

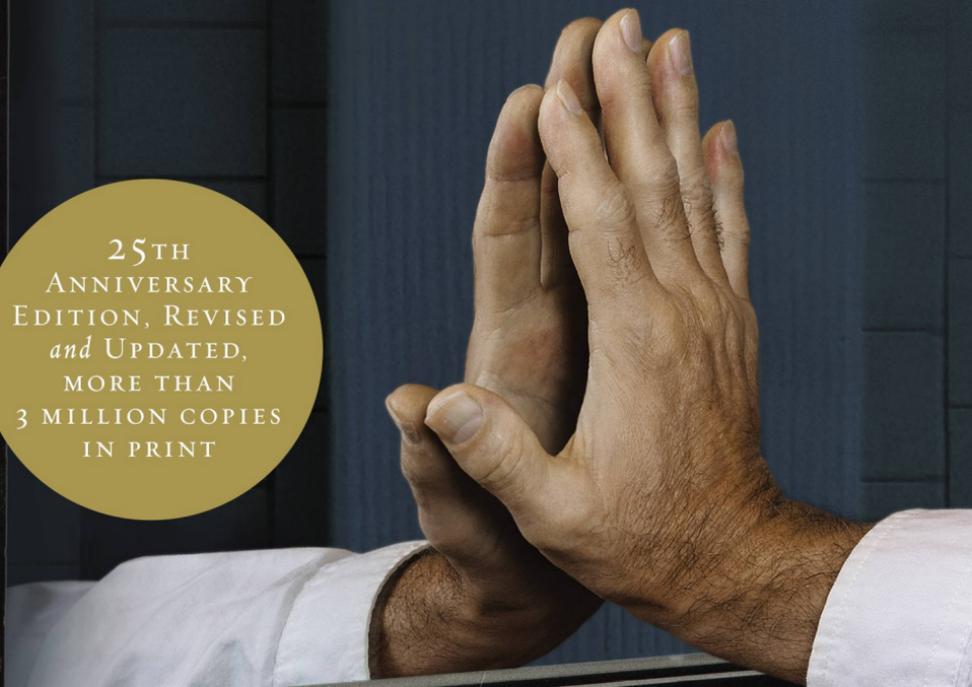
PATRICK M. MORLEY

FOREWORD BY R. C. SPROUL

THE
MAN
IN THE
MIRROR

SOLVING THE 24 PROBLEMS MEN FACE

25TH
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION, REVISED
and UPDATED,
MORE THAN
3 MILLION COPIES
IN PRINT



ZONDERVAN

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INTRODUCTION

One evening we threw a going-away party for Ragne (RAWG-nee). For one whole year Ragne had soaked up American culture like a sponge.

A pastor from Sweden, he journeyed to America to learn how to make his own country come alive for God. I invited Ragne to attend a weekly Bible study that my wife, Patsy, and I hosted in our home. Part of Ragne's training was to participate with us. His insights, always peppered with humor, livened up our group.

On our last evening together, we went around the room and each person said their farewells to Ragne, and then we presented him with an engraved pen-and-pencil set for his desk back home in Sweden. We all grew to love that affable, Nordic teddy bear.

When all were finished, I asked Ragne to tell us the most interesting thing he had learned about Americans.

Without hesitation he said in a thick Scandinavian accent, "Well, when I first got here, everywhere I would go, everyone would always say to me, 'Ragne, so good to see you. How are you doing?'"

"It took me about six months to realize—nobody wants an answer!"

Sad, but true. We have all experienced the sting of the insincere inquiry. Why doesn't anyone want an answer? For some, of course, it's just a social greeting, but for most of us we can see in this a clue into how we live.

We Americans are so busy, so overcommitted, so up to our ears in duties and debts—we just don't want to know. We have so many

problems of our own that there is no time left for anyone else—we just don't have the time to “want an answer.”

More than a few men are swamped—they are in over their heads. After they've taken care of their own problems, they have no capacity left over to help anyone else. They don't understand why they are so caught up in the rat race, and their lives are frequently spinning out of control.

