



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9
- Matthew 4:8-11
- II Corinthians 9:6-15
- Hebrews 4:11-13

IMPERSONATING A

CHRISTIAN

- Who Owns Your Worship?
- Who Owns Your Possessions?
- Who Owns Your Allegiance?

It can be very funny to watch a talented comedian do impersonations. They are skilled at capturing the essence of someone who most people would recognize. They accentuate their mannerisms, facial expressions, voice, body language and talk about subjects this famous person is known for. They truly capture the outer expression of a person's character. It might be said that imitation is a great compliment. Of course, this is true if it is all done in clean fun, as the Bible warns us against coarse jesting.

Yet, it is far from funny and rather offensive, even dangerous, when we find someone impersonating a Christian. What does that even look like? Too often, you cannot easily identify such "comedians" simply by their mannerisms, facial expressions, voice, body language or the subjects they talk about. Those all appear

authentic. But it's their inner character that ultimately exposes them. Out in the open they appear as Christians, but in the secret place of the heart they are just frauds.

I'd invite you to use a few key parameters and see if you can spot them. They are much more popular than you might think; they are actually everywhere, lurking just below the surface. They love their idols. You'll notice what's most important to them on the inside by what gains most of their time, attention, and resources. Another key giveaway is effort. It takes a lot of effort to be accomplished at anything; and you will recognize counterfeits by their cheep imitations; they simply never put God first, never give Him their best of anything. Something else is always more important than God. And we all know that actions speak louder than words, so if you keenly observe what people are doing, you will know.

In this high tech world in which we live, virtual reality and social media have become major brands of entertainment. Strap on the headset and dive into a wondrous and expansive fake world. Fabricate any persona you desire and propagate it on your channels, feeds and posts. People have become experts at fake! Practice your fake Christianity in that world and no one will care; no one gets hurt. But, when you take off the blinders and step back into reality, you will get exposed. The divinely inspired words of the Bible insure you will have no plausible deniability if you say one

thing and do another. It's there in plain sight, so you do not turn aside from God's ways to the right or to the left.

"Catch Me If You Can" was a movie released in 2002 in which the main character successfully performs all sorts of cons. He convinces everyone that he is someone else, someone he's not. He is a great impersonator, an imposter. It seems like an exciting ride all along, but deep inside he is actually tormented by his true identity. In the end, all his pretense is exposed anyway. You can't hide the truth forever! Is that you? Others may not have noticed yet, but deep down inside, you know! Are you impersonating a Christian?

THEME: MAIN SCRIPTURE(S) THAT HAS INSPIRED MESSAGE

"You shall not **plant** for yourself any **tree**, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the Lord your God. You shall not set up a **sacred pillar**, which the Lord your God hates." Deuteronomy 16:21-22 NKJV

"You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God a bull or sheep **which has any blemish or defect**, for that is an abomination to the Lord your God." Deuteronomy 17:1 NKJV

"Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that **he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book**, from the one before the priests, the Levites." Deuteronomy 17:18 NKJV

OUTCOME: MAIN TAKEAWAY(S) I AM HOPING FOR PEOPLE

“And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Colossians 3:17 NKJV

“And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men**, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; **for you serve the Lord Christ**. But **he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done**, and there is no partiality.” Colossians 3:23-25 NKJV

Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

1. This portion of scripture reviews many recently written commands. But as Deuteronomy does at times, it also introduces some commands not mentioned previously. We know they must have been, as this is the second telling, yet we see them in writing for the first time. One such law is mentioned in verses 17:18-20, which commands a King of Israel, as he takes the throne, to write for himself a complete copy of the Torah in his own hand. And, there so many other important pieces that are reviewed:
 - (a) Justice Must be Administered
 - (b) Principles of Governing Kings

- (c) The Portion of the Priests and Levites
 - (d) Avoid Wicked Customs
 - (e) A Prophet Like Moses
 - (f) Three Cities of Refuge
 - (g) Property Boundaries
 - (h) The Law Concerning Witnesses
 - (i) Principles Governing Warfare
 - (j) The Law Concerning Unsolved Murders
2. The commandment for the king to write a copy of the Torah for himself is prophetic of Messiah as the Word made flesh. He is the copy of the Torah in human form. The King **writes for himself** a Torah scroll just as **we are to write God's laws on our own hearts**. It is not for us to wait for God to do that work. And the Torah of King Y'shua is written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Deuteronomy 16

3. **Justice Must be Administered:** Righteous judges and law enforcement are necessary for healthy governance. However, those placed in these positions must be just and free from the temptation to take bribes or to pervert justice. This paraphrase says it all; *"A bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous."* Deuteronomy 16:19

4. Then Moses specifically address pagan practices. Yahweh hates pagan images or modes of worship, and defective sacrifices, which He calls an abomination. What happens if you suspect someone of worshipping and serving other gods? First there will be a diligent inquiry. If it is indeed true that such an abomination has occurred, then capital punishment is in order.

(a) However... *“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people.”*

Deuteronomy 17:6-7 NKJV

5. Lastly, in the justice department, we see what to do in difficult cases. If the decision is too complicated and there exists too much controversy over what is correct, inquire of the priests to resolve the issue. The priest will discern precisely what is right and pronounce the sentence of judgment. Do exactly according to all that they order. Do not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce. Anyone who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest’s orders will be subjected to capital punishment.

