

**What's wrong with Christians?**



## What's wrong with Christians?

### **False or fake conversions.**

To convert is to be “born again.” At the moment of conversion, the converted person is filled with the Holy Spirit and begins a journey of turning away from sin and beginning to worship and serve the Lord. A “false conversion” is no conversion at all. A false conversion may *look like* a true, Spirit-caused conversion, but it is not. The reasons for false conversions are varied. Sometimes the person experiencing a false conversion doesn't even realize it. At other times, there is intentional deception on his/her part. Not everyone who claims to have been converted has, in fact, been converted.

In order to detect a false conversion, it is necessary to first know what true Christian behaviour looks like.

In the Parable of the Weeds in **Matthew 13:24–30** Satan works to deceive the church by mingling his children with God's children, making it difficult for believers to discern the true from the false. The more we are familiar with Scripture, the easier it will be for us to detect the true Christians from the false converts.

## What's wrong with Christians?

### **False or fake conversions.**

Some believe their recitation of a prayer or responding to an “altar call” alone may have turned them into a Christian. Many believe their religious traditions, such as being baptized as an infant, secured a spot in heaven for them, or that their plentiful good works alone have put them in good standing with God. And, of course, some believe church attendance alone guarantees salvation. The point is that many who profess to be Christians are not Christians at all.

Yet they complacently remain convinced that all is well with their soul. Sadly, many will live their entire lives believing they were Christians only to one day hear these words from Jesus Christ:

*“I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”* **Matthew 7:23.**

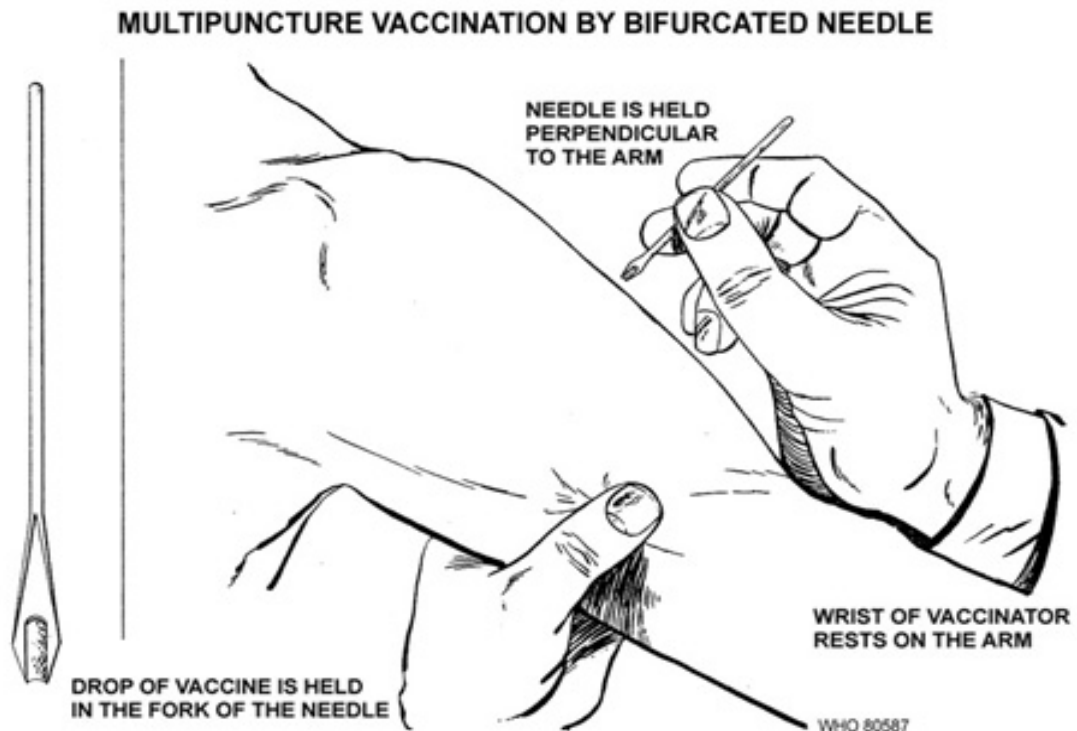
The clear teaching of the Bible is that when someone is saved his life will most definitely change as he is a *“new creation, the old has gone and the new has come”* **2 Corinthians 5:17.**

