

# Putting “Christ” Back in “Christian”

By Mary Jensen

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

*Matthew 6:19-21*

There is a quote attributed to Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi that says, “I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.” I don’t know about you, but this quote makes me think. As an American I can’t help but notice that our reverence for God has been replaced with a feel-good message tailored to fit our lifestyle. I have begun to wonder if we are so comfortable with the reward of Christ’s work that we have minimized the necessity of it.

Do we still recognize the holiness of God? We base our Christian life on the Good News, but do we intentionally seek a relationship with the One who is the reason it is good? Hopefully we’ve all come to the realization that Christ’s death isn’t about bringing us homes, health, or wealth. The Bible clearly teaches us there is a difference between heavenly blessings and earthly gain. So why as Christians do we continue to use “freedom in Christ” as justification for attaining the American dream?

There is definitely a “god of this age,” but it might not be who you think. Whether we want to accept it or not, the present ruler of this world is Satan and he is an expert at deception. Even if we live our lives in a way that isn’t in outright defiance toward God, we still need to be aware that Satan wants to work through us. He is the “father of lies” and he disguises himself as good. 2 Corinthians 11:14 tells us “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” Yes, light! And he is at work in our Christian lives, waiting for a way to slip in. He convinces us to “take authority” by labeling our general lifestyles as good or bad when in reality God wants us to examine every choice we make with the simple question of “Will this bring me closer to God or draw my attention away?”

Our desire to obtain earthly comforts and pleasures only enslaves us with chains of bondage. How often do we walk right into one more debt that keeps us unable to give; one more habit that consumes our actions; one more commitment that steals our time? Before we realize it, we are indebted to the world instead of free to become the person God designed us to be. Freedom from this bondage starts with knowing the mindset of God and avoiding the snares of this world. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11.

Thankfully, God knows all about our fallen state. He didn’t send us a magic genie. He sent us a Savior who opened the door to eternal life and set the example of self-sacrificial living.

So where does this leave us? We need to start with being open to conviction from the Holy Spirit and allowing God to be the authority in our lives. We won’t be able to untangle the snares of the American dream on our own, but as we work towards this goal we will have the privilege of seeing God’s glory being revealed in every victory. May we head towards self-sacrificial lives and show the world the “Christ” in “Christian.”