Deuteronomy 17

6. **Principles of Governing Kings:** Here we have this amazing prophetic picture. God knows that the people will eventually demand to have a king rule over them as the pagans do, so He sets some parameters in place in advance. First, Yahweh will be the one to choose the king. Then, notice the very things a king is not supposed to do. Unfortunately, this is exactly what Solomon eventually did 300 years later. **“The king shall not multiply horses for himself, neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.”** [See 1 Kings 10 which describes Solomon’s massive wealth and 1 Kings 11 which describes his hunger for women and his great fall.]
7. The next section speaks for itself. It could be considered the single greatest duty of a righteous king. It also has prophetic implications for us as believers in **THE KING:**
- (a) *“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, **that he shall write for himself** a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. **And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life,** that he may learn **to fear the LORD** his God and be careful **to observe all the words** of this law and these statutes, that **his heart may not be lifted above** his brethren, that **he may not turn aside** from the commandment to the right hand or to the*

*left, and that **he may prolong his days** in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.” Deuteronomy 17:18-20
NKJV*

Deuteronomy 18

8. **The Portion of the Priests and Levites:** We are reminded, yet again, that the Levites have no part nor inheritance with Israel; and how they are provided for by the sacrifices and offerings of the people.
9. **Avoid Wicked Customs:** Again, like we saw in Leviticus 18:1-5, the people are reminded to not learn to follow the abominations of the nations they go to dispossess. Simply do not participate in a single pagan practice! Instead be blameless!
10. **A Prophet Like Moses:** This one area in Deuteronomy might generate one of the greatest controversies in our faith. And although there seems to be almost universal agreement throughout Christianity that the prophet like Moses being prophesied about here is Y’shua Himself, I see glaring inconsistencies with that belief. Now, one might ask themselves, “If nearly everyone agrees, other than a fraction of percent, then how could it possibly be in error?” I might also ask that question about the relevance of the Torah for the Church. It was universally believed across all denominations up until 60 years ago, or so, that Y’shua fulfilled the Torah and

therefore we, as Christians, are not obligated to the commandments of God, other than the 10 commandments (minus the Sabbath). This is still held as a “sacred cow” by most Christian “denominations” today. Yet this too is dangerously inconsistent with Y’shua’s words and warnings:

- (a) *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”* (Matthew 5:17-18)
- (b) *Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.”* (John 7:16)
- (c) *“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”* (John 5:45-47)

11. So with an open mind, let us consider these words:

- (a) *““The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire*

anymore, lest I die.’ “And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.”

(Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

- (b) And consider the following proof texts that indeed Moses is instead referring to Elijah as the prophet to come, and not Y’shua. (Acts 3:19-23; Matthew 3:1-17; Matthew 17:1-13; Isaiah 40:1-8; Malachi 3:1-3; Malachi 4:1-6; Luke 1:13-17; John 1:15-26)

12. After that, Moses warns us that prophets who presume to speak a word in Yahweh’s name, which He has not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You will know they spoke on their own when what they prophesy does not happen.

- (a) *“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will*

exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.” II Peter 2:1-3 NKJV

Deuteronomy 19

13. **Three Cities of Refuge:** Again the cities of refuge and the parameters of who they are for are reiterated.
14. **Property Boundaries:** The great precedent for not messing with Israel’s borders is next.
 - (a) *“You shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.” Deuteronomy 19:14*
15. **The Law Concerning Witnesses:** Now we see an expansion of what we just read in Deuteronomy 17:6-7.
 - (a) *“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, then you shall do to him as he*

thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

Deuteronomy 19:15-21 NKJV

- (b) See how Y’shua masterfully applied these laws to the woman accused of adultery in John 8:1-12 and what is says on the matter in Hebrews 10:26-29.

Deuteronomy 20

16. Principles Governing Warfare: Many important concepts are included here about going into battle.

- (a) Do not be afraid or faint of heart; for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.’
- (b) Then, there are a bunch of exceptions indicating who should not join in battle:
 - (1) A man who has built a new house and has not yet dedicated it.
 - (2) A man who has planted a vineyard and has not yet eaten of it.
 - (3) A man who is betrothed to a woman and has not yet married her.

- (4) A man who is fearful and fainthearted.
17. What to do with an adversarial city that wishes to make peace verses one that chooses to fight back:
- (a) If they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you.
 - (b) If the city will not make peace with you, then you shall besiege it, strike every male but take the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, as spoils.
18. However, when you are dealing with cities God gives you as an inheritance...
- (a) You shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods.
 - (b) Do not destroy its trees if you can eat of them. Only destroy the trees which you know are not for good for food so you can use the wood to build siegeworks.

Deuteronomy 21

19. **The Law Concerning Unsolved Murder:** The city closest to where the body is found is required to call the priests, make a sacrifice, and wash their hands over the sacrificed animal as a declaration of their innocence.

- (a) *“So you shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.” Deuteronomy 21:9*

20. If you wish to see last two year’s teachings on this portion:

[Written on Our Hearts](#) & [The Justice League](#)

WHO OWNS YOUR WORSHIP?

1. New Idols to Replace Old Idols

A. Cheep Imitations

(1) Counterfeits and Substitutes: Is Yahweh just one of many gods in your life?

(a) The pagans have their Gods and spiritual practices. DO NOT imitate them!