## **Fake conversions immunise a person to the real thing.**

- **Cowpox**, also called **vaccinia**, mildly eruptive disease of cows that when transmitted to otherwise healthy humans produces immunity to smallpox (Encyclopaedia Britannica)
- **Smallpox vaccine**, the first successful [vaccine](#) to be developed, was introduced by [Edward Jenner](#) in 1798. He followed up his observation that milkmaids who had previously caught [cowpox](#) did not later catch [smallpox](#) by showing that inoculated cowpox protected against inoculated smallpox. The word **vaccine** is derived from *Variolae Vaccinae* (i.e. smallpox of the cow), the term devised by Jenner to denote cowpox and used in the long title of his *An enquiry into the causes and effects of Variolae Vaccinae, known by the name of cowpox*. **Vaccination**, the term which soon replaced *cowpox inoculation* and *vaccine inoculation*, was first used in print by Jenner's friend, Richard Dunning in 1800. (**Wikipedia**)
- Initially, the terms *vaccine/vaccination* referred only to smallpox, but in 1881 [Louis Pasteur](#) proposed that to honour Jenner the terms be widened to cover the new protective inoculations being introduced

## **Fake conversions immunise a person to the real thing.**

- In a similar manner those who have been exposed to Fake Christianity develop an immunity to a true conversion, they may show some of the symptoms just as a vaccination to smallpox will cause a little bit of fever etc but it does not lead to death, it is not fatal.
- In like manner those who have been injected with a dose of fake Christianity develop an immunity to the real thing which leads to death so that Christ can live through us.



# What's wrong with Christians?

## Spiritual maturity vs. spiritual immaturity

Christine was church-hunting - again. It seemed as if every time she started to get comfortable at a church, the questions would start.

1. "Oh, Christine, wouldn't you like to join our Bible study?"
2. "Christine, you have such a good heart, I thought of you as soon as I heard they needed someone to help with Sunday school."
3. "Christine, we had the most awesome time at the orphanage this Christmas. I really wish you would get involved!"

Why was it so hard for people to understand she just wanted to be loved by Jesus, to feel that glow of being accepted for who she was? Why did they keep acting as if this was a test of spiritual maturity vs. spiritual immaturity?

But for Christine and many other followers of Christ, that's exactly what it is. The Bible laments the same thing in [Hebrews 5:11-14](#)

## **Many Christians don't want to mature.**

### **Hebrews 5:11-14.**

*"There is so much more we would like to say about this. But you don't seem to listen, so it's hard to make you understand. You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things a beginner must learn about the Scriptures. You are like babies who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food. And a person who is living on milk isn't very far along in the Christian life and doesn't know much about doing what is right. Solid food is for those who are mature, who have trained themselves to recognize the difference between right and wrong and then do what is right" (NLT).*

The transition from milk to meat should be a natural one for most Christians. We should find ourselves wanting to read the Bible more often, to pray more frequently, to reach out in loving community as Christ teaches us. And, as the author of Hebrews intimates, we should naturally begin teaching others who are less spiritually mature rather than constantly needing to be fed ourselves.

## The Engel scale.

The **Engel Scale** was developed by James F. Engel as a way of representing the journey from no knowledge of God through to spiritual maturity as a Christian believer.

The model is used by some Christians to emphasise the *process* of conversion, and the various decision-making steps that a person goes through before they become a Christian

The original model was developed by James F Engel and Viggo Søgaaard, although this was later refined by Engel, who added several ideas from behavioural science, and published it in his 1975 book *What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest*. According to this model, everyone is somewhere on this scale. (Wikipedia)

If people are near the bottom of the scale, we must not use Christian language and ideas which will mean nothing to them. We must assess our message through their eyes, not ours. It may also be inappropriate to preach for a decision, at this point. Avoid a style of presentation which bases everything around praying a sinners prayer. People need time to progress and understand. Instant conversions are rare.



