



# What Controls Your Life?

(Book 1)

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NOT FOR SALE

# What Controls Your Life?

## Preface

Have you ever wished you were “Free as a bird”? Who hasn’t, right? But is a bird really free: Is something that has to spend most of its waking hours in search of food and in constant fear for its life really free? Sure, the birds are free from term papers, money worries, threats of war, etc. But they are not free from other things such as the control of instinct.

The truth is no beast or man is completely free from being under the control of something or someone! We are free only in one sense-unlike a bird; we can choose what will control our life. Our choice is, “Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...” but never, “Choose for yourselves today **if** you will serve...” from the Garden of Eden, we have had this “freedom to choose” God’s control or Satan’s. And while we “cannot serve two masters, “we cannot say we will serve no master. And to say that we will not choose is to choose.

So the question is not if something controls your life but what controls your life: Is it really all that important? Maybe, and maybe not. It is important to the person who is concerned about making the right choices in life to ensure he will have an abundant life here on this earth, and it is to the person who is concerned with his eternal destiny. Both his abundant life and his eternal destiny will be determined by what controls his life. Concerned?

Good. Then read on.

## CHAPTER 1

### They Had the Real Thing

A student came into the office one day telling about a representative from Pepsi Cola who had lectured to a class studying salesmanship. The representative came into the class with a bottle of Pepsi in his hand and for 45 minutes talked about how “Pepsi has got a lot to **give** and young people have a lot to **live!**” The student said it was really something sitting and listening to this man. How could anyone get that worked up over a bottled drink? But when class was over he could hardly wait to get to the drink machine and get his hands on a Pepsi to see if it would do anything for his life!

This caused us to wonder: What would happen if we, as Christians, really believed in the Lord’s power to change lives as much as this salesman believed in his bottle of carbonated water?

There was a time when this was true. The earliest New Testament Christians really believed in the Lord’s power to **change their lives**. Theirs wasn’t a Pepsi generation excited over a bottle filled with carbonated water - but theirs was a Power generation excited over a life filled with a “**new man**”. And as you read about them in Acts, you feel the zeal, excitement and enthusiasm “**running in their blood**”. They had truly found something (or more correctly, someone) that had a lot to give! Can you imagine one of these people saying something like, “I know I’m in the right church, but I just don’t have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ”? Not on your life! Look at the way Peter describes their feelings in **1 Peter 1:7-8** “*and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory*”, The transformation was such that on occasions statements were made about them like the one in **Acts 4:13**, “*...they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.*”

Does this sound out of place today? Should it? Is there any reason why we should not have such a relationship with Christ ourselves - even though he lived on earth 19 centuries ago?

Doesn’t the Bible say something about Christ being **the same** yesterday, today, and forever? (**See Hebrews 13:8**) This means that a person’s relationship with Christ is independent of space and time. Jesus is just as “**now**” as He was then! Yes, and it even means that you and I can have the same consciousness of Jesus as a present, living Lord with whom we are in touch as our early New Testament brothers and sisters did!

Then what is it that is missing? **We** are here and Christ is just as “**now**” as he has ever been. And yet there seems to be something missing, something deficient in the lives of many.

Some try the ministry hoping that will be the answer. Others go into foreign fields as missionaries only to return with more frustrations. You may have gone on a “campaign for Christ,” and it seems to help for a while, but after a few weeks you found yourself back in the same old rut, right? Exodus movements, cottage meetings, retreats, fellowships, and on and on it goes. Our lives are filled with religious activities-but often there comes that “**moment of awareness**” when we realize we are still empty, that we still do not know that “THOU-I” relationship with Christ.

As a consequence some, out of frustration and despair, begin to think that the church has nothing to offer, that it has outlived its day and belongs to yesterday. They cry for a “**new gospel for a new age**”, something that will keep pace with the times. And many of these go leaping off in every direction after drugs or whatever, searching and hoping to find something that will give them a “**meaningful religious experience**” only to end even more void and deficient than before. And so we're right back where we started asking, “What is missing? Where is it?”

Could it be that nothing is missing? That it has been here all along and too many have missed it? You see, most of our lives we have heard preaching and teaching about “**Jesus our Savior**”. Now I am certainly not knocking that because that's the Gospel! But that's not all of the Gospel. If we look back at the message that the early disciples proclaimed, we will find that it could be summed up as, “**Jesus is Lord.**” And their message came from that great commission given by the Master in his last recorded words by Matthew:

*“All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you:** and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. 28:18-10 – Note the emphasis.)*

There is no doubt from these words about **who** is Lord, and that He is to be **preached** as Lord.\* The sovereignty of Christ as the Son of God was and **is** the message of the New Testament.

*“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.” (2 Cor. 4:5)*

Today, however, we hear a great deal about “**our Savior**” but very little about “**our Lord**”. For one thing, we live in a country that knows very little about lords and masters. Rather, we are used to representatives that we have elected. And it is possible that we have been trying to use this idea in Christianity. But it won't work. The kingdom of Christ is not a democracy, it is an absolute monarchy - “**One Lord.**” (**Ephesians 4:5**)

But it is a frustrating experience to try to live **in** the Lord's kingdom and try at the same time not to live **under** his Lordship or control. In fact the Lord said you cannot do it:

*“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matt. 6: 24)*

We can see that spiritual frustration can be caused and our whole life upset not only by a failure to permit Christ to be our Savior, but also by a failure to permit Him to be where He belongs as the Lord of our life. And when we miss this we miss it all for as He himself has said, “Without me ye can do nothing.”