1. “You shall not **plant** for yourself any **tree**, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the Lord your God. You shall not set up a **sacred pillar**, which the Lord your God hates.”

Deuteronomy 16:21-22 NKJV

2. “You shall not plant for yourself an **Asherah** [sacred poll] of any kind of tree or wood beside the altar of the Lord your God, which you shall make. You shall not set up for yourself a **sacred pillar** which the Lord your God hates.” Deuteronomy 16:21-22 AMP

- a) Plant: [Strong's Hebrew 5193](#): to plant, fasten, fix, establish.
- b) Tree (Asherah): [Strong's Hebrew 842](#): a Babylonian (Astarte)-Canaanite goddess (of fortune and happiness), the supposed consort of Baal; sacred trees or poles set up near an altar.
- c) Sacred Pillar: [Strong's Hebrew 4676](#): pillar, stump, as monument, personal memorial.

(2) Asherah

- (a) A wooded symbol of a female deity which seems to have been wrongfully (or sinfully) linked with God!
- (b) "Perhaps" an object devoted to the goddess Asherah.
- (c) Sacred pole or "trees" used as symbols of Asherah, the goddess of fertility.

(3) Sacred Pillar

- (a) This is not a new warning but one that Yahweh reiterated, over and over again. And it begs the questions, "Who owns your worship?" "Are you impersonating a Christian?"

1. **"You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars,**

break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.” Deuteronomy 12:2-4 NKJV

- a) Let’s pause here and not brush off the magnitude of this instruction. There are two overarching themes here that **MUST** be elaborated for you to **NOT** miss God’s warning.
- b) **First:** you are to utterly obliterate every single remnant of anything the pagans did or used to worship their false gods, **including their names**. Utterly means, *“completely and without qualification; absolutely, totally, entirely, wholly, fully, thoroughly, beyond, altogether, one hundred percent, downright, outright, unqualifiedly, in all respects.”* Do you understand utterly!
- c) This is what King Saul was supposed to do: *“Now go and attack Amalek, and **utterly destroy** all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”* (I Samuel 15:3 NKJV)
Of course Saul did no such thing, even when he

insisted he had done what the Lord commanded.
(See I Samuel 15:1-35)

- d) **Second:** and this is the part often missed. *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”* This is the part that most modern Christians miss completely. Most Christians today engage in practices, use symbols and images, and even the names of pagan deities, in their worship. And they rationalize that it is okay because they are doing it for Jesus. Take “Easter” for instance. The name of a pagan goddess (and the rabbit and eggs of Easter, all pagan symbols.) Easter takes its name from a pagan goddess from Anglo-Saxon England. “Eostre” was a goddess of spring or renewal and that’s why her feast is attached to the vernal equinox. And take the tree of Christmas and Christmas itself (all pagan practices and symbols). Go read Jeremiah 10:2-10.
- e) Christians typically dismiss any discussion on such matters by rationalizing, *“God knows my heart, and He knows why I am doing it, and that I am doing it for Him, so it’s fine.”* They completely

ignore, *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”*

(b) In today’s portion, Yahweh makes it absolutely clear that His people are to participate in NOTHING pagan! This again begs the questions, “Who owns your worship?” “Are you impersonating a Christian?”

1. “When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, **you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.** There shall not be found among you anyone who **makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord,** and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. **You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.** For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your **God has not appointed such for you.**” Deuteronomy 18:9-14 NKJV

2. Look at this list; it should leave no doubts...

- a) You shall not follow the abominations of the pagans.
 - b) No child sacrifice (modern-day abortions).
 - c) No witchcraft, soothsaying, interpreting of omens, or sorcery (conjuring spells, consulting mediums, or spiritists, or one who calls up the dead.)
 - d) *“God has not appointed such for you!”*
(Deuteronomy 18:14) *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”* (Like Deuteronomy 12:4)
- (c) God was well aware of the temptations that would shipwreck His people. This once more begs the questions, “Who owns your worship?” “Are you impersonating a Christian?”
1. “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God. **According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.** You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore keep My

statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 18:1-5 NKJV

- a) Don’t practice anything you saw in Egypt...
- b) Don’t practice anything you will see in Canaan...
- c) Do practice ONLY My judgments, ordinances, and statutes!
- d) Any questions? “Who owns your worship?” “Are you impersonating a Christian?”

B. Human Tendencies

(1) The temptation of Asherah: they were warned, but clearly man loves his idols... *“You shall not erect for yourself **Asherah** alongside Yahweh’s altar...”* Deuteronomy 16:21

(a) Look at the long biblical history of violating God’s DIRECT COMMAND. (And this is just a sampling in which **Asherah** is named, and not even every reference to Asherah!)