Other men sense that something isn't quite right about their lives, but they can't put their finger on the answer. An eerie feeling lingers that they may be running in the wrong race. They see that they are more *financially* successful than their parents, but they suspect they may not be better-off.

In 1939, Christopher Morley penned the words in his novel *Kitty Foyle*, “Their own private life gets to be like a rat race.” In the decades since, the term *rat race* has evolved to describe the hopeless pursuit of a good life always just out of reach—a treadmill on which we can't stop walking or we will fall off. Many of us today are trying to win the wrong race.

We could view Ragne's perceptive remark as an indictment, but instead, let's use it as a springboard to look into the problems, issues, and temptations that face the man in the mirror every day and see what practical solutions we can discover for winning the *right* race.

At the end of each chapter, I have included several *Focus Questions*. There are a number of ways you can use these questions.

- You may simply want to read them at the end of each chapter and quietly think about your responses.
- If you want to get more out of the chapter, you can write your answers down in a journal. This is an excellent way to bring clarity and resolve to your thinking.
- Finally, you may want to pull together a group of men who commit themselves to read one or two chapters a week on their own and then discuss their answers and insights in a weekly

meeting. The *Discussion Leader's Guide* at the end of this book may be helpful.

The use of the book in men's groups, Bible studies, adult education classes, or among a group of colleagues will greatly enhance its value and give you an opportunity to put what you learn into practice.

My prayer is that this book will meet you where you live—in the marketplace. Life is a struggle. And we all need Monday-through-Friday answers to Sunday's nagging questions. That said, I want you to know that this is intended to be a positive book. I believe you will be a happier, more focused man when you finish. Let's begin by taking a close-up look at the rat race.

A NEW INTRODUCTION FROM THE AUTHOR

The world has changed dramatically over the last twenty-five years. The once dependable consensus of Judeo-Christian values has melted away faster than a polar ice cap. Today, nearly half of our women would rather live with a man than marry him. And one-third of our children are not living with their biological dads.

The last twenty-five years have been dominated by the digital revolution. The Internet has only been with us since the mid-1990s—just long enough to have made Steve Jobs rich enough to build a \$250 million super yacht that can be operated from an iPad. He died without ever being able to see it, but I did, just two days before I wrote this—a vacant ghost ship, hauntingly moored to a berth at a marina in Florida.

How did it happen that we take body searches for granted, and welcome metal detectors into our schools? Whether it's the Great Recession, Wall Street corruption, political gridlock, social media, shifting demographics, terrorism, or the Department of Homeland Security—these are but a few of the tectonic changes that have rocked our world these last few years.

Yet when it comes to what it takes to be a man, not much has changed.

Frankly, when my colleagues asked me to update *The Man in*

the Mirror, I wasn't sure it was a good idea. However, in light of the dramatic changes just mentioned, it quickly became apparent that a whole new generation of men might benefit from taking a fresh look at how to solve the 24 problems men face.

Actually, the solutions to most of the problems you and I face are surprisingly simple. But as with any skill you want to master, you have to have the right information. So my goal in this new edition of *The Man in the Mirror* is to help you address the unique challenges these 24 problems present as you find your way in the twenty-first century.

When I wrote the original edition of *The Man in the Mirror*, I wasn't a writer at all; I was in commercial real estate. Now, the fact that millions of copies have been distributed around the world—well, there's no question that God performed a miracle with that first book. And so I've resisted the urge to change those original, direct, plainspoken sentences that put into words what so many millions of men wanted—or needed—to hear in the first place. It was less about writing craft anyway, and more about what God wanted to do in men's lives—how He was moving in the world. Some who read it became Christians. Others realized they had been more cultural Christians than biblical Christians. Many reordered their priorities and, in the process, saved their marriages and families. In short, God used that book to inspire and guide an entire generation of men.

Now I'm praying that it might inspire and guide you too. What does God want to do in *your* life? If you're ready, turn the page and let's get started!

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN OR CULTURAL CHRISTIAN?

A whole new generation of Christians has come up believing that it is possible to “accept” Christ without forsaking the world.