Then there's the brighter side, the opposite side, when one **does** permit Christ to sit on the throne of his life. Peace overcomes frustration, purpose replaces meaninglessness, and one can do all things through Christ who gives him strength.

If more can regain consciousness of the fact that Christ must be the Lord as well as the Savior of a Christian's life, we might regain the zeal, enthusiasm and faithfulness of the New Testament church. And usually the first question that is asked by a person regaining consciousness is, “Where am I?”

**\*Note:** See glossary at end of book for a explanation of the word LORD.

This concludes Chapter 1. Please answer the following questions before going on to Chapter 2

1. Why are birds really not free?
  - a) They have to search for food
  - b) They are in cages all the time
  - c) They work for a living
  - d) None of the above
2. True or False: No beast or man is free from being under the control of something or someone.
  - a) True
  - b) False
3. Since when have we had the freedom to choose whom we will serve?
  - a) The Tower of Babel
  - b) The Garden of Gethsemane
  - c) The Garden of Eden
  - d) The Great Flood
4. Can we serve 2 masters?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Both Yes and No
  - d) None of the Above
5. True or False: Saying we will not choose is choosing?
  - a) True
  - b) False
6. A person's abundant life and eternal destiny will be determined by...
  - a) How much money he has?
  - b) How many prayers he says?
  - c) What controls his life?
  - d) How religious he is?
7. What did the man from Pepsi-Cola say about Pepsi? "Pepsi has a lot to give and..."
  - a) Older people should drink diet!
  - b) Young people have a lot to live!
  - c) Young people have a lot to give!
  - d) Older people have a lot to give!
8. What was the reaction of the student at the end of the 45 minute talk?
  - a) He was sleeping
  - b) He was bored
  - c) He was mad at the speaker
  - d) He wanted to try the product
9. What was the first century Christian's attitude toward their new life?
  - a) Zealous
  - b) Sad
  - c) Indifferent
  - d) Burdensome
10. What did the earliest Christians think that really believing in the Lord had the power to do?
  - a) Let them do miracles
  - b) Change their lives
  - c) Make them rich
  - d) Make them more religious
11. Which verse says, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever"?
  - a) Acts 4:13
  - b) Hebrews 13:8
  - c) Matthew 28:18-20
  - d) 2 Corinthians 4:5
12. When some people feel like they do not have a personal relationship with Christ they:
  - a) Cry for a new gospel
  - b) Search for a meaningful religious experience
  - c) Turn to drugs or other things
  - d) All of the above
13. The religious world today, according to the writer, focuses more on which aspect of Jesus?
  - a) Jesus our Savior
  - b) Jesus our Lord
  - c) Both a and b
  - d) None of the above
14. Where is the story of the "Great Commission" found?
  - a) Matthew 28:18-20
  - b) Ephesians 4:5
  - c) Matthew 6:24
  - d) Hebrews 13:8
15. The kingdom of Christ is a:
  - a) Democracy
  - b) Monarchy
  - c) Both Democracy and Monarchy
  - d) None of the above
16. What passage says "Apart from me you can do nothing"?
  - a) Matthew 6:24
  - b) Ephesians 4:5
  - c) 2 Cor. 4:5
  - d) John 15:5
17. What is usually the first question asked by a person regaining consciousness?
  - a) Who am I?
  - b) What am I?
  - c) Where am I?
  - d) When am I?

18. True or False: The main question we try to answer in this course is “Who controls your life”?
- True
  - False
19. True or False: A person’s relationship with Jesus is completely independent of space and time?
- True
  - False
20. What is the “moment of awareness” idea mentioned in our lesson? The moment we realize:
- We are empty
  - We need to go on more trips
  - We are lost
  - We have a relationship with Christ
21. As a result of the “moment of awareness” what are a lot of people’s responses?
- They think the church has nothing to offer
  - That it has outlived its day
  - They want a new gospel
  - All of the above
22. How are spiritual frustrations caused in our lives?
- A failure to let Christ be savior
  - A failure to let Christ be where he belongs in our lives
  - A failure to realize that “without me you can do nothing”
  - All of the above
23. If one does permit Christ to sit on the throne of his life:
- Peace overcomes frustration
  - Purpose replaces meaningless
  - Anyone can do all things through Christ who gives them strength
  - All of the above
24. What happens when we realize that Christ must be the Lord and Savior of our Christian lives?
- We can regain the zeal, enthusiasm and faithfulness of the N.T. Church
  - We give up
  - We become a god
  - We tend to fall away
25. What passage talks about “we preach not ourselves”?
- 2 Corinthians 4:5
  - Matthew 6:24
  - Matthew 28:18
  - Ephesians 4:5

## CHAPTER 2

### Out of the Sinning Business

Many people don't like to discuss sin and become offended if in any way the idea is suggested that they are sinners. But sin is not something in which only a few are involved.