- 1. “They forsook the Lord and **served Baal and the Ashtoreths.**” Judges 2:13 NKJV
- 2. “So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God, **and served the Baals and Asherahs.**” Judges 3:7 NKJV

3. "Then the children of Israel **again** did evil in the sight of the Lord, and **served the Baals and the Ashtoreths**, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the Lord and did not serve Him." Judges 10:6 NKJV
4. "Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then **put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths** from among you, and **prepare your hearts for the Lord**, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."" I Samuel 7:3 NKJV
5. "Then they cried out to the Lord, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord and **served the Baals and Ashtoreths**; but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.'" I Samuel 12:10 NKJV
6. "For **Solomon went after Ashtoreth** the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites." I Kings 11:5 NKJV
7. "because **they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess** of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the

people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David." I Kings 11:33 NKJV

8. "For **the Lord will strike Israel**, as a reed is shaken in the water. **He will uproot Israel** from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, **because they have made their wooden images [Asherahs], provoking the Lord to anger.**" I Kings 14:15 NKJV
9. "For they also built for themselves high places, **sacred pillars, and wooden images [Asherahs]** on every high hill and under every green tree." I Kings 14:23 NKJV
10. "And Ahab **made a wooden image [Asherah]**. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him." I Kings 16:33 NKJV
11. "Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the **four hundred prophets of Asherah**, who eat at Jezebel's table.'" I Kings 18:19 NKJV

12. “Nevertheless they did not depart from **the sins of the house of Jeroboam**, who had made Israel sin, but walked in them; and **the wooden image [Asherah] also remained in Samaria.**” II Kings 13:6 NKJV
13. “They set up for themselves **sacred pillars and wooden images [Asherahs]** on every high hill and under every green tree.” II Kings 17:10 NKJV
14. “So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a **molded image** and two calves, **made a wooden image [Asherah]** and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.” II Kings 17:16 NKJV
15. “For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and **made a wooden image [Asherah]**, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.” II Kings 21:3 NKJV
16. “He even **set a carved image of Asherah** that he had made, in the house of which the Lord had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever;” II Kings 21:7 NKJV

17. "Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which **Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth** the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon." II Kings 23:13 NKJV

(b) These false gods simply shall not stand!

1. "Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered; And this is all the fruit of taking away his sin: When he makes all the stones of the altar Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, **Wooden images [Asherahs]** and incense altars **shall not stand.**" Isaiah 27:9 NKJV

(c) Read the following and examine yourself...

1. "Thus says the Lord: "**Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;** Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For **the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest,** The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. **They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple.** They are upright, like a palm

tree, And they cannot speak; They must be carried,
Because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be
afraid of them, For they cannot do evil, Nor can they
do any good." Inasmuch as **there is none like You, O
Lord** (You are great, and Your name is great in might),
Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? **For
this is Your rightful due.** For among all the wise men
of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, There is
none like You. **But they are altogether dull-hearted
and foolish; A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine."**

Jeremiah 10:2-8 NKJV

- a) This is one of those pagan traditions.
- b) Do you recognize it?
- c) It's the Christmas Tree!
- d) Are you dull-hearted and foolish? Is this worthless doctrine and "wooden idol" part of your "Christian tradition?"
- e) "Who owns your worship?" "Are you impersonating a Christian?"

C. Yahweh Alone

- (1) You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve...

- (a) When you are tempted to engage in pagan practices, ask yourself: “Who owns my worship?” “Am I impersonating a Christian?”
1. “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and **showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.** And he said to Him, “**All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.**” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘**You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.**’ ” **Then the devil left Him,** and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.” Matthew 4:8-11 NKJV
- a) Here is everything the world has to offer. All you have to do is compromise a bit! Give in a little and idolize something other than Yahweh! It will be worth it. God knows your heart; He knows you are using those pagan Christmas trees and Easter eggs to worship Him. It’s fine! NO, IT IS NOT FINE!
- 1) *“You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”* Matthew 4:10
 - 2) *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”* Deuteronomy 12:4

3) *“God has not appointed such for you!”*

Deuteronomy 18:14

(2) Too Harsh?

(a) If you think I might be a bit too harsh in my approach here, then maybe you will like James’ approach better.

1. *“Therefore **submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee** from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**” James 4:7-8 NKJV*

a) Sinner? Double minded? Submit to God! Resist the Devil!

1) *“You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”*

2) *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”*

3) *“God has not appointed such for you!”*

b) Ask yourself... *“Who owns my worship?” “Am I impersonating a Christian?”*

(3) Living in Two Worlds...

(a) It’s bizarre if you’d consider going back to your pagan ways!

1. “Therefore, **since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind**, for he who has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin**, that he **no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God**. For **we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles**—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. **In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation**, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” I Peter 4:1-6 NKJV
 - a) Keep this in the forefront of your mind! Christ died so you could STOP SINNING!
 - b) You spent your entire past life chasing sin, lust and paganism. Now you are equipped to chase the will of God.
 - c) The enemy and his teammates will find it bizarre that you no longer desire lewdness, lusts,

drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

d) But today I ask you this..."Do you? "Who owns your worship?" "Are you impersonating a Christian?"

e) See: [Energy & Dissipation: Wholistic Grace](#)

(b) Warning: Don't get entangled in past sins (paganism)...

1. "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV

(c) Warning: You can't serve two masters...

1. ""**No servant can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**"" Luke 16:13 NKJV

D. Questions, Directives and Obvious Differences

(1) Questions

- (a) "Who owns your worship?"
- (b) "Are you impersonating a Christian?"