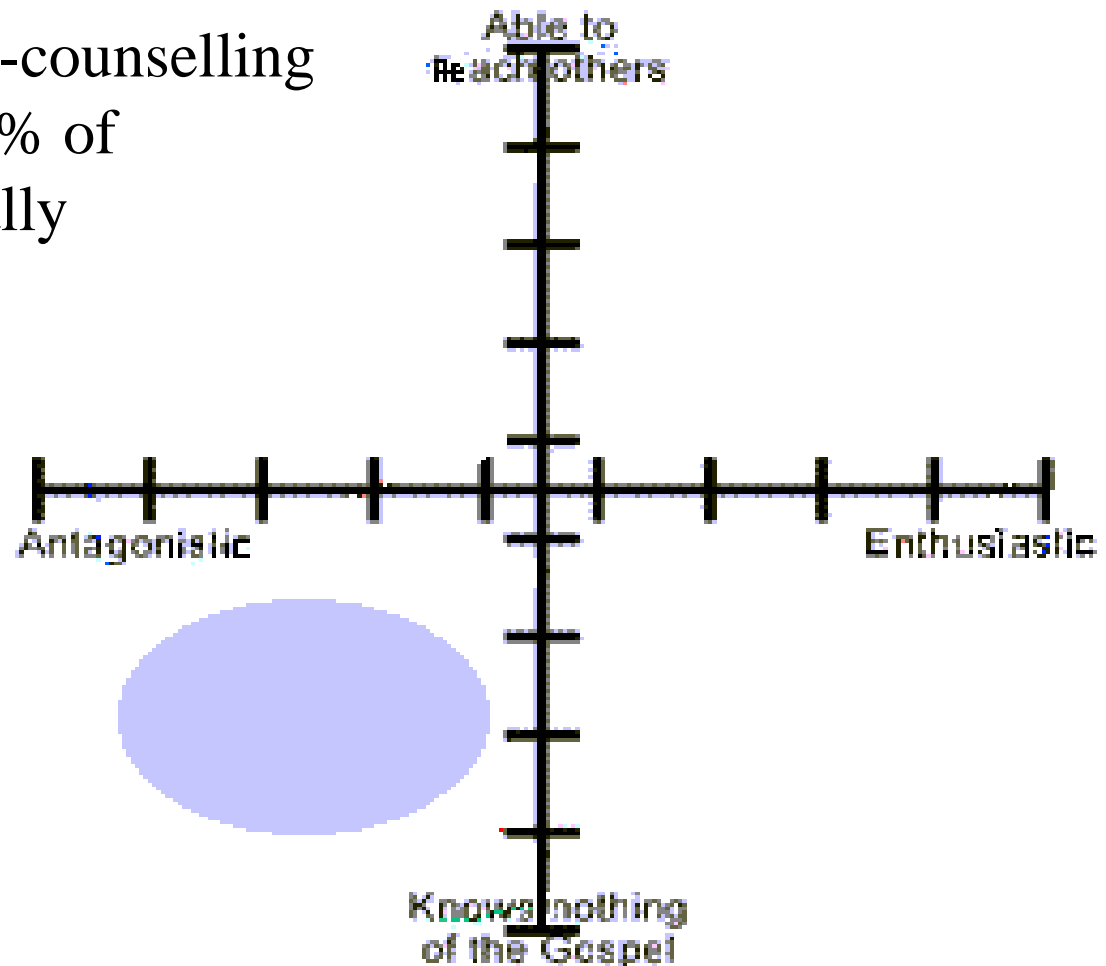
# What's wrong with Christians?

## The Engel scale

- +5 Stewardship
- +4 Communion with God
- +3 Conceptual and behavioural growth
- +2 Incorporation into Body
- +1 Post-decision evaluation New birth
- 1 Repentance and faith in Christ
- 2 Decision to act
- 3 Personal problem recognition
- 4 Positive attitude towards Gospel
- 5 Grasp implications of Gospel
- 6 Awareness of fundamentals of Gospel
- 7 Initial awareness of Gospel
- 8 Awareness of supreme being, no knowledge of Gospel

## The Gray Matrix Scale.

- The Gray Matrix, Frank Gray's modification of the Engel Scale. Anything which moves people from left to right across the scale is 'evangelistic'. This might include acts of service and friendship.
- There is a Christian debt-counselling service in UK, where 80% of those helped are eventually converted.