A. W. Tozer

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

James 1:23–24

We’ve got a problem. Remember Larry and Carol—our couple from the first chapter? They’re Christians.

“What!?” you say. “You’ve got to be kidding!”

I’m not kidding. In fact, I submit to you that the forces at work in Larry and Carol’s lives are the rule and not the exception among Christian households today. Going one step further, I would also tell

you that after meeting with thousands of men, I can't name more than a handful of men whose marriages are working the way they are supposed to.

In groups where I have made the adventurous statement, "I don't personally know ten men whose marriages are working like they are supposed to," I have never had anyone challenge me on it, nor has the body language ever shown any individual resistance to such a notion.

"Well, how could that happen to a Christian couple?" you may ask.

It's easier than you might first think.

THE PROBLEM

As we've seen, our material standard of living is up, but are we really better off? As I said in the introduction to this book, many men sense that something isn't quite right about their lives, but they can't quite put their finger on the answer. An eerie feeling lingers that they may be running in the wrong race. They see that they are more *financially* successful than their parents, but they suspect they may not be better off. What is really going on?

As we noted in the first chapter, a century of consumerism and media influence has caused a basic shift in values. Overall, we live in a culture dominated by the secular worldview.

The real problem we have is that it's not just happening to Larry and Carol and Mr. Silver — *it's happening to us too*.

TWO IMPOVERISHED VALUES

In his epic book *How Should We Then Live?* theologian Francis Schaeffer noted how changes in art, music, drama, theology, and the mass media have negatively affected our values.

Dr. Schaeffer underscored that the majority of people have adopted two impoverished values: *personal peace* and *affluence*. His

perceptive analysis was immediately adopted as a consensus view because it had, and still has, the ring of truth. Here are his working definitions of those two values:

Personal peace means just to be let alone, not to be troubled by the troubles of other people, whether across the world or across the city—to live one’s life with minimal possibilities of being personally disturbed. Personal peace means wanting to have my personal life pattern undisturbed in my lifetime, regardless of what the result will be in the lifetimes of my children and grandchildren. Affluence means an overwhelming and ever-increasing prosperity—a life made up of things, things, and more things—a success judged by an ever-higher level of material abundance.⁸

Our spirits sense the truth of Dr. Schaeffer’s observations, don’t they? They give us a framework that helps explain a great deal of what we see happening in the world around us.

We saw in chapter 1 how we are lured into these two values by pursuing the Madison Avenue lifestyle.

But we also have the lingering problem of Larry and Carol—how could a *Christian* couple become so desperately entangled in these bankrupt, impoverished values? And the conspicuous question—how does it happen to us?

A THIRD IMPOVERISHED VALUE

Christianity is flourishing. There are more Christians today in America than ever before, both as a percentage and in total numbers. Roughly one in three Americans indicate they have asked Jesus to forgive their sins and grant them the gift of eternal life.

Here’s the question: *If religion is such a big part of our lives, why isn’t it making more of an impact on our society?* The sad reality is that claims of religious commitment run high, but impact is at an all-time low. At the very point when Christians have felt comfortable to come “out of the closet,” our culture has sunk into a moral sewer.

So why is our culture in such turmoil? The answer is simple: While Christianity is flourishing, our culture is no longer guided by Christian values. Some people call this a post-Christian culture.

Here's what's interesting: While one in three are evangelical today, in 1800 only one in *fourteen* of America's 5.3 million citizens belonged to an evangelical church.⁹ So while the number of Christians in America has grown dramatically, Christianity has *always* been in the minority in America.

Yet we once operated under the moral consensus of Judeo-Christian principles. Movies, television, literature, and other instruments of culture adhered to the morals of this consensus. That consensus has been breaking up for more than a hundred years and has accelerated rapidly over the past twenty-five years. So, while Christianity itself continues to flourish, secular culture no longer rests on Judeo-Christian values.

Essentially, Christianity and non-Christianity are both growing, but in different directions. So don't make the mistake of saying that Christianity is not working. It is! It is non-Christianity that is not working. Where our culture is wholesome, it is because of Christians and non-Christians who still hold to Judeo-Christian values. Everything else is a moral mess. Don't make the mistake of judging Christianity by the failures of non-Christianity.