(2) Directives

- (a) "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve." Matthew 4:10
- (b) "You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things." Deuteronomy 12:4
- (c) "God has not appointed such for you!" Deuteronomy 18:14

(3) Obvious Differences

- (a) The tares among the wheat...
 1. "Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, **his enemy came and sowed tares** among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, '**Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?**' He said to them, '**An enemy has done this.**' The servants said to him, '**Do you want us then to go and gather them up?**' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the

wheat with them. **Let both grow together until the harvest**, and **at the time of harvest** I will say to the reapers, **“First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them**, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ‘ ”” Matthew 13:24-30 NKJV

- a) There will be two lookalikes fellowshipping together. One is authentic and one is the imposter. As they grow side-by-side, it is difficult to tell them apart. The impersonator looks the same as the authentic Christian.
- b) May I quote from directly from the introduction:
Too often, you cannot easily identify such “comedians” simply by their mannerisms, facial expressions, voice, body language or the subjects they talk about. Those all appear authentic. But it’s their inner character that ultimately exposes them. Notice what’s most important to them on the inside by what gains most of their time, attention, and resources. You will also recognize counterfeits by their cheap imitations; they simply never put God first, never give Him their best of anything.
- c) Yes, they look the same on the outside but their priorities and decisions will ultimately expose

them. When it's time for the harvest, tares simply bear no fruit. You can distinguish the impersonator from the authentic Christian by their fruit (Matthew 7:16).

- d) So, "Who owns your worship?" "Are you impersonating a Christian?"

Summary: WHO OWNS YOUR WORSHIP?

1. New Idols to Replace Old Idols

A. Cheep Imitations

- (1) Counterfeits and Substitutes: Is Yahweh just one of many gods in your life?
 - (a) The pagans have their Gods and spiritual practices. DO NOT imitate them!
- (2) Asherah
 - (a) A wooded symbol of a female deity which seems to have been wrongfully (or sinfully) linked with God!
 - (b) "Perhaps" an object devoted to the goddess Asherah.
 - (c) Sacred pole or "trees" used as symbols of Asherah, the goddess of fertility.
- (3) Sacred Pillar
 - (a) This is not a new warning but one that Yahweh reiterated, over and over again. And it begs the

questions, “Who owns your worship?” “Are you impersonating a Christian?”

- (4) Let’s pause here and not brush off the magnitude of this instruction. There are two overarching themes here that **MUST** be elaborated for you to **NOT** miss God’s warning.
- (a) **First:** you are to utterly obliterate every single remnant of anything the pagans did or used to worship their false gods, **including their names**. Utterly means, *“completely and without qualification; absolutely, totally, entirely, wholly, fully, thoroughly, beyond, altogether, one hundred percent, downright, outright, unqualifiedly, in all respects.”* Do you understand utterly!
- (b) This is what King Saul was supposed to do. Of course he did no such thing even when he insisted he had done what the Lord commanded.
- (c) **Second:** and this is the part often missed. *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”* This is the part that most modern Christians miss completely. Most Christians today engage in practices, use symbols and images, and even the names of pagan deities, in their worship. And they rationalize that it is okay because they are doing it for Jesus. Take “Easter” for instance.

The name of a pagan goddess (and the rabbit and eggs of Easter, all pagan symbols.) Easter takes its name from a pagan goddess from Anglo-Saxon England. "Eostre" was a goddess of spring or renewal and that's why her feast is attached to the vernal equinox. And take the tree of Christmas and Christmas itself (all pagan practices and symbols). Go read Jeremiah 10:2-10.

- (d) Christians typically dismiss any discussion on such matters by rationalizing, *"God knows my heart, and He knows why I am doing it, and that I am doing it for Him, so it's fine."* They completely ignore, *"You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things."*
 - (e) In today's portion, Yahweh makes it absolutely clear that His people are to participate in NOTHING pagan! This again begs the questions, *"Who owns your worship?"* *"Are you impersonating a Christian?"*
1. Look at this list; it should leave no doubts...
 - a) You shall not follow the abominations of the pagans.
 - b) No child sacrifice (modern-day abortions).
 - c) No witchcraft, soothsaying, interpreting of omens, or sorcery (conjuring spells, consulting mediums, or spiritists, or one who calls up the dead.)

- d) *“God has not appointed such for you!”*
(Deuteronomy 18:14) *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”* (Like Deuteronomy 12:4)
- (f) God was well aware of the temptations that would shipwreck His people. This once more begs the questions, *“Who owns your worship?”* *“Are you impersonating a Christian?”*
 - 1. Don’t practice anything you saw in Egypt...
 - 2. Don’t practice anything you will see in Canaan...
 - 3. Do practice ONLY My judgments, ordinances, and statutes!
 - 4. Any questions? *“Who owns your worship?”* *“Are you impersonating a Christian?”*

B. Human Tendencies

- (1) The temptation of Asherah: they were warned, but clearly man loves his idols... *“You shall not erect for yourself **Asherah** alongside Yahweh’s altar...”* Deuteronomy 16:21
 - (a) There is a long biblical history of violating God’s DIRECT COMMAND.
 - (b) These false gods simply shall not stand!
 - 1. One of those pagan traditions is the Christmas Tree! Are you dull-hearted and foolish? Is this worthless

doctrine and “wooden idol” part of your “Christian tradition?” “Who owns your worship?” “Are you impersonating a Christian?”

C. Yahweh Alone

(1) You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve...

(a) When you are tempted to engage in pagan practices, ask yourself: “Who owns my worship?” “Am I impersonating a Christian?”

