

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

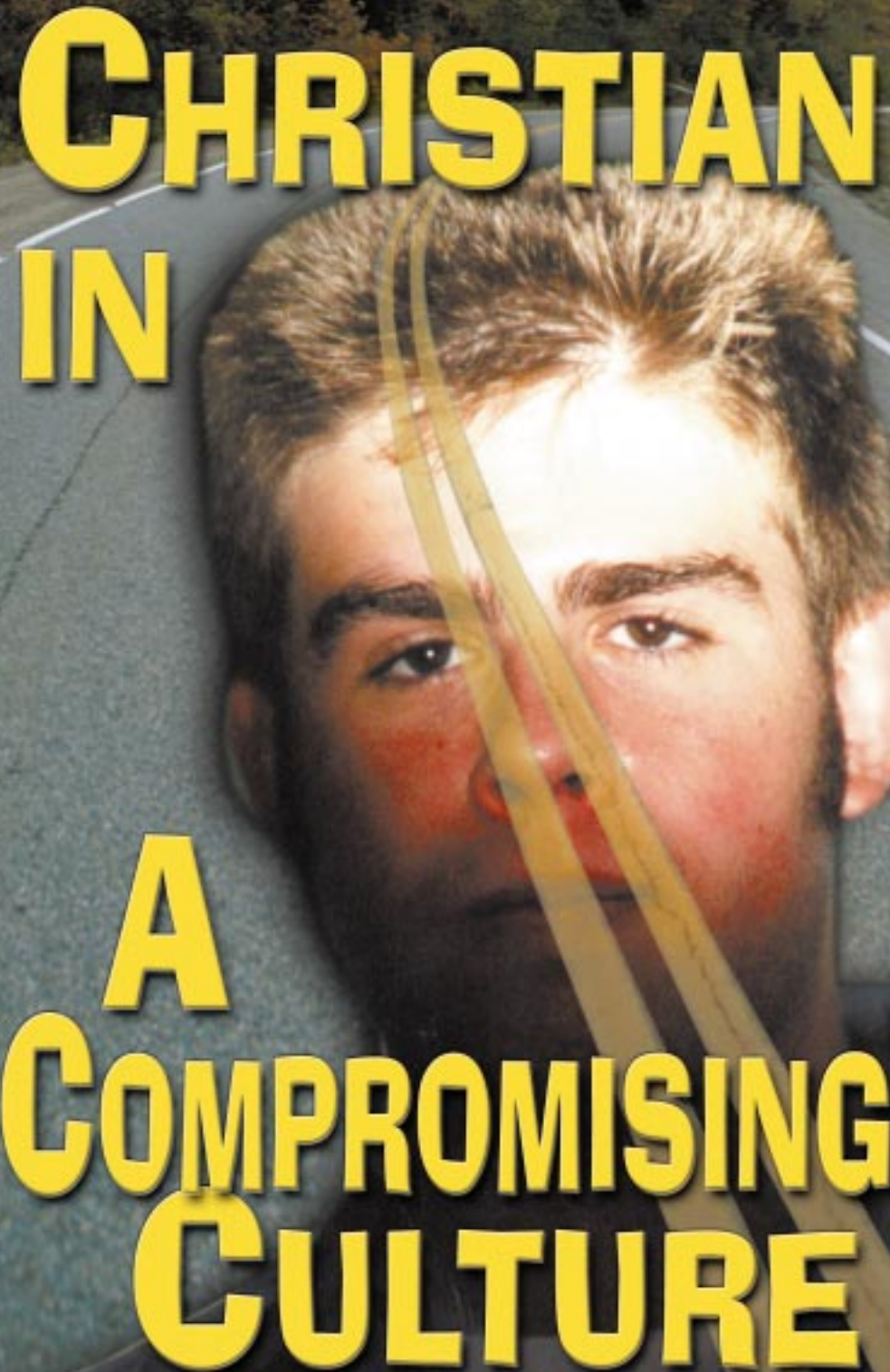
Thanks for watching and God Bless!

Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

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CHRISTIAN IN A COMPROMISING CULTURE



Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as “15 minutes of fame”. Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, “The Al Denson Show.” “You’ve got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport,” says Al. “This has all been so amazing. I can’t imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don’t have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, ‘I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.’ You can’t ask for anything more or better than that.”

