

How Christians Walk in the World

Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus prayed to the Father on behalf of His disciples what has been called His High Priestly Prayer (John 17). When we consider the content of His High Priestly prayer, we soon discover indicatives regarding the state of His followers in the world as well as imperatives on how they should walk in the world. In the midst of these two aspects of our Lord's teaching about the relationship between His people and the world, we learn that there is one over-arching purpose for Christians and our relationship with the world.

Christians Are In The World (John 17:11).

Christians are not physically separate from the world. Christians are in the world in the sense that they occupy the same space, go to the same markets and interact in the same society as non-Christians. They are not people who form their own sub-cultures to avoid the world. They recognize where God has placed them and do not run from that reality. They are relatable, accessible, and approachable to those in the world in normal, ordinary ways.

Christians Are Not Of The World (John 17:16).

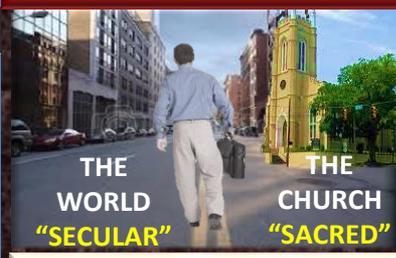
Christians do not belong to the world. They are not longer conformed to the values and ways of living common in the culture and society around them. They belong to the kingdom of God and therefore have a new identity and loyalty to the King and his kingdom. Therefore, while they are in the world, they do not belong to our embrace the world as those who do not belong to Jesus Christ.

Christians Are Hated By The World (John 17:14).

It stands to reason that if Christians are not conforming to the world and its ways, the world would mock, ridicule, detest, and hate the counter-cultural ways of Christians. Therefore, as Jesus says, His followers should not be surprised that the world hates us. The world hated Him first and crucified Him for Who He was. In a later epistle, John wrote that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19). The strong distinction of being in the world and not of the world causes Christians to be hated by the world who does not accept the King in whose kingdom we gladly live.

Christians Walk In The World (John 17:21).

In and through all that Christians are and do in the world is the fundamental purpose of seeing people come to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus indicated in his prayer that there will be those who believe in Him through the gospel proclamation of his disciples sent into the world to be hated and suffer for His name's sake. Christians do not exist to mark time. They exist to see his kingdom come, and our existence is laced with a passion for seeking first that kingdom in all things and with all people.



Colossians 3:17- "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." The "whatever you do in word or deed" is without limit for it is the "all" that is to be done in the name of Christ. Tragically, that is definitely not how the vast

majority of professing Christians live, and especially so in western cultures. There is a strong tendency for westerners to partition their lives into sections which may or may not be interdependent upon each other. Most Christians in western culture tend to divide their lives according to what they regard as either secular or sacred. They may acknowledge some overlap between the two, but for the most part they remain separated from each other. There seems to be little application of what they learn in church to what they do at work and home and in recreational activities. Worse, there seems to be little understanding that what they profess to believe about God should be applied to how they live their lives outside of church.

This verse destroys this opposition between secular and sacred. For the Christian, there is not to be any such division in life. Everything you do is to be done with God and glorifying Him in mind. Everything? Yes, every word and every deed. This means in the church and in the world.



Luke 17:20-21 - Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, The Kingdom Of God Is In Your Midst."

It is an internal, spiritual kingdom; erected in the hearts of men, consisting in the subjection of their wills to the will of God, and in the conformity of their minds to his laws. Wherever it exists, it exists in men's hearts.

Romans 14:17- "Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; or the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men..." Philippians 1:21- "That for me to live is Christ."

To do all in the name of the Lord Jesus is to pursue His interests in your life instead of your own.



"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave

you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Matthew 25:35-40

The things we communicate to others and the deeds that we do are to be consistent with what Jesus would communicate and what Jesus would do. Obviously then the greater the Word of Christ richly dwells within you the easier it will be to carry out this command. The greater our understanding of Jesus and His commandments, the greater will be our ability to live according to what He wants. That is the essence of statements by Paul such as Galatians 2:20 – "That Christ lives in him and that the life he was now living in the flesh was lived by faith in the Son of God." The attitude of fulfilling this command is simply this. We want others to see the Lord Jesus Christ living through us. We want Jesus to manifest His life through us in what we say, what we write and the deeds that we do. We want our light to so shine before men that they will glorify our Father Who is in heaven because that light is reflecting Jesus.

Whatever You Do in Deed

The word for deed is also translated as work, action and behavior. It is referring to all the various actions of your behavior. All the general principles that apply to whatever you do in word also apply to whatever you do in deed. Your behavior also communicates and sometimes louder than what you say. As one person quipped, "I can't hear you because your actions are shouting too loudly." People can get away with deceiving others until their actual deeds become known, for then their behavior proves their words are simply empty rhetoric. Why pay attention to anything said by anyone whose actions prove them to be wrong? Your words and deeds must correspond and they must be in keeping with Jesus' character and will. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that inherent in our salvation is the fact that we are "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Paul adds in Titus 2:14 that Jesus redeemed us in order to "Purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."



We are to perform those deeds in such a way that others will see then and glorify our heavenly Father; "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16), and we need to be in relationships with one another to spur one another on to love and good deeds; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (Hebrews 10:24). What good deeds? Whatever you do and that means everything. This is not just church work, religious deeds or spiritual actions. This includes everything. Your behavior at

work, school, social events and recreational activities. It includes the activities of daily life including how you drive your car, your behavior while shopping, cooking and eating. It includes your behavior while doing all your chores whether sweeping the floor, dusting the furniture, shoveling snow, mowing the lawn or taking out the trash. All that we do is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, we are to live our lives in a manner that is consistent with His character and will.

How Can You Live In Such A Way So That All Is Done In The Name Of The Lord Jesus?

- 1) Make sure you understand who Jesus actually is and His character and work.
- 2) By faith, identify yourself with Jesus who has redeemed, regenerated and reconciled you to God.
- 3) As one who is raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above and set your mind on the things above and not the earth.
- 4) Put to death the old habits and ways of thinking that belong to the old man.
- 5) Put on the virtues of the new person.
- 6) Strive to have the Word of Christ richly dwell in you. If these things are being done, then you will also be striving to make sure that all that you do in word or deed will be done in the name of the Lord Jesus desiring to honor Him and fulfill His will which in turn will result in thanksgiving to God through Him.