Here's the problem: Although Christianity is flourishing, many of us who are Christians have gotten caught up in this increasingly bankrupt culture. We have adopted many of the values of the world around us. Maybe it's the new sexual ethics of cohabitation or pornography, rampant greed and materialism, or winking at the needs of the poor. Galatians 5:9 explains why adopting these values is a problem: "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." So when we try to have the best of both worlds, we exchange the truth of God for a lie and the glory of God for idols, we do what seems right in our own eyes, we get engrossed in the secular world, and we worship created things instead of the Creator.

When we don't run a good race, the unfortunate result is that a third impoverished value evolves: *cultural Christianity*. Cultural Christianity means pursuing the God we want instead of the God who is. It is the tendency to be shallow in our understanding of God, wanting Him to be more of a gentle, grandfatherly type who spoils us and lets us have our own way. It is sensing a need for God, but on our own terms. It is wanting the God we have underlined in our Bibles without wanting the rest of Him too. It is God relative instead of God absolute.

Cultural Christianity is Christianity made impotent. It is Christianity with little or no impact on the values and beliefs of our society. When the secular worldview is merged into the Christian worldview, neither one survives.

Cultural Christianity requires God to grant us personal peace and affluence to prove He loves us. It is God love, but not God holy. Actually, God loves us so much that He will cleanse the cultural Christianity from our lives, like the silversmith purifies silver by burning off the dross.

We often want God to be adjustable, like the transformer toys that children play with. We want him to adapt to our whims instead of us adapting to Him. Look for a moment at your own lifestyle. To what extent do you think these three values—personal peace, affluence, and cultural Christianity—describe your own life? What has been the result of this adaptive, cultural religion?

TWO KINDS OF CHRISTIANS

The ease with which people now associate themselves with religion has produced two kinds of Christians: *biblical Christians* and *cultural Christians*.

When we “look at the fish” in self-examination, perhaps the first observation we make is that among those who identify themselves as Christians, we lead sharply different lifestyles.

None of this is new, of course. It's only that the cycle has come

around again. Jesus was the first to clarify the different types of people who would or would not associate with Him. The parable of the sower reveals four groups of hearers of the Word of God.

Group 1—The Non-Christian

“Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.”

Luke 8:12

Christ makes clear the point that not everyone who hears about salvation will believe.

Group 2—The Cultural Christian: Type “C”

“Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.”

Luke 8:13

Modern thinking is correct in believing that once a man is saved he is always saved. Christ affirms this by saying, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27–28).

Modern thinking breaks down, though, by advertising to people that all they need to do is “pray a prayer” and they will be saved—born again. Everyone, it seems, has “prayed a prayer”! Prayer doesn’t save; faith saves. More on this in the next chapter.

Type “C” stands for *counterfeit faith*. Among us are some who profess to be Christians, but in reality they are not Christians at all; they are cultural Christians—type “C.” They have a counterfeit faith—a faith that is not a genuine faith in Christ. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of

heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

The apostle Paul urges, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Without sounding a false alarm, but in love, I encourage every man who finds himself to be a cultural Christian to consider whether his faith is merely a defeated faith or a counterfeit faith. If counterfeit faith is the condition of your life, don’t be discouraged. God loves you with an everlasting love and wants to reconcile with you. In the next chapter we will look at how you can get on, or get back on, the right track.

Group 3 — The Cultural Christian: Type “D”

“The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.”

Luke 8:14

Early on, I noticed what many others have also observed about the purchasing habits of evangelical Christians compared to society at large: The majority of the time there is no difference. Why is this significant? Spiritually, if there is no difference in the way we as Christians live, then what is there about us that will recommend Jesus to those who don’t know him yet? From a practical point of view, the typical U.S. family has right around \$100,000 in household debt.¹⁰ When as Christians we spend like the “typical family,” we also will be bogged down with debts and run the race to acquire material possessions. As a result, the worries that follow choke the Word and make it unfruitful in our lives.