## **Spiritual immaturity.**

by Greg Gibson

*I have an embarrassing personal confession to make. For the first 10 years of my Christian life, I was an immature, carnal Christian...*

*"How," you wonder? The truth is, I followed men. What I mean is that I couldn't think for myself. You see, I gave my devotion and mind to men, a movement, and a system. Then I unconsciously let them do my thinking for me.*

*Was it the Church of Rome, the Jehovah's Witnesses, or the Mormons? No, believe it or not, it was a group of evangelicals, who preached the gospel of Jesus Christ, but, they didn't tolerate questions to their confession of faith and systematic theology.*

*And unfortunately, I submitted my thinking to them, because I over-esteemed them as godly men.*

*In the Bible, God has given us many descriptions of spiritual infancy vs. spiritual maturity. One of those descriptions, found in **1 Cor. 1:10-3:23**, is following men instead of Christ, and using labels.*

## **Spiritual immaturity.**

**Cults are notorious for using thought-control methods to undermine the Christian faith's fundamental truths.**

However, even doctrinally sound Christian ministries can be guilty of using cult-like methods to teach their non-essential, sectarian, or hobbyhorse doctrines.

*Good Bible teachers not only proclaim Biblical truth, they also aren't afraid to teach others how to study the Bible for themselves. To keep individual disciples from straying into error, God has given His Spirit, His Bible, and His Church.*

*There is no perfect organization, movement, or group. All groups are made of imperfect individuals. And, since there is no individual perfection, then there is no corporate perfection.*

Ask yourself, "How much do I agree with my favourite group?" If you agree 100%, beware! This could be a sign you're following men, instead of following Christ. Paul commended the Bereans in that *they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).*

## Marks of spiritual immaturity (Doctrinal instability)

**No firm doctrinal foundation.**

**Hebrews 5:11-14.**

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.*

*But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*



## Marks of spiritual immaturity (Doctrinal instability)

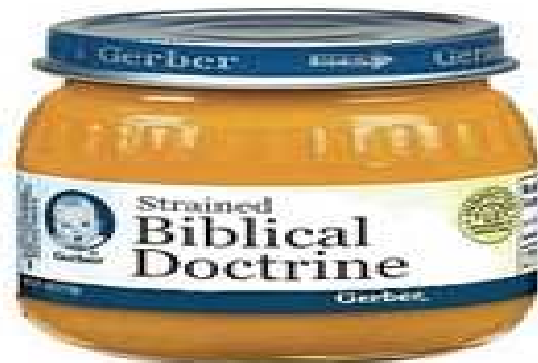
### Hebrews 6:1-3.

*Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.*



## What's wrong with Christians? (Doctrinal instability)

Pastor, why force solid doctrine on your congregation when there's a palatable alternative?



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## Marks of spiritual immaturity (Divisions)

### 1 Corinthians 3

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. <sup>3</sup> You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings? <sup>5</sup> What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. <sup>6</sup> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. <sup>7</sup> So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. <sup>8</sup> The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. <sup>9</sup> For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.



## Marks of spiritual immaturity (Divisions)

### 1 Corinthians 3

*<sup>10</sup> By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. <sup>11</sup> For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. <sup>14</sup> If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. <sup>16</sup> Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.*

## Marks of spiritual immaturity (uncontrolled tongue)

### James 1:26.

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

### James 3:1-2.

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. (mature)

### James 3:9-12.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

No, no...  
This isn't gossip.  
It's the truth.



