

Christian Discipleship Guide



“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

13. Christians in the World

The Bible is very clear that the present world system is contrary to God's eternal purpose. The Word of God commands His children to be separate from this world system; yet at the same time, to reach the lost men and women who live in it for Jesus Christ. Christians need to learn how to live a balanced and consistent life in order to influence people for the Lord Jesus Christ, without having the world influencing them for evil.

As Christians, we must realize that if we truly live for Jesus Christ, we will encounter opposition from the world. We will be opposed because Jesus Christ was opposed (John 15:18-21). And, we will be opposed only if we live for Him. If, however, we go along with the world, they will not oppose us (2 Timothy 3:12).

There are four main areas from which opposition will come. Our primary opposition will come from those closest to us who know us best, that is, from friends, family, fellow workers, and acquaintances (Matthew 10:35-36, John 1:11, Mark 6:4). Secondly, opposition will come from unsaved people in general. The two spiritual families (the Devil's family and God's family) have never gotten along and never will (Galatians 4:29). Thirdly, opposition will come from society in general. The nature and course of this present world system is against God. This opposition is communicated subtly through the media, such as literature, music, television, radio, newspapers, video games, etc. We must judge those things by the Word of God (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4). Lastly, the mastermind behind all this opposition is Satan himself. He is our adversary (1 Peter 5:8). And, he is currently at work in unsaved people (Ephesians 2:2).

As Christians, there are a number of ways we can overcome this opposition. We can give a soft answer and avoid fights whenever possible (Proverbs 15:1; Romans 12:18). We can please God with our life (Proverbs 16:7). We can have faith in God (1 John 5:4-5). We can love our enemies and help them. Jesus loved His enemies enough to die for them when He did not have to. The world cannot understand this type of love, and those who are seeking the truth will be drawn to it (Romans 12:14; Romans 12:20-21). We can pray for our enemies, and pray with pure motives (Matthew 5:44; Luke 17:1). We can keep good company, and especially associate with people who love God and want to serve Him (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33). And, we can immerse ourselves in the Word of God (Romans 12:1-2).

A Christian's life should be a good example to the unsaved world. The world should know that we love God – not by our mouth as much as by our life (1 Corinthians 8:3). Our lifestyle should separate us from the world, and our behavior should be different from that of the unsaved (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Peter 2:9). However, we should not be so different that we lose influence (1 Corinthians 9:22). The world should see us as being open and honest in all matters (2 Corinthians 8:21; Romans 12:17). They should see in us a living testimony of the grace of God (Philippians 2:14-15). And, lastly, we should be of "good report" (1 Timothy 3:7; Colossians 4:5-6).

Once a person becomes a believer, they should have a special view the unsaved world. They should see themselves as pilgrims in a strange land (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11). They should realize that their true home is in Heaven (Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:20). They should see this world as a "mission field" to reach the lost for Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20). Someone once said that, "for the saved, this world is a bad as it's going to get; and for the unsaved, this world is a good as it's going to get."

Lastly, Christians all over the world are living under various forms of governments, such as democracies, monarchies, dictatorships, etc. The Bible describes our responsibilities to our governments:

- The government is one of the three institutions ordained by God, the other two being the Family and the Church. All governments are controlled by Satan (Luke 4:5-6) and, therefore, are essentially against God. However, we are still to submit to the ordinance of God (Romans 13:1-2).
- If we do what is right, we have no reason to fear. God will honor us for doing right (Romans 13:3-5).
- We are to render to the government what is due by law (Romans 13:6-7; Matthew 17:24-27; Matthew 22:15-22).
- We are to submit to government ordinances (1 Peter 2:13-15).
- We are to honor those in authority, even the wicked, without partaking of their wickedness. We should commit any adverse situations to God and let Him handle them. When Peter wrote the words “Honour the king” (1 Peter 2:17-23), Nero was the king of the Roman Empire and was perhaps the most wicked ruler that Rome ever had.
- We need to realize that we cannot legislate morals or change mankind through political action. Man is “by nature” fallen and sinful, and must be changed individually, from inside out, through personal saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 2:14).

In summary, Christians need to live a balanced and consistent life in order to influence people for the Lord Jesus Christ, without letting the world influence them for evil.

Questions:

1. List the sources of opposition that Christians will face.

2. How should a Christian view the unsaved world? Give three viewpoints.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

3. Many “Christian” groups today are trying to force morality on people through the passing of laws. Why won’t this process work?

Additional Scripture Verses:

2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 2:15-16; 1 Corinthians 8:3).