Sadly, there is little marginal difference between the way many Christians spend their money and the way non-Christians spend theirs. For a group whose primary commission is to be salt and light

to a broken, confused world, this example does little to present a viable alternative to empty lifestyles.

Type “D” stands for defeated faith. The type “D” cultural Christian lives in defeat. There is little, if any, marginal difference between his lifestyle and the lifestyle of the man who makes no claim to be in Christ. He has never understood, perhaps because he has never been told, the difference between what it means to be a cultural Christian versus a biblical Christian. This book will be especially helpful for the man who falls in this category. This is the category I flirted with before God brought me to my senses.

Group 4 — The Biblical Christian

“But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.”

Luke 8:15

Biblical Christians don’t live by their own ideas, but by penetrating, understanding, and applying the Word of God. By the Spirit, they experience the success and peace to which we each aspire.

A biblical Christian is a man who trusts in Christ, and Christ alone, for his salvation. As a *result* of his saving faith, he desires to be *obedient* to God’s principles out of the overflow of a grateful heart (see Romans 1:5). Obedience doesn’t save us; faith does. This explains why some men can be cultural Christians—they have a saving faith, but they have not obediently made Christ Lord over all their lives. They have not allowed the Holy Spirit to empower them.

People who associate themselves with Christ, then, fall into two broad categories: *biblical Christians* and *cultural Christians*. Among cultural Christians are those who have a *counterfeit* faith and those who have a *defeated* faith. Here’s another way of putting it:

- Biblical Christian—a genuine faith (obedience)
- Cultural Christian
 - Type “C”—a counterfeit faith (not genuine faith)
 - Type “D”—a defeated faith (no power)

Why is there so much confusion about what it means to be a Christian?

AN AMBIGUITY OF TERMS

Because so many people have chosen to identify themselves as Christians, an ambiguity has developed about what it really means to be a Christian. It’s a little like calling yourself a Republican or a Democrat. The label reveals far less about what you think and believe today than it did fifty years ago.

C. S. Lewis, in his 1943 book *Mere Christianity*, points out how words can be spoiled for their intended purpose. The word *gentleman* originally meant something exact—to be a gentleman you had to have a coat of arms and own property. To be called a gentleman was not a compliment, but a statement of fact. Over time, however, the term evolved into a way of complimenting a man instead of giving information about him. As a result, Lewis pointed out, *gentleman* is now useless for its original meaning—it has been spoiled for that purpose.¹¹

The term *Christian* has also evolved to have broad and various intended meanings by those who use the term. A man is either a Christian or he is not. That fact is what it is, and no adjective is now, or ever will be, required to describe a true Christian. But because of the current ambiguity surrounding the term, thinking in terms of *cultural* or *biblical* is a useful way to explain the wide differences in what professing Christians think, say, and do. As Lewis pointed out, a Christian is a Christian, but he may be a good one or a bad one.

What does it mean to be a cultural Christian today?

LESSONS FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Do you remember your elementary school teacher demonstrating the principle of diffusion? She started with a clear glass of water. Then with an eyedropper she took some red food dye from a bottle and squeezed one drop into the glass. Within moments, the water was tainted with a pinkish hue as the dye permeated the water in the glass.

To be a cultural Christian in your parents' generation was to be like a clear glass of water with one drop of red dye. In other words, the secular culture was not that different from the Christian culture. That was before the days of Internet pornography, abortion on demand, explicit sex during prime-time TV, songs that degrade women, and a drug culture that's hard to avoid. So a man could be a cultural Christian and still be somewhat close to a Christian worldview and values.

To be a cultural Christian today is like having the whole bottle of red dye poured in the glass. The secular culture today is so polluted that to be a cultural Christian today means that your worldview and lifestyle are not tainted a pinkish hue but are contaminated by failed, impoverished values, three in number:

1. Personal peace
2. Affluence
3. Cultural Christianity

FROGS IN HOT WATER

Malcolm Muggeridge told the story about how to cook a frog. If you take a pot of boiling water and toss a frog in, the frog will immediately feel the heat and leap out of the pot. But if you start with a pot of cold water, put the frog in it, and slowly turn up the heat, the frog won't notice the change in temperature and won't leap out—he'll be cooked.