## **Marks of spiritual immaturity (uncontrolled tongue)**

**Grumbling and complaining.**

**Philippians 2:14-15.**

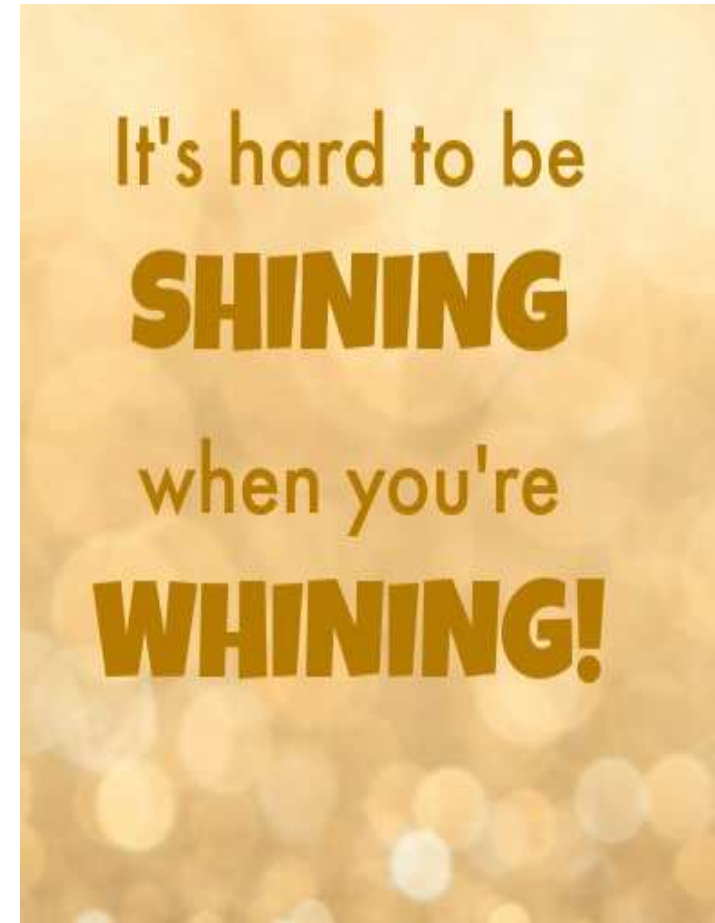
*Do everything without complaining or murmuring, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation.*

**James 5:9**

*Don't grumble against each other brothers or you will be judged, the judge is standing at the door.*

**1 Corinthians 10:9-11**

*and do not grumble as some of them did and were killed by the destroying angel.*



## **Spiritual immaturity (Difficulty in loving the unlovely)**

### **Matthew 5:43-48.**

*You have heard that it was said,  
Love your neighbour and hate your  
enemy. But I tell you, love your  
enemies and pray for those who  
persecute you, that you may be  
children of your Father in heaven.*

*He causes his sun to rise on the evil  
and the good, and sends rain on the  
righteous and the unrighteous.*

*If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

*If you want to be like Jesus  
then love the unlovable,  
forgive the unworthy and  
do good to those who  
can't repay you.*

## Marks of spiritual immaturity (Legalism)

### Romans 14:1-5.

*Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarrelling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall.*

*And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.*



## **Doctrinal stability, speaking the truth in love and serving**

### **Ephesians 4:11-16.**

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.*

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

## **What's wrong with Christians?**

**The modern day Gospel has been changed, those who respond to it are not converts to the Gospel of self denial that Jesus preached.**

**Galatians 1:6-12.**

*I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse! Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*

## What's wrong with Christians?

**Keith Green the singer** who died some 30 years ago in a plane crash, listed some of the subtractions to the modern-day gospel in a booklet “What’s wrong with the gospel” I have adapted it to make it more concise.



**The modern day Gospel has been changed.**

- The blood of Jesus is not preached.
- The cross that Christians are to take up is not preached.
- The threat and terrors of hell and the guilt of sinners are not preached.
- The Law of God is not preached.
- The fear of God and Judgement seat of Christ is not preached.
- Repentance necessary for forgiveness is not preached.
- God’s sorrow and broken heart over sin is not preached.
- The necessity of holiness to please God is not preached.



## What's wrong with the Gospel?

- **The blood of Jesus is not preached.**

A bloodless gospel is now preached, one that has been adapted to reach the masses. The whole concept of Jesus being the Passover Lamb has been lost, it takes too much time and thought to expound these foundation Biblical truths, in fact the Old Testament is relegated to a position of an optional extra for those interested in history.

