

Humility or being humble is a quality of being courteously respectful of others. It is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity. Acting with humility does not in any way deny our own self worth. Rather, it affirms the inherent worth of all persons. Humility is exactly what is needed to live in peace and harmony with all persons. It dissipates anger and heals old wounds. It allows us to see the dignity and worth of all God's people. Humility distinguishes the wise leader from the arrogant power-seeker (Proverbs 17:7, Matthew 20:20-28).

4. Be Honest

Honesty and integrity are held as very important values throughout the Bible, and any deception to gain an advantage or harm another is prohibited by the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:16) and other Bible passages (Proverbs 12:17).

Deception may be by false statements, half-truths, innuendo, or failing to tell the whole truth. It is all too common in advertising, business dealings, politics and everyday life. We must strongly resist the temptation to engage in any form of theft, cheating, deception, innuendo, slander or gossip.

Rationalisation is a form of self-deception by which we convince ourselves that sinful actions are justified in order to achieve a good result, but this is really just another form of dishonesty (Galatians 6:7-8, James 1:26, 1John 1:8).

Holiness is in **living** in accordance with the Word of God, not in achieving an end result (Matthew 4:8-10, 16:26). In Biblical teaching, the end **does not** justify the means!

5. Live A Moral Life

The Bible says, *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price (1Peter 1:18-19),*

As Christians, we are to "honour God with our mind and body" (1Corinthians 6:19-20). Jesus gave a list of actions that constitute immoral uses of the body: He said: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean'. For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy,

slander, arrogance and foolishness. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean" (Mark 7:20-22).

The apostle Paul gave similar lists in Galatians 5-6, Ephesians 4-6, and Colossians 3. We often think of morality in terms of sexual sins, but according to Jesus, sins such as slander, greed, deceit, and arrogance are equally immoral.

So, what is your Christian **STATE** or condition like right now? Are you in a **STATE** of turmoil? Does God seem far away, distant and uncaring to you? Are you hostile toward God? Is life a big question mark? It may be that you have turned your back on God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, the Church and Christians. You may have struggles with certain sins. You may be openly disobedient to God. Whatever your condition, come to Jesus today. If you do not know Jesus, do not turn away, but trust him as your Saviour and Lord (Romans 10:9, Revelation 3:20).

You will then begin a journey with God that leads to heaven above. You will discover the joy and peace that comes from trusting, submitting and complying in obedience to God's word.

Your daily **STATE** of life will be in good condition (2Peter 1:5-8), if you take time to read the practical spiritual guidelines in God's word, like Romans chapters 12-15, or Ephesians 4-6 or Colossians 3-4 or the letters of Philipians, James and Peter. They will guide and bless you.

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So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- John 8:36

What Is Your Condition as a Christian?



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What Is Your Condition as a Christian?

Colossians 3: 1-17

The Bible speaks about our Christian **STATE**. The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian believers and said, *"I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your STATE [or daily condition]. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your STATE. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 2:19-21). Years ago I remember hearing a song by the country singer Kenny Rogers, with the words, *"I just dropped in to see what condition my condition was in"*.

The Bible clearly teaches a difference between our **STANDING** and our **STATE**. Our **STANDING** is our Relationship to God in Jesus Christ. And it never changes. But our **STATE** is our daily condition as a Christian, which includes the way we think and act and live. This is always changing. There is no doubt that we live in a sinful world and we are deeply affected by it. We hear it and see it on the job or on TV. We struggle with our sinful nature. Sometimes we see evil, think evil and even do evil. Evil is contrary to the nature of God, so we experience a struggle. Within all Christians there is a constant battle between right and wrong. It is defined in Galatians 5:16 -17, *"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want."*

The New Testament speaks of two kingdoms - the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God. The kingdom of this world is under the influence of the evil one.

The Apostle John wrote: *"We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the power and control of the evil one"* (1John 5:18-20). The Apostle Paul wrote: *"Satan, the god of this evil world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, so they are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News that is shining upon them"* (2Corinthians 4:3-4).

The dominant values of the world include wealth, power, pleasure, revenge, fame, vanity and status. These things are most important to people who

perceive no power or purpose beyond themselves. Worldly values promote jealousies, resentments and conflicts among people in accordance with the purposes of Satan. Believers are reminded that *"You once lived just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature"* (Ephesians 2:1-3).

The kingdom of God (also known as the kingdom of heaven) is not only a geographic location; it exists within the world among those people who put their faith, trust and loyalty in God (Luke 17:20-21). The values of the kingdom of God are often the opposite of worldly values: kindness and respect for all people instead of power; humility instead of status, fame and vanity; honesty and generosity instead of wealth; self-control instead of pleasure; forgiveness instead of revenge. Christian values promote peace and good will among people in accordance with the purposes of God. These are the things we strive for if we are sincere followers of Christ. We will never achieve perfection in this life, but those of us who strive to obey God often find a sense of joy and peace that no worldly rewards can match!

Here are **FIVE** key elements of a true Christian life that will make your **STATE** or Christian Living, better every day.

1. Worship Only the God of the Bible

One day, a religious leader asked Jesus which of the commandments was most important: *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength"* (Mark 12:28-30).

The people of God in Old Testament times tended to lapse into worship of pagan deities and statues of animals or other objects, but anything that takes the place of our devotion to God becomes an idol or a false god, and that is forbidden by the first of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-6).

Other Bible passages mention idols that we can find ourselves holding dear to us, like greed,

covetousness, arrogance, gluttony and pride as being equivalent to idolatry. In today's world, many things compete against God for our devotion.

Here are some of the things that can become a modern-day form of idolatry, if we let them become too important to us:

- Excessive attention to material things such as houses, cars, clothes, jewellery, physical appearance, entertainment, etc.
- Pursuit of wealth, power, fame, pleasure or status.
- Excessive devotion to self, job, hobbies, country, ideologies, heroes, leaders, even family.

The apostle Paul warns us about our sinful nature and what it can do. *"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God* (Galatians 5:19-21).

2. Respect All People

After Jesus said to *"Love the Lord your God"* is the most important of all the commandments, he continued... *"The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There are no greater commandments than these"* (cf. Mark 12:31).

The English word "love" has many different meanings, but the Greek word, *agape*, used in the New Testament, is commonly known as *"Christian love."* It means respect, affection, benevolence, good-will and concern for the welfare of the one loved. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that we must practice Christian love even toward our enemies! (cf. Matthew 5:43-48). Jesus gave the Golden Rule which is, *"Do unto others what you would have them do unto you"* (Matthew 7:12).

We should not say or do anything unless we can answer "Yes" to the question, "Would I want that said or done to me?" Neither should we fail to do the good things we would expect of others. Life is a boomerang!

3. Be Humble