(b) You can have everything the world has to offer. All you have to do is compromise a bit! Give in a little and idolize something other than Yahweh! It will be worth it. God knows your heart; He knows you are using those pagan Christmas trees and Easter eggs to worship Him. It’s fine! NO, IT IS NOT FINE!

1. *“You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”* Matthew 4:10

2. *“You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.”* Deuteronomy 12:4

3. *“God has not appointed such for you!”* Deuteronomy 18:14

(2) Too Harsh?

- (a) If you think I might be a bit too harsh in my approach, then maybe you will like James' approach better.
 - 1. Sinner? Double minded? Submit to God! Resist the Devil!
 - a) *"You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve."*
 - b) *"You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things."*
 - c) *"God has not appointed such for you!"*
 - 2. Ask yourself... "Who owns my worship?" "Am I impersonating a Christian?"
- (3) Living in Two Worlds...
 - (a) It's bizarre if you'd consider going back to your pagan ways!
 - 1. Keep this in the forefront of your mind! Christ died so you could STOP SINNING!
 - 2. You spent your entire past life chasing sin, lust and paganism. Now you are equipped to chase the will of God.
 - 3. The enemy and his teammates will find it bizarre that you no longer desire lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

4. But today I ask you this..."Do you? "Who owns your worship?" "Are you impersonating a Christian?"
5. See: [Energy & Dissipation: Wholistic Grace](#)
- (b) Warning: Don't get entangled in past sins (paganism)...
- (c) Warning: You can't serve two masters...

D. Questions, Directives and Obvious Differences

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(3) Obvious Differences

- (a) The tares among the wheat...
 1. There will be two lookalikes fellowshiping together.
 2. One is authentic and one is the imposter.
 3. As they grow side-by-side, it is difficult to tell them apart.

4. The impersonator looks the same as the authentic Christian.

(b) May I quote from directly from the introduction:

1. *Too often, you cannot easily identify such “comedians” simply by their mannerisms, facial expressions, voice, body language or the subjects they talk about. Those all appear authentic. But it’s their inner character that ultimately exposes them. Notice what’s most important to them on the inside by what gains most of their time, attention, and resources. You will also recognize counterfeits by their cheep imitations; they simply never put God first, never give Him their best of anything.*
2. Yes, they look the same on the outside but their priorities and decisions will ultimately expose them. When it’s time for the harvest, tares simply bear no fruit. You can distinguish the impersonator from the authentic Christian by their fruit (Matthew 7:16).
3. So, “Who owns your worship?” “Are you impersonating a Christian?”

WHO OWNS YOUR POSSESSIONS?

2. Second Best Might as Well be Worst

A. Actions speak louder than words...

(1) Saving your defective things for God!

(a) Do you really prefer to keep the best for yourself?

Would you rather just give God your leftovers? Who owns your possessions?

1. "You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God a bull or sheep **which has any blemish or defect**, for **that is an abomination** to the Lord your God." Deuteronomy 17:1 NKJV

(2) Blemished Sacrifices

(a) Give your best or give your junk! And FYI, God will NOT accept your junk!

1. "'A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the Lord of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' **"You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?'** By saying, 'The table of the Lord is contemptible.' And when **you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the**

lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the Lord of hosts. "But now entreat God's favor, That He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?" Says the Lord of hosts. "**Who is there even among you who would shut the doors,** So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you," Says the Lord of hosts, "**Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.** For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; **For My name shall be great among the nations,**" Says the Lord of hosts. "But you profane it, In that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.' You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer at it," Says the Lord of hosts. "**And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering!** Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the Lord. "But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, **But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—**

For I am a great King," Says the Lord of hosts, "And My name is to be feared among the nations." Malachi 1:6-14 NKJV

2. "You have wearied the Lord with your words; Yet you say, **"In what way have we wearied Him?"** In **that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord,** And He delights in them," Or, "Where is the God of justice?"" Malachi 2:17 NKJV
 - a) God considers your (leftovers) lame, sick and stolen sacrifices evil!
 - b) God does not accept them, so don't bother.
 - c) Someone should stop God's people from offering Him anything less than their best!
 - d) And it is even worse when someone comes along and tells the people it is okay to do so!
 - e) Question: Who owns your possessions?

B. Give

- (1) You can't out-give God!
 - (a) Give what is in your heart, not out for compulsion!
 1. **"Give, and it will be given to you:** good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and **running over** will be put into your bosom. **For with the same**

measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”” Luke 6:38 NKJV

2. “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. **So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.** As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. **For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men,** and by

their prayer for you, who long for you **because of the exceeding grace of God in you.** Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" II Corinthians 9:6-15 NKJV

3. **“Then the righteous will answer** Him, saying, ‘Lord, **when did we see You** hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, **inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”**

Matthew 25:37-40 NKJV

4. Here is how it works...
- a) Give and what comes back will be immeasurable!
 - b) Give cheerfully and God’s exceeding grace, His supernatural power, will abound toward you. (See: [Indomitable Grace](#))
 - c) Promise: you will have sufficiency in all things.
 - d) Promise: you will have an abundance for every good work.
 - e) Promise: you supply the needs of the saints; thank God for the resources, and the testimony of your obedience will glorify God.

- f) It all works with this formula: That which you do for the least of God's people, you do for God!
- g) Question: Who owns your possessions?

C. All for God

(1) The Perfect Formula (This + This = This)

(a) This...