As it is written,

*“There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3: 10)*

*“For they all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)*

*“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1:8, 10)*

We've all been in the “Sinning business” at one time or another, and thus we have all worked for the wages of sin-death. (**Romans 6: 23**).

*“Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.” (Rom. 5:12)*

## The Way Out

The first thing we must do is to realize that we are sinners and the verdict is the same for all - eternal death! (**See Romans 6: 23**)

It is God who has been “sinned against,” but through the gospel we learn some “good news”- we learn that our condition is not hopeless if we will respond to the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Our faith is the first move toward God, *“and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.”* (**Hebrews 11: 6**).

Perhaps we can illustrate this by the following story:

One time the disciples were in the midst of the Sea of Galilee in a storm when Jesus *“came unto them, walking upon the sea.”* Peter called out, *“Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters.”* (**Matthew 14: 26-29**). In other words, Peter was asking for some proof, some evidence that it really was Jesus out there walking on the water and not until he was sure of that did he step out of the boat and start toward the Lord. Likewise, the Lord is not asking any of us to trust in Him without evidence or proof. (**Hebrews 11:1**). And our faith comes from the same source Peter's came from-the word of the Lord. *“So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”* (**Romans 10:17**). One time Jesus said *“It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.”* (**John 6:45**). Faith comes from being taught the faith and our willingness to accept it.

This faith or trust will cause us to go still further. We will want to repent.

**Repentance is defined by Thayer\* as: “A change of mind for the better, heartily to amend, with abhorrence of one's past sins.”**

In other words, it is not just being sorry-it's being sorry enough to quit, accompanied with the attitude that, “I don't want to ever sin again!” Is this possible: Is it possible for me to turn my back on sin and to really develop an “I-don't-want-to-ever-sin-again attitude”?

\* **Note:** See Glossary

When we become Christians this, in essence, is what we are saying we intend to do! We make up our minds that we are going to get out of the sinning business and turn our lives over completely to Jesus Christ. When we repent we say “NO” to and sin and “YES” to Jesus as Lord. This means that repentance has a negative and a positive side.

Let's look at the negative side first - NO TO ALL SIN. All sin is a transgression of God's will. (See **1 John 3:4**) Therefore, when we repent we turn away from any deliberate transgression to a life that desires only that God's will be done (by us) on earth as it is in heaven.

*“We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness”.* (**Rom. 6:2b, 17, 18**)

Notice how emphatic Paul is in letting us know that a Christian has made a complete break away from all sin. And previously he had stated: *“Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin. . .”* (**Romans 6:11**).

**Paul leaves no doubt in Romans 6 that anyone who has the attitude of, “I'm willing to repent, but. . .” or, “I've repented of sin, but I don't see any harm in. . .” hasn't repented!**

NO, when you truly repent, Paul says, you don't pick and choose which sins you are willing to give up and which ones you'll drag along with you as a Christian! You quit, you throw in the towel, and you get out of the sinning business altogether - forever.

“But hey, nobody's perfect!” That's right, but we are not saying that a Christian is “sinless”. There is however, a great difference between being sinless or perfect and being dead to sin and free from the domination of sin.

John tells us that a Christian “doeth no sin.” (1 **John 3:9**). What does that mean: Well, literally it means that a child of God “does not practice sin.” In verse 7, John uses the expression “doeth righteousness,” and this means literally to “make a practice (or habit) of doing what is right.” Thus, a person who has really repented is a person to whom sin has become distasteful who no longer makes a habit of feeding a sinful appetite. Rather he hungers and thirsts after righteousness. Like Christ, his meat is to do the will of God, to do always those things that please Him. Unlike Christ, however, the disciple will sometimes “be overcome in a fault.” (Refer to 1 **John 1:8**, **Galatians 6:1** and **James 5: 16**) But because sin has become distasteful to him, he will, like the Prodigal Son, say:

“I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned. . .”

He will receive the same “*holy surprise*” that the Prodigal did - “*forgiven and forgotten... welcome home!*”

Yes:

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 **John 1:9**)*

No, a Christian is not sinless, but sin will not have dominion over him (**Romans 6:14**). He has become dead to that kind of life and has become alive unto righteousness.

Notice carefully Paul's graphic description of its transformation:

*“We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:4)*

*“Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new.” (2 **Cor. 5: 17**)*

Notice Paul said that the old things have changed -become new. But before all things can become new, we must say NO to all of the old things - sin. God will not forgive any sin until we are willing to repent of (quit) all sin.

So, the first side of repentance - NO to all sin - is the attitude which says, “Lord, I've come to give it all up... altogether... forever.”

But someone says, “How can I do that? How can I live apart from sin for the rest of my life? That's asking too much. I don't think I can do it!”

In working with alcoholics we show them how to leave alcohol alone one day at a time. It is too much for an alcoholic to think of the rest of his life without a drink, but those who stay sober work on their sobriety one day at a time.

Now apply this to any other sin. Could you get up in the morning and live one day without committing a willful sin: Say for example, you are in the practice of reading lascivious literature such as Playboy Magazine. Could you, knowing that lasciviousness is a sin (**Galatians 5:19**), live one day without reading and looking at this type of material? Realizing that Jesus loves you and God loves you and they have gone to drastic lengths to free you from the domination of sin, could you live one day without committing this sin: This is a fantastic thought! One day without sinning! Jesus said, “Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” (**Matthew 6:34**). And Paul said on this very point, “I die daily.” (1 **Corinthians 15:31**). And in 2 **Corinthians 4:16**, he says, “Our inward man is renewed day by day.”