- **The cross that Christians are to take up is not preached.**

**You cannot have more exact opposites than the Bible's "Christ-centred Gospel" and the modern day me-centred gospel"**

*AW Towzer. Jesus said that "if any man will come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. So the cross not only brought Christ's life to an end, it also ends the first life, the old life of every one of his true followers... this and nothing less is true Christianity. We must do something about the cross, and there's only one of two things we can do... flee it or die upon it.*

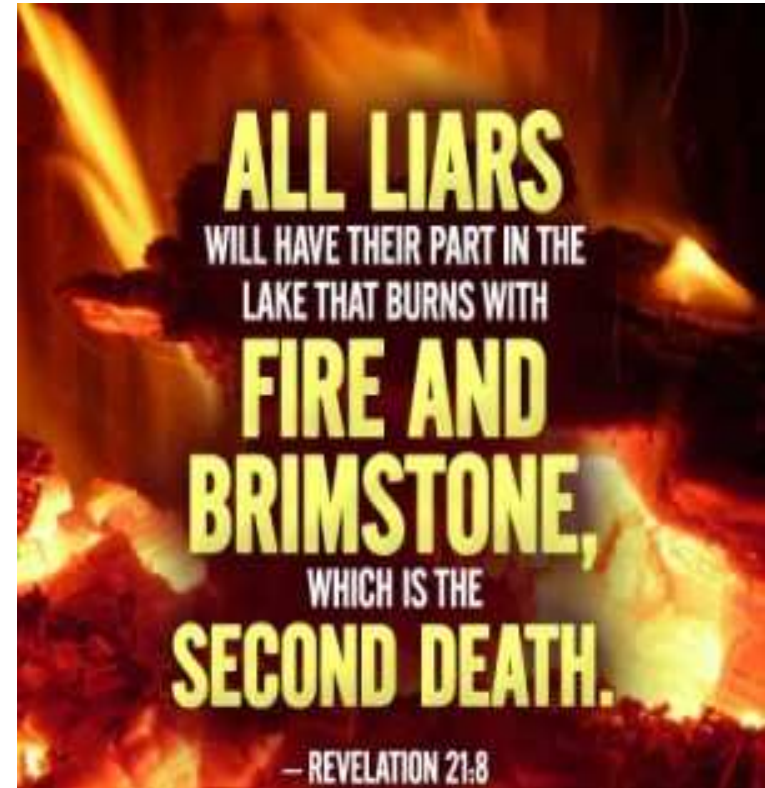
## What's wrong with the Gospel?

- **The threat and terrors of hell and the guilt of sinners are not preached.**

We have heard people say “I’m tired of hell-fire and brimstone preaching, “well” I often reply, “When was the last time you heard any?”

Very few preach about hell anymore, it is no longer in vogue. We shouldn't scare poor sinners. They're just unfortunate misguided souls, right?

Wrong! The Bible clearly shows that they are rebels who have robbed and dishonoured the living God and infinitely offended Him and have no right to look at themselves in any other light. What right do we have to remove things from the Gospel presentation that Jesus Christ Himself gave great place to in His own preaching?



## **What's wrong with the Gospel?**

- **The Law of God is not preached to convict one of sin.**

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus, he asked him a very direct question: Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Can you imagine what our preachers would answer him today?

Just admit you are a sinner, say this short prayer and accept Jesus as your personal saviour and go to church and pay your tithes and try to be good and you're in.

But Jesus answered "You know the commandments" **Matthew 19:17**

**Why the commandments, aren't we living in the age of grace?**

Jesus was using the commandments to convict this man of his sin of greed and did not tell him to tithe but to sell everything and give it to the poor. The commandments must be preached not as the way of Salvation, but as a searchlight put on the sinners heart so that he can see how utterly rotten he is **Galatians 3:24.**

**Romans 7:7.**

*For I would have not come to know sin except through the Law.*

## What's wrong with the Gospel?

- **The fear of God and Judgement seat of Christ is not preached.**

Instead of the awesome majesty of Jehovah, today the Lord is portrayed as a sort of ice cream man or Santa Claus and the church is the candy store where you can get every goodie your heart desires. Jesus himself is portrayed as a sweetie pie, so good, so gentle and loving, but what happened to “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the Living God?”



## What's wrong with the Gospel?

- **Repentance necessary for forgiveness is not preached.**

The teachings of Jesus and the Apostles are full of commands to “Repent and be saved”.

Repentance is not just being sorry and it is not merely a change of heart and a change of mind, it is a change of action.

Because there is so little conviction of sin brought about by the preaching of the modern gospel, we can't truly require repentance anymore, if we did no one would come forward at all.

For repentance is easy for him who sees how ugly and horrible sin is, but it is impossible where the Law does not convince the sinner of his wicked heart, compelling him to turn from his sins into the arms of a waiting compassionate God.