1. **“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above,** where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.** For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. **Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth:** fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, **in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.** But now you yourselves are to **put off all these:** anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have **put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to**

the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” Colossians 3:1-11 NKJV

- a) You were resurrected with Christ, so set your mind on kingdom things, not on things of the earth.
- b) Put to death all your nasty sins because you used to walk in them, but that was your old man with his his nasty deeds.
- c) Live as a new man who was renewed and is now capable of representing the image the God.

(b) Plus this...

1. **“Therefore, as the elect of God**, holy and beloved, **put on** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another** in psalms and hymns and

spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians 3:12-16 NKJV

- a) Put on all the character traits of Christ.
- b) Forgive others like you were forgiven.
- c) Above all things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
- d) Let the peace of God rule in your heart.
- e) Be thankful.
- f) Let the word of Christ dwell in you.
- g) Teach and admonish one another.

(c) Equals this!

1. “And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:17 NKJV
2. “And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men**, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; **for you serve the Lord Christ**. But **he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done**, and there is no partiality.” Colossians 3:23-25 NKJV
 - a) Everything is done through the authority of Y’shua.
 - b) Do everything with excellence as if you are doing it for Y’shua, not for men.

- c) It is He whom you serve.
- d) And it is He whom will hold you accountable!
- e) Question: Who owns your possessions?

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3. Promise: you will have sufficiency in all things.
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6. It all works with this formula: That which you do for the least of God's people, you do for God!
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1. Everything is done through the authority of Y'shua.
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4. And it is He whom will hold you accountable!
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WHO OWNS YOUR ALLEGIANCE?

3. No Plausible Deniability

A. You should know better!

(1) The Responsibilities of Royalty...

(a) Don't do that!

1. ““When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’ **you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses;** one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. **But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’ Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.”**

Deuteronomy 17:14-17 NKJV

- a) You shall not multiply horses for yourself.
- b) You shall not cause the people to return to Egypt
- c) You shall not multiply wives for yourself, lest your heart turn away from Yahweh.

- d) You shall not greatly multiply silver and gold for yourself.
- e) Note to self: You are royalty! *“But you are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”* 1 Peter 2:9 NKJV
- f) Who owns your allegiance?

(b) Do this!

1. *““Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that **he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book**, from the one before the priests, the Levites.”* Deuteronomy 17:18 NKJV

- a) Become totally engulfed in God’s word. It should become part of your DNA!
- b) Who owns your allegiance?

(c) This is why!

1. *“And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that **he may learn to fear the Lord** his God and **be careful to observe all the words of this law** and these statutes, that **his heart may not be lifted above his brethren**, that he **may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the***

left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 17:19-20 NKJV

- a) Knowing the scriptures: will instill reverence of the Lord.
- b) Knowing the scriptures: will instill the need to carefully observe all the words of the law.
- c) Knowing the scriptures: will help you stay humble and meek.
- d) Knowing the scriptures: will keep you on a straight path!
- e) Knowing the scriptures: will prolong God’s favor!
- f) Question: Who owns your allegiance?

B. The Word in Action

(1) Knowing the scriptures...

(a) Cuts through all the distractions and exposes...Who owns your allegiance!

1. “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. **For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the**

thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is **no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him** to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:11-13 NKJV

- a) Knowing the scriptures: pierces to the core of any matter.
- b) Knowing the scriptures: discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- c) Knowing the scriptures: exposes every hidden secret.
- d) Question: Who owns your allegiance?

C. What's in the mirror?

(1) Are you impersonating a Christian? All you have to do is look in the mirror!

(a) If you are a hearer of God's word and not a doer, you are impersonating a Christian.

1. “But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only**, deceiving yourselves. For if **anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.** But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful

hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:22-25 NKJV

- a) When you look in a mirror you see the old man looking back at you!
- (b) If you are a doer of God’s word and not just a hearer, you are an authentic Christian.
 1. “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But **we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**” II Corinthians 3:17-18 NKJV
 - a) When you look in a mirror you see the new man looking back at you!
- (c) We have the exact pattern of what it looks like to be an authentic Christian.
 1. “Brethren, **join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame**

—who set their mind on earthly things.” Philippians
3:17-19 NKJV

- a) Unfortunately, many walk on a different path.
- b) Their allegiance is to the god of their own desires... “Who owns your allegiance?”
- c) Their worship is to the god of their own glory...
“Who owns your worship?”
- d) Their possessions are the god of their own their minds... “Who owns your allegiance?”
- e) They are enemies of the cross; they are the tares among the wheat.
- f) God says, *“Gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them!”* Matthew 13:30

(d) Final Analysis

- 1. “Who owns your worship?”
- 2. “Who owns your possessions?”
- 3. “Who owns your allegiance?”
 - a) If the answer is God—welcome to the faith!
 - b) If the answer is you—you are impersonating a Christian!
- 4. Paul says it best; *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* I Corinthians 11:1 NKJV

5. John the Baptist tells us how? *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* John 3:30 NKJV

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2. You shall not cause the people to return to Egypt
3. You shall not multiply wives for yourself, lest your heart turn away from Yahweh.
4. You shall not greatly multiply silver and gold for yourself.
5. Note to self: You are royalty!
6. Who owns your allegiance?

(b) Do this!

1. Become totally engulfed in God's word. It should become part of your DNA!

(c) This is why!