Start each day with the prayer, “Lord, help me not to sin this day,” and with God's help you can make it! If you supply the willingness, he will supply the way. Just break your Christian life down into “Christian days” and live one day at a time for the Lord. And remember the Lord's promise in 1 **Cor. 10:13**!

This tremendous thought reminds me of an ex-alcoholic who was asked if he knew what the word “hallelujah” meant. He thought for a moment and answered, “I don't know for sure, but I think it means, ‘Hot dog, this is it!’”

This is it! Your life lined in “Christian days” - one day at a time without sin! Hallelujah!

This concludes Chapter 2. Please answer the following questions before going on to Chapter 3

26. What is sin?
  - a) Going against God's law
  - b) Going against the government's law
  - c) Going against what you want
  - d) All of the above
27. True or false: Romans 3:23 is referring to ALL people in general have sin?
  - a) True
  - b) False
28. What does a sinner have to look forward to?
  - a) Eternal life
  - b) Eternal death
  - c) Eternal wealth
  - d) Eternal happiness
29. What is repentance?
  - a) Being sorry for your sins enough to quit
  - b) Changing your mind for the better
  - c) Having the attitude of I never want to sin again
  - d) All of the above
30. What is the "negative" side of repentance??
  - a) Losing your life
  - b) Giving yourself to God
  - c) Saying No to sin
  - d) Saying yes to God
31. What is the "positive" side of repentance?
  - a) Losing your life
  - b) Giving yourself to God
  - c) Saying no to God
  - d) Saying yes to God
32. What is the greatest obstacle to a person's salvation?
  - a) Their friends
  - b) Their work
  - c) Themselves
  - d) Their family
33. Which verse says, "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"?
  - a) John 6:45
  - b) Hebrews 11:1
  - c) Rom. 10:17
  - d) 2 Corinthians 4:5
34. John says in 1 John 3:9 that a Christian;
  - a) Cannot sin
  - b) Makes a habit of doing righteousness
  - c) Does not practice sin
  - d) All of the above
35. A Christian, like Christ, should;
  - a) Do the things pleasing to God
  - b) Do what they want
  - c) Do what their religious leaders want
  - d) None of the above
36. What passage says if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and clean us from all unrighteousness?
  - a) 2 Cor. 5:17
  - b) 1 John 1:9
  - c) Rom. 6:14
  - d) Matt. 6:34
37. How does an alcoholic stop drinking? They think about it
  - a) One day at a time
  - b) One week at a time
  - c) One month at a time
  - d) For the rest of their life
38. True or false: it is impossible to live without sin.
  - a) True
  - b) False
39. True or false: God is not willing to take away our sins until we repent and stop sinning?
  - a) True
  - b) False
40. True or false: If we supply the willingness God will supply the way?
  - a) True
  - b) False
41. What passage says "there is none righteous, no, not one"?
  - a) Romans 3:10
  - b) Matthew 14:26-29
  - c) Hebrews 11:6
  - d) Romans 5:12
42. True or False: After we have sinned our situation is hopeless and we can never be back in a relationship with God.
  - a) True
  - b) False
43. What passage speaks about the impossibility of pleasing God without faith?
  - a) Romans 3:10
  - b) Matthew 14:26-29
  - c) Hebrews 11:6
  - d) Romans 5:12

44. What passage speaks about Jesus walking on water?  
 a) Romans 3:10  
 b) Matthew 14:26-29  
 c) Hebrews 11:6  
 d) Romans 5:12
45. Which of Jesus' apostles walked on water with Jesus?  
 a) Paul  
 b) Peter  
 c) John  
 d) Luke
46. Romans 6:11 says "Even so, reckon ye yourselves also to be:  
 a) Living in sin"  
 b) Dead to sin"  
 c) Free from sin"  
 d) None of the above
47. In the story of the prodigal son, his sins were:  
 a) Remembered forever and he was not forgiven  
 b) Forgiven and forgotten  
 c) Forgiven but written down so they would not be forgotten  
 d) None of the above.
48. What passage talks about what baptism does to a person?  
 a) Romans 6:14  
 b) Romans 6:4  
 c) Romans 6:2  
 d) Romans 6:17
49. What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 say about what a man becomes after he becomes "in Christ"?  
 a) A demon  
 b) An angel  
 c) A new creature  
 d) A cherubim
50. In which passage can we find the promise from the Lord about sin being a choice?  
 a) 1 Corinthians 10:13  
 b) 2 Corinthians 5:17  
 c) 2 Corinthians 4:5  
 d) 1 Corinthians 15:31

## CHAPTER 3

### Is Christianity Just a Sunday Stroll With Jesus?

#### **A Saint on Sunday-A Devil on Monday**

It's sad but true that many followers of Christ seem to feel that their discipleship involves no more than a "**Sunday stroll with Jesus**". They think they can be saints one day out of seven and live like the devil the remaining six!

The purpose of this chapter is to emphasize that the life of a Christian cannot be (and why it cannot be) like treating Christ as a "Sunday visitor" that we have over to the house for "fried chicken and gravy".