Like an unsuspecting frog in a cold pot, our values have been slowly "cooked" over the past few decades. If someone had been cryonically frozen one hundred years ago and we brought that person

back to life today, he would jump out of this boiling pot we have created so fast our heads would spin!

Why don't we scream our lungs out over abortion on demand, illegal drugs, the federal deficit, and corruption? We don't jump up and down because over a period of years, like the unsuspecting frog that didn't notice the changing temperature, many of our values have gradually eroded—been “cooked”—and many of us have become cultural Christians.

Many of us have bought into our modern culture lock, stock, and barrel. Too often our values and beliefs reflect the bankrupt values of a shallow, hurting society. Instead of offering hope to a weary world, they look at us and think, “Well, I just don't see how Christ has made that much difference in your life. If that's what it means to be a Christian, then I'll just stay where I am.”

The question for us all should be: *Is there any marginal difference between the way I live and the way the broken, hurting world lives? Does my life offer hope or disillusionment?*

Jesus said to one group of Christians, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (Revelation 3:15–17). Is Jesus saying this to you? Are you lukewarm, slowly being cooked—like the frog? If your answer is yes, then you have been living the life of a cultural Christian.

TOO BUSY

Ron Jenson rented a travel camper and traveled around the country with his wife while working on his doctoral thesis. His task was to interview 350 Christian leaders. At the end of this tour, he made a discouraging observation. He said, “I found a great deal of zeal for God's work, but very little passion for God.” The one exception he

found was Cru founder Bill Bright, who wept openly as he spoke about his love for Jesus.

Many of us are busy “doing” but are not keeping our personal relationship with God in tune. We can become so busy for Christ that we live in defeat in important areas of our personal lives. Christ said to another group of Christians, “I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first” (Revelation 2:2–4). Is Jesus saying this to you? Have you become so busy with your own agenda that you have lost your passion for God? If your answer is yes, then you have been living the life of a cultural Christian.

Perhaps you have never before thought about what kind of a Christian you are. Or perhaps you have known you have not lived as you should, but you have not known how to make a change. Whichever the case, let’s contrast the life of a cultural Christian and the life of a biblical Christian for clues about how to live. It has been said that understanding the problem is half the solution.

MARKET-DRIVEN VERSUS PRODUCT-DRIVEN

Former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Frederick Moore Vinson once said, “Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there are no absolutes.”

Cultural Christians often think truth is relative—that it changes over time as circumstances change. The biblical Christian accepts Jesus’ statement, “I am the way and the truth . . .” (John 14:6). He finds no fault in old teachings having modern application. The lack of a hi-tech appearance to the Scriptures is a source of strength and encouragement, not embarrassment.

The biblical Christian is persuaded that the Bible, though often filled with mystery, reveals a personal God who has unchanging, absolute principles and precepts.

THAT MAY NOT BE SUCH A GOOD IDEA!

Every day, men of enormous intellect uncover new ideas that we embrace. I wonder who the genius was who first figured out that the federal government could borrow money? Have you ever considered that a majority elected Adolf Hitler to the leadership of the Nazi party?

The cultural Christian lives by his own ideas and the ideas of others. The 51 percent majority rule is the law of his mind. The biblical Christian lives by the Word of God and the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

Is the biblical Christian, then, ever allowed to question Scripture? Yes, of course. However, there is a difference between wrestling with a Scripture to understand the truth of it, to penetrate it, and to grasp its full depth and meaning versus wrestling with it to decide whether or not you think it's true. The first wrestling is seeking the terms of surrender. The second wrestling is a contest of our will against the will of God—a specific act of disobedience.

I met a man here in Orlando whose wife became a Christian. She felt the Lord was calling her to leave her family and take a public relations job in New York City. He was shattered. She wasn't open to the counsel of God's Word, and a disaster resulted. The biblical Christian will never live against the Word of God.