1. Knowing the scriptures: will instill reverence of the Lord.

2. Knowing the scriptures: will instill the need to carefully observe all the words of the law.
3. Knowing the scriptures: will help you stay humble and meek.
4. Knowing the scriptures: will keep you on a straight path!
5. Knowing the scriptures: will prolong God's favor!
6. Question: Who owns your allegiance?

B. The Word in Action

(1) Knowing the scriptures...

(a) Cuts through all the distractions and exposes...Who Owns Your Allegiance?

1. Knowing the scriptures: pierces to the core of any matter.
2. Knowing the scriptures: discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.
3. Knowing the scriptures: exposes every hidden secret.
4. Question: Who owns your allegiance?

C. What's in the mirror?

(1) Are you impersonating a Christian? All you have to do is look in the mirror!

(a) If you are a hearer of God's word and not a doer, you are impersonating a Christian.

1. When you look in a mirror you see the old man looking back at you!
- (b) If you are a doer of God's word and not just a hearer, you are an authentic Christian.
1. When you look in a mirror you see the new man looking back at you!
- (c) We have the exact pattern of what it looks like to be an authentic Christian.
1. Unfortunately, many walk on a different path.
 2. Their allegiance is to the god of their own desires...
"Who owns your allegiance?"
 3. Their worship is to the god of their own glory...
"Who owns your worship?"
 4. Their possessions are the god of their own their minds... "Who owns your allegiance?"
 5. They are enemies of the cross; they are the tares among the wheat.
 6. God says, "*Gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them!*" Matthew 13:30
- (d) Final Analysis
1. "Who owns your worship?"
 2. "Who owns your possessions?"
 3. "Who owns your allegiance?"

- a) If the answer is God—welcome to the faith!
 - b) If the answer is you—you are impersonating a Christian!
- 4. Paul says it best; *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* I Corinthians 11:1 NKJV
 - 5. John the Baptist tells us how? *“He must increase, but I must decrease.”* John 3:30 NKJV

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. The warnings about worshiping other Gods are clear and numerous throughout the Holy Scriptures:

A. Summarize in a short narrative what God says about such things. (Use: Deuteronomy 12:2-4; 16:21-22; 18:9-14 and Leviticus 18:1-5)

2. Many Christians reason that they can participate in practices that have ancient roots in paganism because their personal intention is to direct that worship to the God of the Christian faith.

A. Read Deuteronomy 12:2-4; 18:9-14 and Matthew 4:8-11. How do these scriptures direct us against such rationalization and satanic temptation? (Hint: Deuteronomy 12:4; 18:14; and Matthew 4:10)

- B. What popular Christian practice is Jeremiah 10:2-8 exposing?
- C. What should you do about it in light of your answer in letter A?

3. James does not mince words in his approach to this type of compromise...

- A. What is his approach to satanic temptations in James 4:7-8?
- B. How is James' approach related to how Jesus handled being tempted to compromise in Matthew 4:8-11?
- C. Mediate on: Who owns your worship? Am I impersonating a Christian?

4. What is Peter's advice when we face temptation to go back to our pagan ways? (See I Peter 4:1-6)

- A. Now enhance your answer using Hebrews 12:1-2 and Luke 16:13.

5. Matthew 13:24-30 reveals that we will see two lookalikes worshipping together. One is authentic and one is an imposter.

- A. How can you tell the difference?
- B. What should you do about?
- C. What will God do about it?

6. God is not interested in you giving your second best...

- A. What does second best look like? And what strong assessment does God make about giving less than your best? (See: Deuteronomy 17:1; Malachi 1:6-17)

- B. Construct a short narrative about the benefits of giving your best to God using Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6-15; and Matthew 25:37-40.
- C. Look closely at Matthew 25:40. How is giving to God often demonstrated?
- D. Meditate: Who owns your possessions?

7. Read Colossians 3:1-25 and answer the following:

- A. What should be your attitude because you were “raised with Christ? (Hint: Colossians 3:1-11). Be detailed.
- B. What actions and approach should you take? (Hint: Colossians 3:12-16)
- C. What should be your only reason for doing all of the above? (Hint: Colossians 3:17-25)

8. With royalty comes responsibilities and you are royalty. (See I Peter 2:9).

- A. What was the king warned not to do for himself? (See Deuteronomy 17:14-17)
- B. What was he commanded to do? (See Deuteronomy 17:18)
- C. What five benefits would there be if he did what he was commanded to do in Deuteronomy 17:18? (See Deuteronomy 17:19-20)
- D. In light of this, how will knowing the Word of God benefit you? (Add Hebrews 4:11-13 to enhance your answer.)

9. Are you impersonating a Christian? All you have to do is look in the mirror!

- A. Which scripture more accurately describes your life in the faith and why? (James 1:22-24 or II Corinthians 3:17-18)
- B. Mediate: Who owns your allegiance?
- C. Mediate: Are you impersonating a Christian?

10. We have the exact pattern of what it looks like to be an authentic Christian.

- A. Paul gave us clear instructions in Philippians 3:17-19 and I Corinthians 11:1. How can you use his advice in your own life?
- B. John the Baptist also shows us how. Mediate on John 3:30 and this time write a short narrative considering the following questions:
 - 1) Who owns your worship?
 - 2) Who owns your possessions?
 - 3) Who owns your allegiance?
 - 4) Are you impersonating a Christian?