining a bright and powerful light towards the path we must follow.

In Luke 10:38-42, Martha, impatiently asks Jesus to tell her sister Mary to help her with chores, as Mary was intent and concentrated on listening to Jesus’ teaching. Jesus’ answer in verse 42 must have floored her as He said, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

If there is any question in our mind as to whether we must be in God’s Word, this should definitely bring the conviction in our hearts about its prime importance. Psalm 1:1-2 says, “Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.”

There is also power in the Word of God when, “Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11)
How powerful is God’s Word in our lives right now?

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Prayer is defined as a spiritual communion with God, the only avenue for a true relationship with our heavenly Father.

Prayer gives us access to the Throne of God, available to all who have made Christ Lord of their lives through salvation. It's all good to talk about God with people. However, how often do we talk to Him?

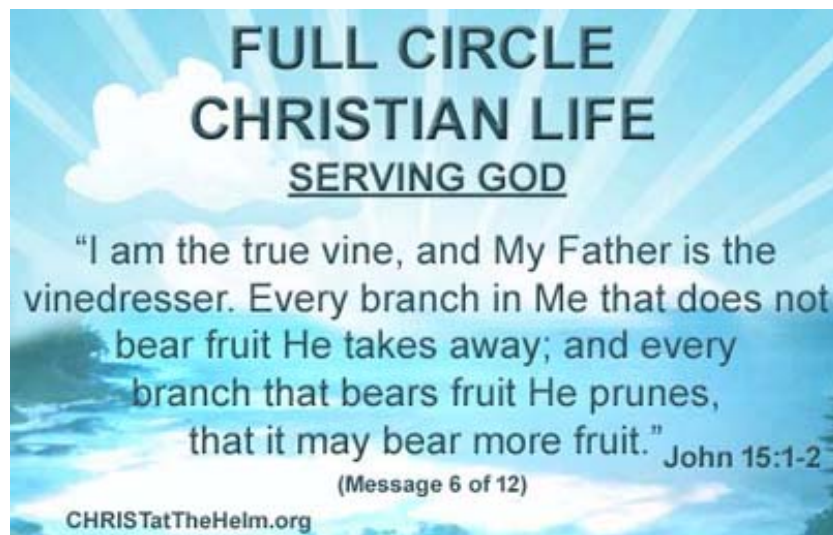
How do we pray? Jesus' answer in Mat 6:6: "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." When we pray, God demands we give Him our full attention and not let ourselves be distracted by the world around us.

Then in verse 7 He added, "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words." Prayer obviously must come from the heart and not be babbling or a task we hurry through.

Why pray? Again Jesus' answer, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak." Mat 26:41.

Without prayer in our life, we really don't have a relationship with God. In light of 1Thess 5:17, "Pray without ceasing," is our daily prayer life measured in seconds, minutes, hours, or none at all?

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To be in Christ obviously requires we bear fruit. What does it mean to bear fruit?

Paul in Eph 2:10 said: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." We sure aren't saved by works, but once saved, our lives should emulate what Christ taught us, to bear fruit and serve Him as Lord.

How are we to serve the Lord? 1Peter 4:10 provides the answer: "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." While we may not all called to full time ministry, we are all called to share the light of Christ as the Lord calls on us to do.

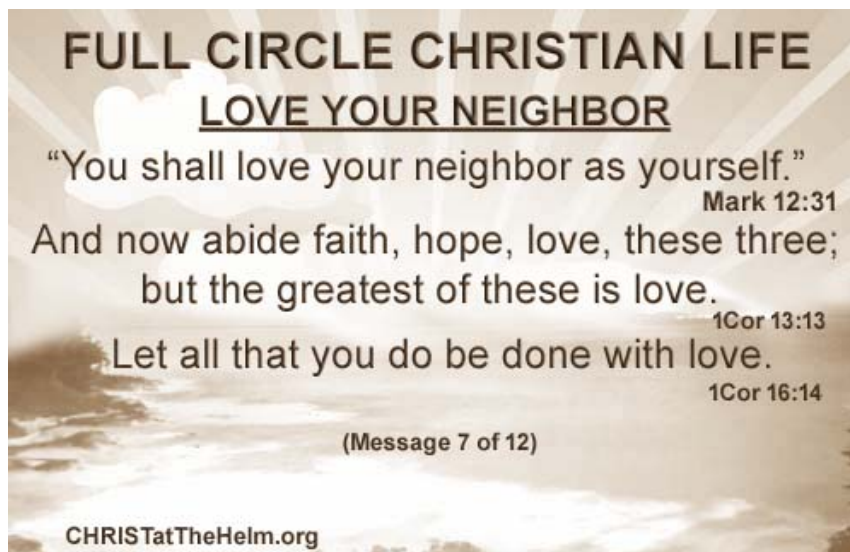
Let's also remember that we serve the Lord, not our flesh, the reason Paul said in Col 3:23, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."