## What's wrong with the Gospel?

- **God's sorrow and broken heart over sin is not preached.**

The picture of God presented today by Evangelists is that of an optimist, a positive thinking good ole boy who lives in Heaven high above all the trouble on Earth. But the Bible paints a very different picture of God, with Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, or the pleading of God through the Prophets.

**Proverbs 15:3.** *The eyes of the Lord are in every place watching the evil and the good.*

That means God saw every rape committed today, he saw every murder, every person who starved to death, every abused and battered child.

How can we believe that he sees all of this and does not grieve.

But the church does not want a God that is grieved with sin because then he would be grieved with them.



## What's wrong with the Gospel?

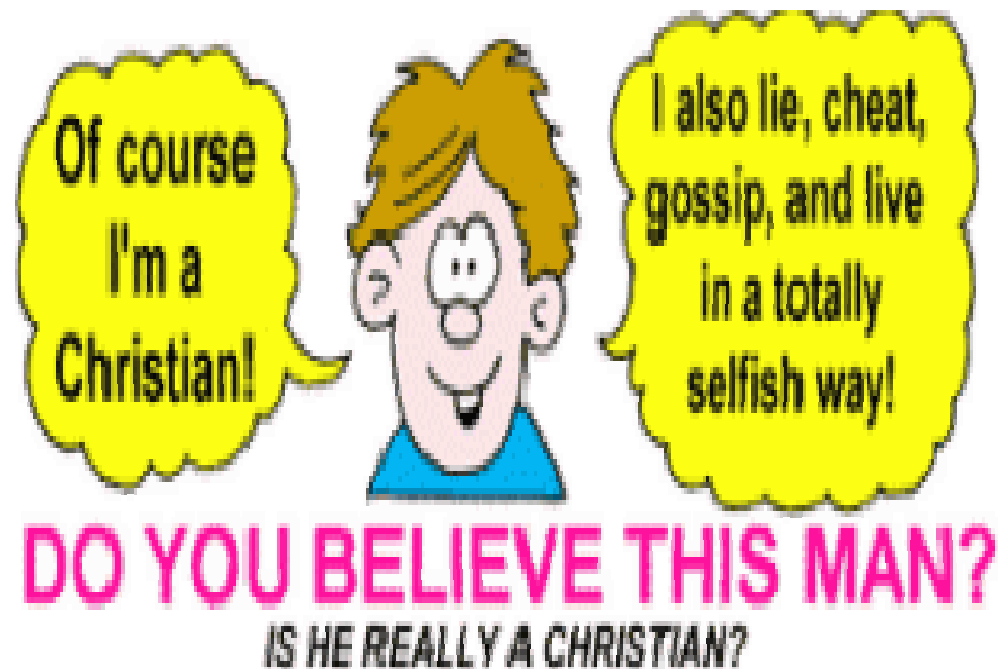
- **The necessity of holiness to please God is not preached.**

**Hebrews 12:4.** says “*without holiness no one shall see the Lord.*”

But a stranger than truth doctrine has been invented as a blessed refuge for the back slider called “The carnal Christian” In this crazy doctrine we are led to believe that any believer who isn't really walking with the Lord and is indulging in the things of the world and the lusts of the flesh can still be considered a Christian, but not a 1<sup>st</sup> class Christian only a 2<sup>nd</sup> class Christian, “a Carnal Christian”

Today, possibly the greatest insult to the Gospel has been the almost total neglect of the preaching of holiness for the Christian.

Jesus does not want to make believe that we are holy, he wants to impart his holiness to us by the Holy Spirit.



## **What's wrong with modern day Christianity?**

**There is a whole list that one could mention here but let me mention one that I have heard.**

**There are no miracles and healing.**

The miracles that Jesus performed were proof of his Messiah-ship and he even said this to John's disciples.

**Matthew 11:2-6.**

*When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."*

God does not heal us because we deserve a better lot in life he heals because of His Grace and mercy and John was not released from his prison cell but was executed by Herod.



# What's wrong with modern day Christianity?

Perhaps to answer this we need to look at who other than Jesus were used by God to perform miracles.