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In January 1997, the New York Times reported that a man had died from eating poisonous mushrooms he had gathered near his home in Santa Rosa, California. The mushroom the man was thought to have eaten was known as the death-cap mushroom. It is the cause of 95 percent of lethal mushroom poisoning worldwide and is fatal more than 35 percent of the time. The toxins in its cap destroy the victim’s liver by rupturing the cells.

The Times went on to say that experts warn inexperienced mushroom enthusiasts to leave the picking to trained mycologists who will not be fooled by poisonous varieties which closely resemble their non-poisonous cousins. One of the most dangerous aspects of mushroom poisoning is the delay between eating the mushroom and the onset of symptoms. The stronger the poison, the longer it takes to show itself. By the time the victim is aware of the problem, it may be too late. A poison-control-administrator was quoted as saying, “A level of presumed expertise is not enough to save your life.”

There are some things you can’t afford to learn by trial and error because the price of making a mistake is far too high. That’s the way it is with your choices about right and wrong. Much is at

stake and the full consequences may not be seen until it is too late. There is only one expert when it comes to life and that expert is God. The Bible is the Word of God and therefore the only authority on right and wrong. In the Bible, God has given very clear-cut commandments, guidelines, and principles about how to determine the difference between right and wrong.

For hundreds of years in this country, the Bible was honored and the biblical definition of right and wrong was the accepted as absolute truth. But

for most Americans today, truth is relative to their circumstances. Only about one third of all adults and even fewer teenagers believe there is such a thing as absolute moral truth, and that there are clear guidelines about what is right or wrong which apply to everyone regardless of the situation. The other two thirds believe the Bible is just a book of suggestions, and their own reasoning and emotions are enough to determine what is right or wrong. So, without absolute truth and a clear definition of right and wrong, in their minds, there is no such thing as sin. Today many Christians are coming dangerously close to embracing these values and this mindset, as well.

There are some things you can’t afford to learn by trial and error because the price of making a mistake is far too high.

To understand what has happened in our country, imagine a road with a line running down the middle. All the territory to the left of the road, the Bible calls “wrong.” All the territory to the right of that road, the Bible calls “right.” For generations the road was very straight. Then, about forty years ago, the growth of relativism in our culture began to gradually move that road to the left, as secular humanism convinced Americans to deny God-given absolutes and say, “Everything is relative, so do your own thing.” When this began to happen, ours became a compromising culture. Webster defines compromise as “an adjustment or concession between two conflicting courses, ideas, etc...a surrender of character.” Relativism now seems to be the rule of the day and has even convinced many Christians that God has changed His mind about sin. But the Bible clearly says that God

never changes. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. God has not changed His mind about sin, and even though society is gradually moving the road to the left, the line between right and wrong is still straight—it has not moved as far as God is concerned.

Too many Christians today tend to evaluate their lives by other people, not the principles and standards found in the Word of God. So by comparison, they feel pretty good about themselves because they are living on the right side of the road. What they don’t realize is that the road has moved to the left, so they can be living on the right side of the road and still be in “Left Land” if they are living close to the line. When Christians begin to think like the world, they begin to act like the world. As a result, it has become easier for Christians who are not using the Word of God as their standard for right and wrong to become more comfortable with the things that are a way of life in “Left Land” like divorce, premarital sex, drinking, gambling, questionable movies, music, language, etc. These are Christians who have decided that they can pick and choose which parts of the Word of God they want to obey and disregard the rest. This is

the reason we are seeing little difference in the behavior of Christians and non-Christians. Most Christians today tend towards a “go-along to get-along” approach to daily choices.

Too many Christians want to know how much they can get away with. What they are really asking is, “How close to the line between right and wrong, between pure and impure, can I get without going out-of-bounds?” What they don’t understand is that

a Christ-like lifestyle cannot be defined by an activity. It is an attitude which involves our bodies, minds, and spirits. So, instead of asking, “How much can a Christian get away with?” or, “How close to the line can I get?” the question should be, “How far away from the line can I stay?” or “How much like Jesus can I be?” Twenty-first century Christians are living in an increasingly compromising culture.

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How do you keep from becoming a compromiser yourself? Is it possible to have a holy lifestyle in the culture in which we live—to be in the world but not of the world? It is possible, but in the midst of all of this confusion, deception, and darkness, the only light which will show you the way to walk is the Word of God.