In 2Cor 5:20 Paul added, "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ." As ambassadors for Christ, aren't we responsible to represent Christ in all truth to the world?

Can we expect challenges and trials in serving Christ? By all means we will, the reason Jesus said in Luke 14:27 "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

How dedicated and steadfast are we to serve our Lord right now?

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What’s the true meaning of love from God’s perspective?

First of all, we must first love God in order to love our neighbor. Loving God is to live by His Word, which incorporates to be His witnesses to a dying world, so they can believe and receive the gift of salvation in Christ. In John 15:12 Jesus said, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” We’re then to love God with all our heart, and love our neighbor as Christ loved us.

Paul in 1Cor 13:4-5 described love: “Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil.” In Col 3:14 he added, “Put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”

1John 4:8 says, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” Conversely, in 1John 2:15 we are warned, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

So, how are we to love our neighbor? “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” (1John 3:18) In essence, loving our neighbor is to desire that they be treated the same way we desire for ourselves.

Does our life reflect the love of God towards our neighbor?

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While Paul was addressing the church body in the featured scripture, the same applies to family life, as we must love one another and keep the unity of the Spirit in peace at home. In fact, home life should reflect our love for Christ through the love demonstrated between husbands and wives, and children and parents.

Parents are expected to provide for their family, as 1Tim 5:8 says, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

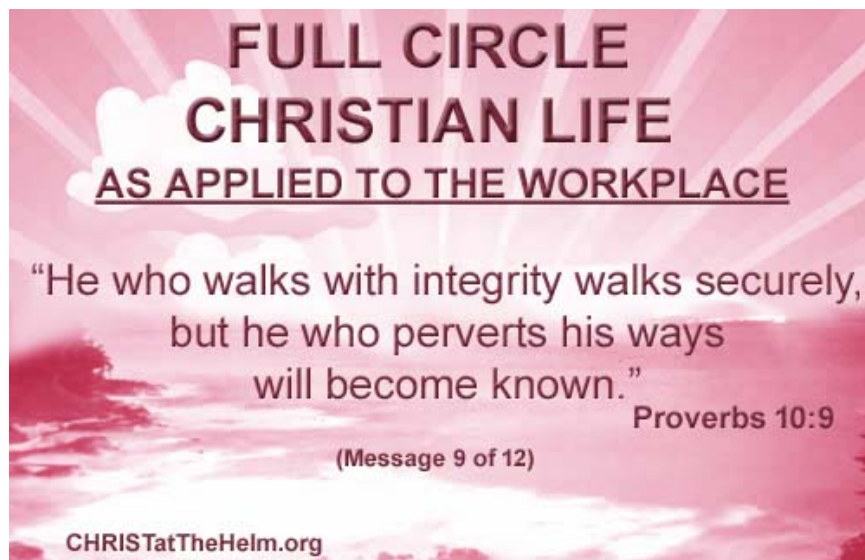
Ps 127:3 says, “Behold, children *are* a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb *is* a reward.” In other words, children are a blessing from God, and surely not to be rejected. Then, Pro 22:6 tells us to “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Our responsibility as parents is to train our children in the Lord’s teachings. When we do, we can say as in 3John 4, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

Children are to “Honor your father and *your* mother.” (Mat 19:19). As well, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” (Eph 6:4).

Is our present home life a testimony to true faith in Christ?

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A frequent area of pride, lies and deception is found in the workplace, in business. We oftentimes witness people offering products and services using exaggeration, deceiving customers, and employees being dishonest.

Associated with this is the fact that many people present themselves in the workplace under disguise, while in reality they are not who they proclaim to be. We find pride, greed, lies and deceptive practices that all worship the prince of the air and reject the King of Kings.

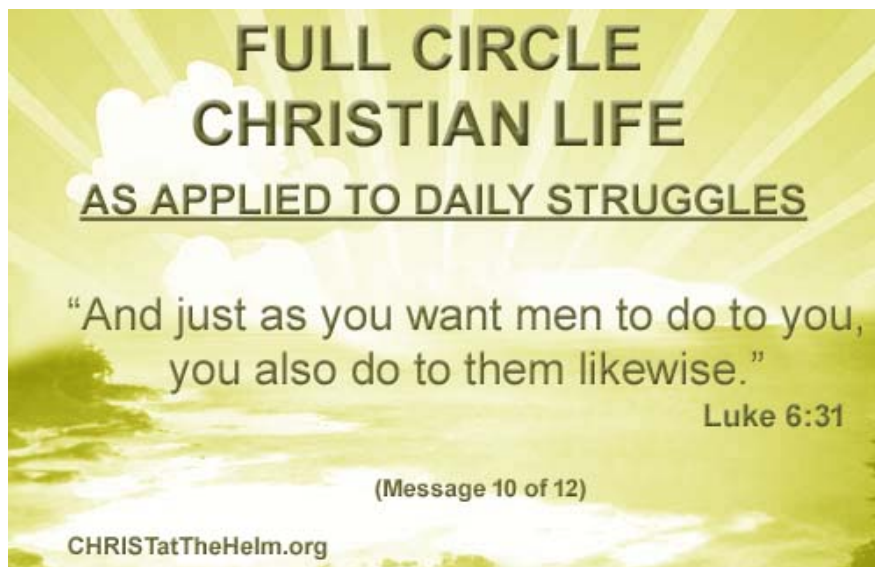
How then should a true believer act in the workplace? “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Mat 5:16. Why? “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.” Pro 11:3