When Jesus is pictured in **Revelation 3:20**, as standing on the outside and knocking at the door of men's hearts he is not asking merely to come in and "**sit-for-a-spell**", but to move in! (See **John 14: 23**) Christ will not come into our lives as some temporary guest to be in view only when we desire his company. No. He comes in as the new owner to **convert** what was **our** house into **his** abode.

*"Or know you not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you which you have from God: and you are not your own; for you were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body". (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20)*

Very often thoughts like the above cause us to become uneasy. Ever wondered why: Could the uneasiness and hesitation be a signal for us to stop and consider if, in essence, we aren't actually doubting the wisdom and love of Christ for our lives: Do we feel that we will be "**wiped out**" if we allow the Lord permanent control?

Let's see... Let's look at a man who cleaned up and then got wiped out!

## He cleaned House... But...

*“But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding it not. Then he says, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he finds it **empty**, swept, and garnished. Then goes he, and takes with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first”. (Mat. 12:43-45)*

Maybe you've had the same experience this man had. You “cleaned house” of all your part sins and for a little while it looked as if it had really worked. But just when you thought you had it licked - WHAM! BANG! - the back door slams and in barges sin again. And not only are some of your old ones back, but even a few new ones! This is when you begin to feel like the drowning man who tries to lift himself out of the water by pulling on his own hair - “Ah, what's the use?”

Well, obviously there's more to quitting sin than just the negative side of saying “NO” to it. As this story of Jesus points out, there is no such thing as a “spiritual vacuum”. Something, or someone, is going to **live** in our house. And while there is a negative side of repentance there must be, at the same time, a **positive action** taken of replacing that “emptiness” with something **that is stronger**, or else our “swept and garnished” life will not remain that way for very long.

But what? What can replace sin and be strong enough to keep it from taking over again? Some have thought that shutting themselves up behind the walls of monasteries would be the answer. Others have felt that various forms of physical punishment would help keep the soul pure. Still others have taught that certain rituals and prayers, performed habitually, were the answer, and on it goes-man searching for the way to conquer sin in his life.

Is it just too simple for us to accept the statement that “Jesus is the Answer”?

We've all seen this expression used as some sort of catchall tacked to a tree beside the highway or stuck on the bumper of a car, and have built up some kind of aversion to it. But in this case, to say that “Jesus is the answer” is not some wandering generality. It is a very meaningful specific.

Christ is the only one who is strong enough to replace sin and keep it from regaining control over our lives. Sin is powerless in His presence as we can see in **Matthew 4**, when He faced Satan “eye-to-eye”. The Hebrew writer tells us that even in His death He destroyed “*him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*”. (**Hebrews 2:14**). And Paul tells us that we can share in this victory over sin through the Victor.

*“Death is swallowed up in **victory**. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, **who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**.” (1 Cor. 15:54b-57)*

Thus when we “clean house” with the negative “NO” to all sin, we must then take the positive step of “YES” to Christ. And unlike the man who ended up worse than he started, when sin tries to barge back in on us we can let the **Master** of the house answer the door!

## KURIOS and DOULOS

Sound like Greek to you? Well hang in there because the meaning and relationship of these two words help emphasize even more that walking in the footsteps of Christ is no “**Sunday stroll**”.

When the writers of the New Testament referred to Christ as **Lord** they used the Greek word KURIOS, meaning a master or ruler, one who has complete control over another. And when Paul and other early Christians referred to themselves as the bondservants of Christ, they were using the Greek DOULOS which literally means **a slave**. In other words, it seems that many of our New Testament brothers and sisters had in mind that they had actually become the **voluntary slaves** of Jesus Christ! How's that for saying “YES” to Jesus?

Wait a minute though, here's another thought to put with that one. These early Christians were following the steps of Jesus when they took on this attitude of being servants. This KURIOS had once been DOULOS. Recall these words from **Philippians 2:5-8**?

*“Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form*

*of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."*

In **Romans 15:3**, we read that "*Christ also pleased not himself*". Then in **John 6:38**, Christ tells us why he didn't live to please himself, "*For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*". And in **Luke 22:27b**, he plainly states, "*But I am in the midst of you as one who serves*".

That's some thought isn't it? The Lord was once a servant, a God-controlled servant of heaven. IT IS THE WAY THE MASTER WENT, SHOULD NOT HIS SERVANTS TREAD IT STILL?

### **Getting the Picture into Focus**

To help get the picture clearer in your mind, think of life as having a throne in the center of it and on that throne something or someone is reigning. The question is What or Who? Is it sin or Christ? Certainly in the life of a non-Christian the answer is sin. Christ has no control because he is kept on the outside and off the throne. This life is as Paul described the Romans before they became Christians: "*You were servants (slaves) of sin*". (**Romans 6:17**)

For "*Know you not, that to whom you present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants you are whom you obey:*" (**Romans 6:16**). So there is no doubt that sin is in control and "it lords over" or dominates the non-Christian's life.

Now let's contrast this with the person who has said "NO" to all sin and "YES" to Christ. Picture in your mind a throne with Christ seated on it and someone kneeling at the feet of Jesus. Things have changed-been converted. The person has become a Christian, a voluntary slave, surrendering his whole life to Christ as Lord and Master.