In II Timothy 3:16-17 it says, “ALL Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Paul was telling young Timothy four things in these verses:

1. The Bible would show him the right road in life to take
2. The Bible would show him when he was off the right road
3. The Bible would tell him how to get back on the right road
4. The Bible would show him how to stay on the right road in life.

God’s Word is timeless and it must also be your only compass for right and wrong.

In making lifestyle choices based on Scripture, you must understand some principles about using the Bible to find direction for your life. The Bible is a guidebook, not a rule book. Many Christians look for specific directives, like, “Don’t wear halter tops,” or “Don’t smoke cigarettes.” But the Bible was not given to be used that way. Often when specific directives don’t exist, these Christians will try to use that as an excuse to do whatever they want.

There are some clear directives in the Word of God which are His timeless laws. These commandments very carefully spell out what we are, and are not, to do. But God most often gives us principles rather than rules or regulations. These principles, which are the “whys” behind God’s laws, have no exceptions. They are God’s road signs to guide us on the path of life. God’s Word speaks to all of life’s issues and it is always relevant to any situation. Every moral, ethical, social, or spiritual decision we ever need to make, can be made using these principles. Barry Wood has seven Biblical principles which can help you determine right from wrong:

1. Is There a Direct Command From God on The Matter?

Sometimes God speaks directly to a moral question. The Ten Commandments are a good example. God says clearly that it is always wrong to lie, murder, and steal. But suppose a Christian girl wants to marry an unsaved guy? The Bible is just as clear in II Corinthians 6:14 to say, “Do not unite yourself with unbelievers. They are not fit mates for you. What has unrighteousness to do with wickedness?...” This is a clear directive from God.

2. Does It Glorify God?

This is a fundamental Christian principle. Can God be glorified in your actions?

Christians have been given the job of reflecting God and representing Jesus to the world as His ambassadors. Paul writes in I Corinthians 10:31, “Whether then you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” There are many things which in and of themselves may not be bad, but your motivation may not be right. Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” Is your motivation in this action to glorify God?

God’s Word is timeless and it must also be your only compass for right and wrong.

Nothing can be more important in our life...

The life of Jesus was a perfect reflection of His Father. As a result, He was able to show the world what God was really like. Your job, until Jesus comes again, is to take over where He left off. If you are to be reflections of Christ, then Jesus must be the consuming fire of your life. Nothing can be more important in our life than honestly, properly representing God in this world.

3. Will It Cause Others To Stumble?

This principle deals with the Christian's responsibility to other people. Romans 14:21 says, "It is not good to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles."

I Corinthians 10:23-24, 31-33, 11:1: "Everything is permissible—but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible—but not

everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others...So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God...For I am not seeking my good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ."

Paul, perhaps the greatest Christian of the early church, was very careful about what he did in order not to offend others and by doing so, hurt the name of Christ. The point here is that there may be some things which would be okay for you to do, but would cause a weaker person to stumble. In I Corinthians 8:9 Paul also says, "But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a

stumbling block to the weak." This doesn't mean that you have to say "no" to your freedom in Christ. It simply means that you chose to say "yes" to the higher law of love. There are some things you can do without, out of love for others. The issue you are dealing with may not be a sin for you but saying "no" to the higher law of love is selfishness and a willful sin.

God stakes His reputation on you, and every time you choose willfully to sin, it

makes the lost world think that your God is weak and powerless. And if that were not bad enough, no one ever sins without hurting others in the body of Christ. You are so supernaturally connected to other Christians, that what you do affects every member of the body. Sin is not a physical act limited to the time and place where it is committed. It is something which happens in the spiritual realm and transcends time and space.



**...than honestly,
properly representing
God in this world.**

Sin cannot be confined and you cannot put a lid on it. Every time you sin, it spills out all over the whole body. The choices you make affect each member in the body of Christ. What people think of God and whether the church is able to impact the world for Christ will be determined by the choices you make every day. When Christians seem to have an interest in spiritual things, but have areas in their lives where actions, attitudes, words, and values conflict with those of Christ, they send a confusing message to unbelievers.

The apostle Paul understood the importance of accountability when he wrote in Romans 12 that Christians are to watch out for one another, warn one another, challenge one another, encourage one another, and rebuke one another. You need brothers and sisters in Christ who will love you enough to hold you

accountable for your decisions, your standards, ethics, values, vocabulary, and lifestyle. You also need to be held accountable for the level of commitment you are displaying in your relationship with God.