The purpose is that, “Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1Peter 2:12)

Paul added in Col 3:23-24, “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”

How bright does our light for Christ shine in our workplace?

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The busyness of life has a way to catch us off guard at times, and more often than we wish to, we find ourselves challenged by other people’s attitudes, actions, and the list could go on. In reality, people can more easily see who we really are through our reactions to life’s unexpected events, than whatever we say about ourselves.

For example, when commuting to and from work, or shopping, what’s our reaction to traffic, someone who cuts us off? Do we rage and cuss at them? Pro 15:1 tells us, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” In other words, our reactions to events can add fuel to the fire and render a situation worse, rather than forgive others and carry the light of Christ.

That’s why Paul said in Col 4:6, “*Let* your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” And in Rom 12:17 he added, “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.”

Pro 18:21 warns us, “Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

How do we react to other people’s negative actions? Our reactions testify as to whether we follow Christ the Lord, or surrender control of our emotions to the enemy. What will it be?

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While we are enjoined to not conform to the world, at the same time we realize that we live in this world. However, Jesus said in John 17:16, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”

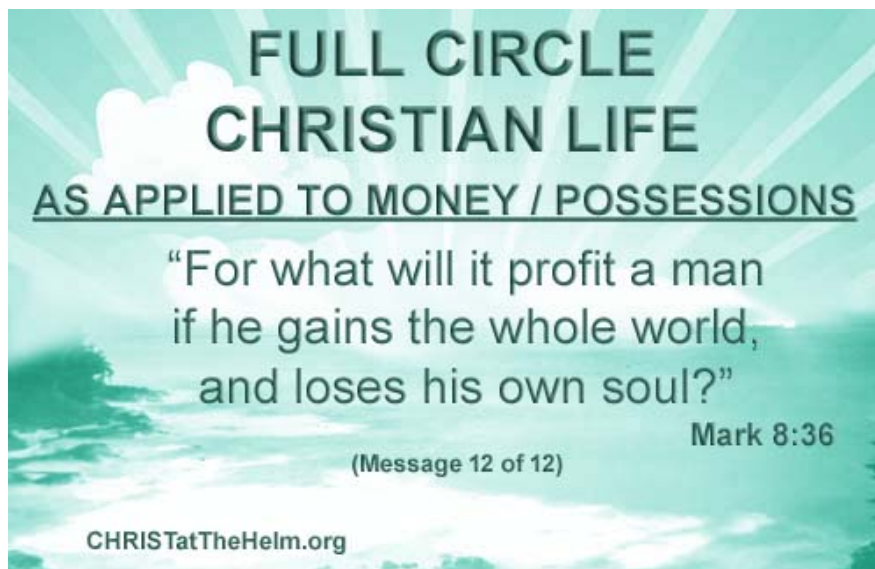
In essence, as followers and disciples of Christ, we must be wise in choosing who we fellowship with and where we hang out, so as to avoid being drawn to the world’s evil. The reason Paul in Col 2:8 warned us, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

Pro 13:20 says, “He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.” Is our desire to truly follow Christ, or will we let the world’s evil influences take hold of us?

It is not talking here about sharing God’s salvation message with sinners or serving Christ in the world. Rather, it refers to whom we share our social life with. Or as Paul said in Philip 2:15, we should be “Children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”

How bright does our light shine for Christ?

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The rat race in our society to get rich quick is so pervasive that it destroys lives as a result. We live in a society that has put at the forefront of life the desires for riches to satisfy the flesh, and will even use any means to seek money and control.

However, when all is said and done, have we ever seen a hearse pulling a trailer of possessions to the grave?

Paul in 1Tim 6:6-7 said, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out." In other words, why aren't we satisfied and content with what the Lord allows in our lives rather than make money and possessions our god?

Jesus made this clear in Luke 12:15, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Paul added in 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."

Let's remember Jesus' words "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Mat 6:24)

Is our trust in God, or in money and our possessions?

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