This is what it means to be truly converted. In another chapter we will discuss how this idea of Lordship is found in every case of conversion in the book of Acts. This will enable us to pinpoint even better why there seems to be such a difference between many of the earlier Disciples of Christ and numerous professing Christians of today.

### **"If Any Man Will Come After Me..."**

As you attempt to evaluate the thoughts found in this chapter with reference to your own life, keep in mind these words of the Lord:

*"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow me". (Luke 9:23b)*

There is no part-time discipleship. It is all of the time (daily) or none of the time. He will not be the Lord of any part of our lives if he cannot be the Lord of every part of our lives.

This concludes Chapter 3. Please answer the following questions before going on to Chapter 4

51. What do lots of "Christians" today believe their discipleship involves according to our lesson?
  - a) Sunday fellowship
  - b) Their entire lives
  - c) Sunday and mission trips
  - d) None of the above
52. How many days of the week are we supposed to be devoted to God?
  - a) 6
  - b) 4
  - c) 7
  - d) 1
53. What is the purpose of this lesson?
  - a) To get people to stop treating Christ as a visitor
  - b) To show that Christ should be the ruler in our lives
  - c) To stop peoples mindset of "saint on Sunday devil on Monday"
  - d) All of the above
54. What does Christ want to with our hearts? He wants:
  - a) To visit
  - b) To only be there when we need him
  - c) To move in
  - d) None of the above

55. What is the main topic in 1 Cor. 6:19-20?
- Our bodies no longer belong to us
  - The Holy Spirit
  - Unclean spirits
  - Death
56. What happened in Matt. 12:43-45?
- The man cleaned up his life
  - The spirit left but came back
  - The spirit brought other spirits
  - All of the above
57. What is the Matt. 12 passage really talking about?
- Love
  - Faith
  - Sin
  - None of the above
58. Is there more to quitting sin than just saying "no"?
- Yes
  - No
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
59. What are we supposed to replace the emptiness with?
- Something stronger
  - More sin
  - Nothing
  - Anything that makes us happy
60. Is there such thing as a spiritual vacuum?
- Yes
  - No
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
61. What is stronger than sin?
- A wall
  - Your head
  - Christ
  - Bigger sin
62. What does Matt. 4 talk about?
- Jesus' crucifixion
  - Jesus' first sin
  - Temptation of Jesus
  - All of the above
63. What passage tells us that Jesus destroyed "him that has the power of death"?
- 1 Cor. 15:54-57
  - Philippians 2:5-8
  - Luke 22:27
  - Heb. 2:14
64. In 1 Cor. 15:54-57 what does it say death is swallowed up by?
- Sin
  - Love
  - Victory
  - Faith
65. What else do we do besides saying no to sin?
- Say yes to Christ
  - Say no to Christ
  - Say yes to Love
  - None of the above
66. What does Kurios mean?
- Master
  - Ruler
  - Owner
  - All of the above
67. What does Doulos mean?
- Slave
  - master
  - owner
  - ruler
68. What does Philippians 2:5-8 talk about?
- Christ's equality with God
  - Christ's equality with man
  - Christ becoming a servant
  - All of the above
69. What passage says "Christ also pleased not himself"?
- Rom. 15:3
  - John 6:38
  - Luke 22:27
  - Rom 6:17
70. Which of the following passages does it clearly state Jesus as being a servant?
- Rom. 15:3
  - John 6:38
  - Luke 22:27
  - Rom 6:17
71. Which passage talks about being "slaves of sin"?
- Rom. 15:3
  - John 6:38
  - Luke 22:27
  - Rom 6:17
72. A Non-Christian's life is ruled by;
- Sin
  - Christ
  - All of the above
  - None of the above

73. A true Christians life is ruled by;

- a) Sin
- b) Christ
- c) All of the above
- d) None of the above

75. How long each day should we be Christians

- a) 9am-5pm
- b) Part time
- c) 2-4pm
- d) 24 hours a day 7 days a week

74. In a Christian's life where should Christ be?

- a) Seated on the throne
- b) Beside the throne
- c) Bowing to us
- d) Not in the room

## CHAPTER 4

### Straddling the Fence

Some people who claim to be follower's of Christ remind us of a man sitting on a barbed-wire fence. He sits there, certainly not because he likes it but because he can't make up his mind on which side to get down. Now he can sit there alright, but it's mighty uncomfortable!

Maybe you are aware of some of these wrestling Christians. They have enough sin in their lives to keep them from being happy as Christians and just enough "**Christianity**" to keep them from going out there and really "getting with it" in sin. Talk about frustrated and unhappy - the man on the barbed-wire would probably think he's got it made compared to the fix they're in!

How do some get into such a predicament? Let's look at it this way. Such a person has dethroned Christ and placed **self** on the throne. Rather than Christ ruling and governing his life, he is controlled by self-will. He has deceived himself into believing that he can do as he pleases and listen to Christ when it suits him. It's like letting Jesus be the king, while making himself the prime minister with the real governing power in his own hands.

The Bible states:

*"The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." (Prov. 14:14a)*

Have you ever known anyone like that, someone who always had to have his own way? Or as one man described himself, "I'm a self-aholic. I'm addicted to myself."