Your prayer, should be the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 69:6: "May those who hope in You not be disgraced because of me, O Lord, the Lord Almighty, may those who seek You not be put to shame because of me."

4. Is This Activity Necessary?

Is the action you are wanting to take really needful? I Corinthians 6:12 says, "All things are permissible for me, but not all things are beneficial..." and in I Corinthians 10:23, 24, it says, "All things are lawful, but not all things are constructive. No one should seek his own good, but the good of others." It is

not necessary if you can do without it and you can do without it if others are going to be hurt by your freedom.

5. Could It Harm My Body Or Is It Addictive?

I Corinthians 3:16 says, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man

destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy..." Your body belongs to Christ. You are to use it for His honor and glory. Anything that is destructive to your body is sin to God. I Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "...You are not your own; You were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body."

You also need to be held accountable for the level of commitment you are displaying in your relationship with God.

You must also ask, “Could the thing I wish to do, be addictive? If so, is it wrong because the guideline given in I Corinthians 6:12 says, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.” Christians are to have only one master in life and that master is Jesus. For anything else to control or master you is sin.

6. Does This Activity Promote Evil?

Romans 12:9 says, “...hate what is evil...” and I Thessalonians 5:22 tells us to “avoid every kind of evil.” In Matthew 12:35 Jesus said, “The good man brings good out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.” These verses are simply telling you that a Christian cannot, in good conscience, promote evil. When you do, you are indirectly promoting Satan’s kingdom. You must not knowingly give your money or consent to those activities or agencies which promote evil.

7. Can I Ask God To Bless It?

When you desire to do God’s will above all else, and, if after applying these principles you can pray about your moral choice and ask God to bless it, and, if you get a peace in your spirit, then you can proceed.

Here is an example of how these principles can be applied to an issue that many Christians have questions about —social drinking:

1. Is There A Direct Command From God On Drinking?

The Bible speaks clearly against drunkenness, but not against drinking. (See Proverbs 13:15; 14:18; 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; and Ephesians 5:18 as examples). However, one of the problems with drinking is that you not drink enough to get drunk, but you may drink enough to impair your decision-making processes. This could cause you to do stupid, embarrassing, sinful, or dangerous things. It is entirely possible that drinking, even a little, could cause you to relax enough to do something that you will

have to pay for the rest of your life. One sure way to make sure you never have that happen is to never take your first drink. Of course, if you are underage, drinking is illegal, and therefore, a sin (see Romans 13:1-2).

2. Does Drinking Glorify God?

Remember, the key here is your motivation. What is your motivation in drinking? To be accepted by the crowd? To prove you are a grown-up? To rebel against the authority figures in your life? To loosen-up? To give you courage? To help you relax? To help escape the emptiness or pain in your life? To enjoy life more? Sorry, but none

of these would be the proper motivation, and without the proper motivation, it is impossible to glorify God.

3. Will My Drinking Cause Others To Stumble?

Alcohol is the most commonly used and

abused drug in America. There are an estimated 14 million American alcoholics. In 13 million of those lives, their alcoholism has resulted in a criminal arrest, termination of a job or family disruption such as a divorce. The percentage of Americans who say that drinking is a problem in their homes—one-fourth—has reached its highest point in recent decades.

**Christians
are to have
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life and
that
master
is Jesus**

There are four and a half million adolescent drinkers in this country. Gallup surveys show that nearly half of all teens think drinking is a problem among their peers and the proportion rises among teens ages sixteen and seventeen. In 2000 there were more than 16,000 alcohol-related automobile fatalities in the United States. The leading cause of death among Americans 15 to 24 years old is alcohol-related automobile accidents.

You may have no problem with alcohol whatsoever, and may feel you are in complete control at all times because you drink only in moderation. But what about the weaker Christian who makes the decision to allow alcohol to be a part of his life because he sees that you have? What if that weaker brother can't stop? Or what about the parent who only drinks wine with meals and introduces his son or daughter to wine assuming he or

she will do the same. What if that son or daughter goes on to become an alcoholic? Does the parent have some responsibility according to the Scriptures? Because you can never truly know the weaknesses of another person and because you never know who is watching your life, the principle of being a stumbling block is a very important one, when it comes to moral choices.

4. Is Drinking Necessary?

Again, the principle says, if you can do without it (if you can't, see number five below), or if others could be hurt by your freedom (they could), then it is not necessary.