**Acts 5:12.**

*The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people.*

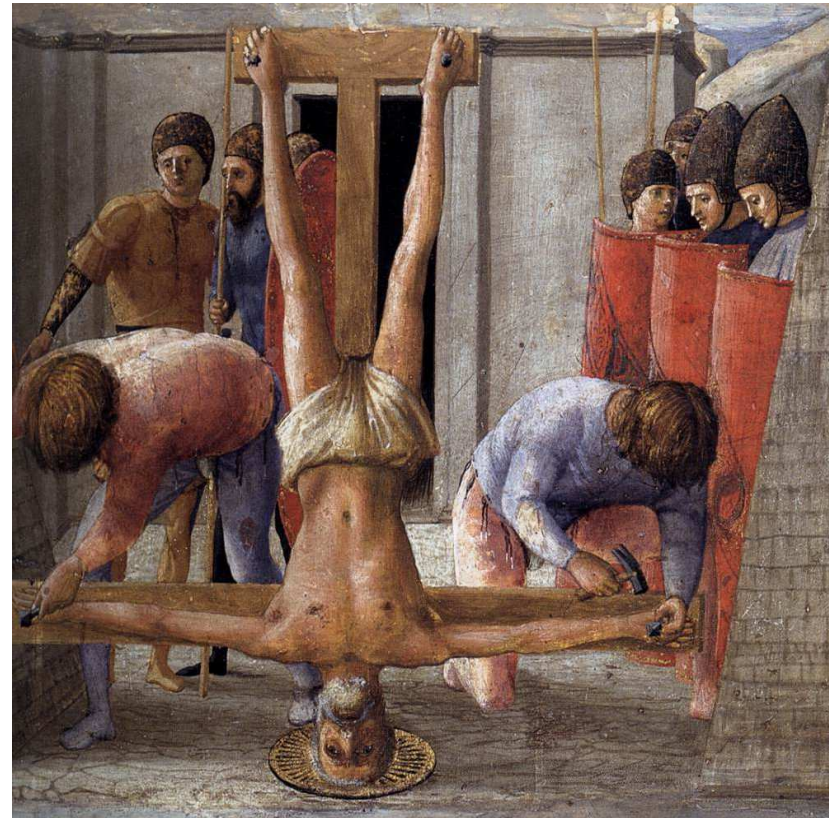
**2 Corinthians 12:12.**

*Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.*

**Why with all perseverance?**

Because this Apostolic anointing came at a price!

Most of the Apostles paid for the anointing with their lives, many of the modern day so-called Apostles want to live a life of ease and luxury.



# What's wrong with modern day Christianity?

## **1 Corinthians 4:9-13.**

*For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong!*

*You are distinguished, but we are dishonoured! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.*

## **Acts 5:40-41.**

*and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

## Radical (Real) Christianity.

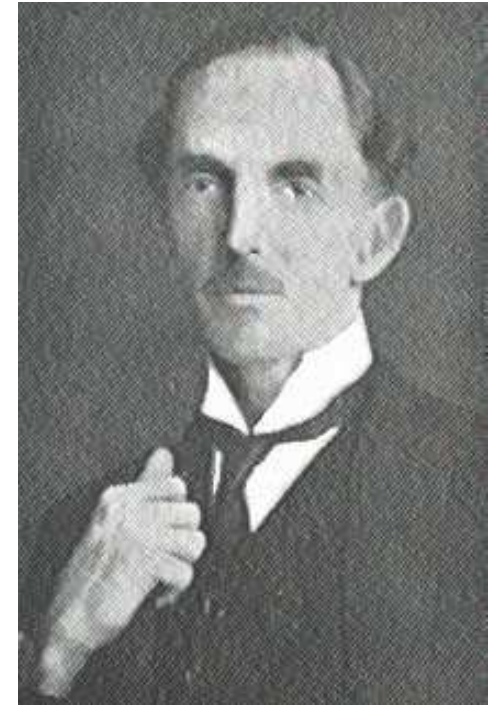
### Charles Thomas (C.T.) Studd

1860-1931

English missionary to China, India, and Africa.

#### Quotes:

- Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.
- If Jesus Christ is God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.
- When his critics told him to go home, that he had done enough, he replied, "God has called me to go, and I will go. I will blaze the trail though my grave may only become a stepping stone that younger men may follow."



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