Selfishness, or self-pleasing is the very essence of sin. Self-on-the-throne was Satan's first offer to man. "Why let God rule you? You can be your own gods! Let **self** be your lord". And ever since men have found it hard to believe that:

*"...it is not in man that walks to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23)*

But the consequences of self-rule have always been the same:

*"There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14: 12)*

Let's look now at what goes on in the life of a person who claims to be a Christian but who is predominantly ruled by self. The picture, of course, is not identical in each case, but it will more or less include the following characteristics.

#### **1. He has poor prayer life and Bible study habits.**

The person who has submitted to a Christ-controlled life is always eager to learn more about his Master and his Master's will. His attitude is "Speak Lord, your servant hears, command and I will obey."

But this is contrary to the wish of the half-hearted Christian who wants his own will to be done. Prayer to him, though not entirely stopped, becomes an "emergency exit" to be used "just in case". And if Bible study is engaged

in at all it becomes a mere “**intellectual pursuit**” and probably a superficial one, for the prime minister doesn’t want any communication from the king unless it suits his purposes.

## **2. He operates with a set of “dual controls.”**

This characteristic is very similar to the one above and reminds me of my flight training. After logging several hours of flying time, I began to feel rather sure of my control over the plane. Then one day while shooting landings with my instructor, we hit a strong cross wind. The plane started skidding down the runway and it looked as if we were going to “ground loop”. I yelled for help, “Bob, grab it!”

The person who has **self** on the throne is using Christ the same way, as if saying to Him, “I can fly this thing myself and if I do happen to need any help, I’ll call you.”

Someone has said, “God is my co-pilot”. No, He is either directing and controlling as **the pilot** or He’s not in the plane at all!

Christ, the Lord, will not sit at our feet in some sort of advisory capacity. He doesn’t go along as some kind of “trouble shooter” getting us out of a mess and then turning the controls back over to **self**. He didn’t say, “If I am with you, you are not against me”. He said, “*He that is not **with me**, is against me.*”

## **3. He keeps back some part of his life.**

Now to look at this one you might be fooled. He’s faithful in church attendance and may even teach a class. He’s willing to lead in prayer, serves on various committees, etc. He looks and acts the part. This person isn’t what you would call a “**real**” hypocrite, because when he engages in worship and other religious activities he is very conscientious and sincere. It’s no show. He is very close to getting completely off the throne and letting Christ have it all...but not quite. There is still that 5 or 10 per cent he wants so badly to keep. He just cannot bring himself to give up some pleasurable sin or trait of character such as stinginess or pride. He is like the rich young ruler. (See **Mark 10: 17-21**)

## **4. He is unhappy.**

Whenever someone lets anything less than Christ be the Lord of his life he will, without exception, be unhappy. Oh, he may drink of all the wells of pleasure this world has and seem to be anything but unhappy. Yet sitting there in the darkness of his life when it’s all been said and done, he is still thirsty. Jesus says:

*“But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become a well of water springing up unto eternal life.” (John 4: 14)*

## **5. He operates out of fear.**

“Why are you faithful to attend church services?” If that question were honestly answered by some, it would be, “Because I am afraid if I don’t I’ll go to hell”. His part-time service to Christ is “**fire insurance**”. He is afraid not to have Christ as his Savior but he cannot bring himself to let Christ be his Lord. He is somewhat like the pagan who tries to “**keep the gods appeased**” hoping they will leave him alone for now but save him **then**. (In a later chapter we will discuss the proper place that fear has in the life of a Christian.)

## **6. He is a premeditated sinner.**

Often when self is ruling one’s life he will deliberately sin. For example, he is invited some place and doesn’t want to go, but rather than tell the truth he concocts a lie to get out of it. That’s premeditated sin, which obviously is not characteristic of a person under the Lordship of Christ. Another familiar example is a student deliberately writing the answers to a quiz on the cuff of his shirt or the palm of his hand before an exam. He knows it is a sin but does it anyway.

And on we could go, giving examples of those who claim to be Christians but who engage in premeditated sin. As one young man at a university put it, “I figured it this way, I knew I wasn’t giving it all up to Jesus - that I still had a few things I was hanging on to. But I figured since I had cut down to only about two or three deliberate sins per week that this was so much above the average the Lord wasn’t going to kick much about it”. But no sin is small in the presence of an infinite Lord. A grain of sand may be a small thing but not if it gets into the mechanism of a watch. (See **Hebrews 2:1-3**)

This characteristic of the self-ruler reminds us of the little girl who, after returning from a birthday party, told her questioning mother, "Mommy, I wasn't good and I wasn't bad; I was just kind of in between!"

Premeditated sins result in POROSIS, or a process of petrification. (See **Romans 11:7, 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:14; Ephesians 4:18**) A person who habitually engages in some particular sin or sins begins to lose his ability to "feel" the sting of sin. Hence, he reaches a stage where regret and penitence are dead. Peter described such a person in **2 Peter 2:20**:

*"For if, after they have escaped the defilement of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first."*

Why would Peter say he's worse off? Because such a person can become so hardened by sin that he will never again respond to God and completely surrender his throne to the Lord.

### Where Am I?

The person with self on the throne is in what we might call a gray area. He is between the one who knows he serves sin and the one who seeks in every way to serve the Lord.