5. Does Drinking Harm My Body or Is Drinking Addictive?

Without debating the physical aspects of drinking, let's simply ask the question—is drinking addictive? Look back at the statistics given under number three. Yes, it is. And

even if you feel you do not have an addictive personality or could never have any problem with alcohol, think again. Any of us, given the right set of circumstances, problems, and stresses could be one drink away from becoming a problem drinker. Remember, man was created to be mastered. If he isn't surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ as his master, by default he will be mastered by other things. Any Christian who finds himself in rebellion and out from under the Lordship of Christ, even for a day, is at risk for an addiction.

6. Does Drinking Promote Evil?

The liquor industry is a very rich and powerful force for evil in this world. It promotes, by its very product, alcoholism, divorce, murder, lust, and violence. So, is a Christian who buys alcohol in any form supporting and thereby promoting, this industry?

7. Can I Ask God's Blessing on My Drinking?

Again, after applying all these principles with a heart that desires to do God's will above all else, can you ask God to bless your drinking?

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God has not called you to be like those around you.

Dr. Henry Blackaby said this at a conference at the Billy Graham Training Center in May of 1999: "If you put the United States up against the Scriptures, we're in trouble. I think we're very close to the judgement of God. The problem of America is not the unbelieving world. The problem of America is the people of God. You see, right now there are just as many divorces in the church as outside the church. There are just as many abortions inside the church as outside the church. There is only a one percent difference in gambling inside the church than outside the church. George Barna did a survey of 152 separate items comparing the lost world and the church, and he said there was virtually no difference between the two...How then should we live? This is a long answer to a short question, but it

depends on the people of God...it's God's people who hold the destiny of America. Don't fuss at the world. It's acting just like its nature. We've got to be salt and light again. We've got to have an observable difference."

The real issue for every Christian when it comes to deciding how to live is the holiness of God.

In Revelation 4:1 God lets the apostle John look into His throne room. John writes, "After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven." In this chapter he describes the creatures he saw and in verse eight he writes, "...Day and night they never stop saying: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." Then John goes on to write about the saints who worship before the throne of

God that say, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Nothing will motivate you to a holy lifestyle like an awareness of the awesomeness of who God is. If all you know of God is what He does, then you don't know much about Him because what He does is only a fraction of who He is. What is it that motivates you to do or not to do certain things? Is it your conscience? Not a good choice because Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that

seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." How about the society in which you live, the Christian culture around you, or even your parents? No, because all of these are imperfect. They can be unstable and sometimes faulty gauges of right and wrong. God has not called you to be like those around you. He has called you to be like Himself. Christians need a measuring stick for right and wrong that is perfect and never changes, and that is, and can only be, the Word of God.

He has called you to be like Himself.

Leviticus 11:44 says, “I am the Lord your God; consecrate (sanctify) yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.” I Peter 1:15-16 says, “But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. For it is written ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” And I Corinthians 1:2 says, “...to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy...” These are not a suggestions from God to His people, they are commandments. As far as God is concerned, a holy lifestyle is not an option for a Christian. When God saved you—at the moment of conversion, in a split second of time—something supernatural took place in

your life. The “old” you died, and a “new” you was born. This “new” you may look like the “old” you on the outside, but on the inside everything is totally different. All your sins are gone, as if they never happened. God has declared that you are now holy, pure, righteous and blameless because of Jesus. If you have been saved, those are the facts. Now God wants your behavior to reflect those facts. In other words, to live on the outside, like who God says you are on the inside. This kind of life is the Christ-life and only He can live it. It is not something you can do in your own strength, it can only be

done as you allow Christ to live His life through you. You might be thinking, “but what about my right to live my life as I choose?” If you are a Christian, you have no rights. Your rights were purchased by Christ at the moment of salvation. Remember, the Bible says in I Corinthians 6:19-20, “...You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.” If you are more concerned about your right to participate in the things of this world than you are in living a holy life, then you may need to re-examine your relationship with God. This is not about legalism but about love.

The Bible says in II Corinthians 5:14, “The love of Christ compels (motivates, propels) us...” The great, unconditional love of Christ and what He has already done for you should be enough to motivate you to live an obedient, Christ-like life. Jesus said in John 14:21, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.” In other words, Jesus said that you can’t say you love Him and live in a way which contradicts His Word. The real issue is not so much what you do, or don’t do, but the attitude and the motivation with which you decide.

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