LOOKING OUT FOR NUMBER ONE

Who is number one in your life? The answer may reveal whether you are a cultural or biblical Christian.

Steve and his wife sold their businesses, he enrolled in graduate school out of state, and they purchased a home near the university.

When they went to close on the new house, the mortgage company wanted him to falsify some financial information.

“I can’t do that,” he told them.

“It’s no big deal. Everybody does it,” was the reply.

“I don’t think you understand; I can’t do that.”

“It just goes in the file; nobody will ever even look at it. Besides, if you don’t, then we can’t give you the loan.”

Steve really believed God had led them to the decision to return to school. Now his peace was shattered. To complete the move he would have to compromise his integrity. The decision was really quite simple: “Who will I put first in this decision—my own desires or Christ?”

We must often make similar decisions. Do we interrupt our personal peace by putting Christ first? Do we cheerfully accept a setback in our standard of living? Or do we go ahead because “everybody does it”?

Steve decided to return to school locally instead of moving out of state on a lie. To put himself first would have been easy. Who would know? Who would even care? He decided to put Jesus first, and he couldn’t be more at peace.

Many Christian men have adopted the three impoverished values of our time: personal peace, affluence, and cultural Christianity. They become number one in their own lives. The biblical Christian puts his relationship with Jesus at the top of the list. He strives to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness . . .” (Matthew 6:33).

Obedience is the trademark of a biblical Christian. That is how we demonstrate our love to God and truth to a weary culture.

How can a man become a biblical Christian? If you have been a cultural Christian, how can you make the change?

SELF-EXAMINATION

The man who has been living as a cultural Christian can change by examining the *influences* on his life and the *values* he has adopted.

If you think you have been a cultural Christian, then examine the influences on your life. Look at the church you attend. Is it a biblical church? How about your friends—what worldview do they represent? What forms of entertainment, media, art, and music do you expose your mind to?

Look at the values you have lived by. Are they biblical or cultural values? Today's society embraces the three impoverished values of personal peace, affluence, and cultural Christianity.

PATIENT FOR CHANGE

When I became a Christian, I asked God for help on two serious, practical problems I struggled with. The first was cursing. Almost instantly, without any help or assistance from me, the cursing ceased. My wife mentioned one day, "Pat, you hardly swear at all anymore."

I was flabbergasted. I had made no conscious effort to stop, nor was I aware that a change had even occurred.

The other struggle was with my temper. I would become too angry. Many regrettable words escaped from my mouth. Although the Lord quickly helped me with cursing, the temper problem lingered for five long, tearful years. Virtually every day I would have to ask forgiveness. There were many tears and long prayers pleading with God for help. But five years passed before my level of anger became a normal person's level of anger.

Here's the point: We didn't get to be the men we are overnight, and we may need to allow some time, perhaps a long time, before we will see our lives the way we want them to be.

A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

The man in the mirror will never change until he is willing to see himself as he really is and to commit to know God as He really is.

This objectivity anchors a man; it gives him the clarity of thought he needs to be a biblical Christian.

Is the man looking back at you in the mirror a cultural Christian or a biblical Christian? These pages are dedicated to helping each of us self-examine and reshape our values and beliefs so we can be biblical Christians in a weary, broken world.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. Think of a Christian couple you know who is having marriage problems. In what ways do you think their conformity to cultural values has contributed to their struggle?
2. Dr. Francis Schaeffer says that modern society has two impoverished values: personal peace and affluence. Do you agree with Dr. Schaeffer? Why or why not?
3. In what ways have you pursued the values of personal peace and affluence?
4. Are you more financially successful than your parents? Is the quality of your personal life more successful than your parents? Why or why not?
5. How would you define *cultural Christianity*?
6. After reading this chapter, would you call yourself a *biblical* Christian or a *cultural* Christian? Why?
7. If you are a cultural Christian, how do you think you became that way? What do you think are the factors that contributed to your worldview?
8. If you are a biblical Christian, what advice would you give to a cultural Christian that might help him get on the right track?
9. Where is the “red dye” in your life? What do you need to do to get it out?