Now, every person can be found in one of these places. Remember the first question usually asked by someone regaining consciousness?

This concludes Chapter 4. Please answer the following questions before going sending in your book.

76. In the case of the man on the fence, who was sitting on his life's throne?
  - a) Christ
  - b) Himself
  - c) Satan
  - d) None of the above
77. What does proverbs 14:14 discuss?
  - a) Christ
  - b) Being self-ruled
  - c) Satan
  - d) Sin
78. What is a self-aholic?
  - a) Someone who is addicted to shellfish
  - b) Someone who is addicted to themselves
  - c) Someone who is addicted to drugs
  - d) Someone who hates themselves
79. What does the author say is the essence of sin?
  - a) Self-pleasing
  - b) Selfishness
  - c) Both a and b
  - d) None of the above
80. What does Jer. 10:23 talk about?
  - a) A man directing himself
  - b) A man not directing himself
  - c) A man driving a car
  - d) A man shopping
81. Proverbs 14:12 says that "there is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of:
  - a) Life
  - b) Death
  - c) Money
  - d) Love
82. A person whose life is ruled by Christ is always eager to:
  - a) learn more about his master
  - b) learn more about his master's will
  - c) Both of the above
  - d) None of the above
83. Whose will does a half-hearted Christian follow?
  - a) Christ
  - b) His own
  - c) The Devil's
  - d) Both A and C
84. What is prayer to a half-hearted Christian?
  - a) An everyday thing
  - b) An "emergency exit"
  - c) Only done on Sunday
  - d) an "intellectual pursuit"
85. To a half-hearted Christian, Bible study is:
  - a) An everyday thing
  - b) An "emergency exit"
  - c) Only done on Sunday
  - d) an "intellectual pursuit"

86. A person who has "self on the throne" uses Christ just as:
- He should be used
  - The author used his flight instructor
  - A co-pilot
  - Both B and C
87. True or False: God is a "trouble shooter".
- True
  - False
88. The third type of "Christian" is a:
- True Christian
  - Hypocrite
  - Sincere Christian
  - None of the Above
89. True or False: The third type of "Christian" has Christ on the throne of his life.
- True
  - False
90. What passage talks about "The Rich Young Ruler"?
- John 4:14
  - Mark 10:17-21
  - Hebrews 2:1-3
  - Romans 11:7
91. What passage talks about the "The well of eternal life"?
- Proverbs 14:12
  - Mark 10:17-21
  - John 4:14
  - Hebrew 2:1-3
92. Our fifth type of "Christian" operates out of:
- Happiness
  - Love
  - Fear
  - None of the Above
93. How is the fifth type of "Christians" like a pagan?
- They bow down and worship God
  - The "try to appease the God"
  - They believe in gods
  - None of the Above
94. What is our sixth type of "Christian"?
- A predetermined sinner
  - A God fearing man
  - A honest individual
  - Both B and C
95. What is Porosis?
- The process of elimination
  - The process of becoming poor
  - The process of petrification
  - None of the Above
96. A person who sins deliberately over time stops feeling the sting of:
- A bee
  - Sin
  - God
  - Both A and B
97. True or False: A person who sins over and over on a regular basis regrets his sins.
- True
  - False
98. A person with self on the throne is in:
- The gray area
  - Heaven
  - Hell
  - None of the Above
99. What does Peter talk about in 2 Peter 2:20?
- Sinning
  - Being worse off then you were before
  - Being better of then you were before
  - Both A and B
100. What is the first thing a person asks after regaining consciousness?
- Who am I?
  - What am I?
  - Where am I?
  - None of the Above

# GLOSSARY

**Lord** - Greek word is KURIOS - variously translated in the New Testament, Lord, Master, ruler, etc., and signifies having power or authority over. . . Note also the word servant from the Greek word DOULOS signifies a slave or bondservant. The Christian and Christ have a slave/Lord relationship.

**Thayer** - One of the best known and respected authorities in the Koine Greek language, which was the language used by the New Testament writers.

**Covenant relationship** - An arrangement or contract between two or more parties with a law to back it up, i.e., between God and Israel (the Law of Moses) or between God and the Christians (the New Testament).

**Grace** - From the Greek CHARIS - has reference to the special favor of God's redemptive mercy. On the part of the receiver, a sense of undeserved or unmerited favor done for man by God - specifically it is the death of Jesus to take away man's sins. To be found "in favor with God", is to find grace.

**Baptism** - Greek - BAPTIZO is the verb form. It means to dip, plunge, immerse. The baptism of the Great Commission (Mark 16:16) was an immersion in water (Acts 8:36) and was for the remission of sins, (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21).

**Morality** - Action based on a standard of right and wrong. Christian morality is based on the authority of God's Word.

**Lasciviousness** - Greek ASELGEIA - denotes an absence of restraint in the area of lewd, lustful thoughts. Lasciviousness has to do with anything that tends to produce lustful sexual emotions that cannot be fulfilled outside of the marriage relationship. It is classed among the works of the flesh since it leads to fornication and adultery.

**Transformed** - Greek METAMORPHOO - Indicates a change from one form or appearance to another. A term used in Biology to describe the life cycles of certain plants and animals, characterized by growth and change "in stages".