The TIMES, THEY ARE CHANGING - An Investigation Into the State and Direction of Modern “professed” Christianity

Intro:
A. That such changes would occur can not be denied - for scripture speaks of such
1. **2 Timothy 3:1–9** (NKJV) - 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
2. 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.
B. As we look at things around about us we can note four aspects of this truth:
1. The Reality: Things Are Changing
2. Some Reasons Things Are Changing
3. Consequences of These Changes
4. How We Should Respond To These Changes
C. It is thus our duty as charged by God thru Paul:
1. **2 Timothy 4:1–5** (NKJV) - 1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
2.  3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

II. The Reality: Things Are Changing
A. Note from the Washington Post:
1. Christianity faces sharp decline as Americans are becoming even less affiliated with religion - By Sarah Pulliam Bailey, May 12th 2015 - The percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christians dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years to about 71 percent, according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. …”
   a. Millennials are growing even less affiliated with religion as they get older - (Born 1981 to 1989) in 2007 - 25% — in 2014 - 34%
   b. There are more religiously unaffiliated Americans than Catholic Americans (20.8%), or mainline Protestant Americans. (14.7%)
   c. Those who are unaffiliated are becoming more secular
2. This is seen during the period of 2007-2014
B. A rejection of the reliability & absolute authority of the scriptures - (**2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Pet 1:19-21; Mat 24:35; Luke 21:33**) 
1. **2 Timothy 3:16** (NKJV) - 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
   a. **2 Timothy 3:17** (NKJV) - 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2. **2 Peter 1:19-21** (NKJV) - 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in
your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

3. **Matthew 24:35** (NKJV) - 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

4. **Luke 21:33** (NKJV) - 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

C. A belief that truth is subjective & relative - (no moral absolutes / doctrine & theology inconsequential) - (**Judg 21:25; Jer. 6:16-19**)

1. **Judges 21:25** (NKJV) - 25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

2. **Jeremiah 6:16-19** (NKJV) - 16 Thus says the Lord: “Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ 17 Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen.’ 18 Therefore hear, you nations, And know, O congregation, what is among them. 19 Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people— The fruit of their thoughts, Because they have not heeded My words Nor My law, but rejected it.

D. The emphasis of feelings & emotion over, & instead of, a “thus saith the Lord.” - (**Prov 14:12; Jer. 10:23; Proverbs 14:12** (NKJV) - 12 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. ; **Jeremiah 10:23** (NKJV) - 23 O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

1. No NEED to READ or STUDY the Bible!

2. It doesn’t MATTER what I believe!

3. I am educated & smart enough to determine what is true for ME!

### III. Some Reasons Things Are Changing

A. "Increasingly, America is biblically illiterate." - George Barna ---- one only has to watch Jeapody to see this ignorance of the Bible demonstrated by smart people who know a lot about nothing.

1. Look at the results of this survey:
   a. Own a bible
   b. Can’t name the 4 gospels
   c. Can’t site 5 of the 10 commandments
   d. Believe Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife
   e. HS Seniors - Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.

   (1) I know this is laughable to us but this is greatly disturbing.

B. When you look at the Value each place on the Bible in Every day life it is even more disturbing.

C. When we look at the role the Bible plays in Society - we have the answer to the reasons why things are changing.

### IV. Consequences of These Changes

A. Paul wrote these words of warning - **2 Timothy 3:1–9** (NKJV) - 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

B. They - **2 Tim 3:5** having a form of godliness but denying its power.
1. John McArthur, Jr - wrote ---- “We have a society filled with people who want what they want when they want it. They are into their own lifestyle, recreation, and entertainment. They want comfort, happiness, and success. When churches appeal to those selfish desires, they only fuel fires that hinder true godliness.” - (Ashamed of The Gospel, When The Church Becomes Like The World, pg 85)

2. This attitude leads to:
   a. Vain worship & Will worship - Mt 15:7-9; Co 2:18-23; Ro 10:1-3
      (1) Matthew 15:7-9 (NKJV) - 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

      (2) Colossians 2:18-23 (NKJV) - 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— 21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22 which all concern things which perish with the using— according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

      (3) Romans 10:1-3 (NKJV) - 1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

   b. The object of worship & service is no longer the God of the Bible - John 4:24; Rom 1:18-25
      (1) John 4:24 (NKJV) - 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

      (2) Romans 1:18-25 (NKJV) - 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

   c. Will accept & practice things that are sinful - Rom 1:26,27; 2 Thes 2:10-12
      (1) Romans 1:26 (NKJV) - 26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

      (a) Romans 1:27 (NKJV) - 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

      (2) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (NKJV) - 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those
who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

C. https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/325-barna-studies-the-research-offers-a-year-in-review-perspective#.UinrSRaTy0s

1. “Bible reading has become the religious equivalent of sound-bite journalism. When people read from the Bible they typically open it, read a brief passage without much regard for the context, and consider the primary thought or feeling that the passage provided. If they are comfortable with it, they accept it; otherwise, they deem it interesting but irrelevant to their life, and move on. There is shockingly little growth evident in people’s understanding of the fundamental themes of the scriptures and amazingly little interest in deepening their knowledge and application of biblical principles . . .

a. Look at the Biblical Influence In the US
   (1) Satan Doesn’t exist
   (2) Jesus committed sin
   (3) Bible, Book of Mormon, Koran all are holy books
   (4) Professed Christians Deny moral absolutes
   (5) Moral Decisions based on Bible
   (6) Truth discovered by reason, logic and experience.

2. “The problem facing the Christian Church is not that people lack a complete set of beliefs; the problem is that they have a full slate of beliefs in mind, which they think are consistent with biblical teachings, and they are neither open to being proven wrong nor to learning new insights. Our research suggests that this challenge initially emerges in the late adolescent or early teenage years . . . In a culture driven by the desire to receive value, more Bible teaching is generally not viewed as an exercise in providing such value.”

D. We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs.

1. The many fronts of moral compromise in this generation can be directly traced to biblical illiteracy in the pews and the absence of biblical preaching and teaching in our homes and churches.

2. Without knowledge of God’s word one cannot understand it - Eph 3:5; Ps. 119:97-104

a. Ephesians 3:5 (NKJV) - 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

b. Psalm 119:97-104 (NKJV) - 97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.
   98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts. 101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. 102 I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me. 103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

3. Without knowledge of God’s word one cannot have true faith - Rom 10:14-17; 1 Thes 2:13

a. Romans 10:14-17 (NKJV) - 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word
of God.

b. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV) - 13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

4. Destruction will come upon those without knowledge of God’s word - Hos 4:6; Mt 15:14
   a. Hosea 4:6 (NKJV) - 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.
   b. Matthew 15:14 (NKJV) - 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

V. How We Should Respond To These Changes
   A. Individually:
      1. Develop A Genuine Love For The Truth - 2 Thes 2:10-12; Ps 119:97-104; 2 Pet 2:2
         a. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (NKJV) - 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
         b. Psalm 119:97-104 (NKJV) - 97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. 98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts. 101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. 102 I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me. 103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.
         c. 2 Peter 2:2 (NKJV) - 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

2. Read & Study God’s Word Daily - Acts 17:11,12; Psalm 1:2
   a. Acts 17:11 (NKJV) - 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.
      (1) Acts 17:12 (NKJV) - 12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.
   b. Psalm 1:2 (NKJV) - 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

3. Use God’s Word To Mold & Control Our Thoughts, Lives & Homes! - 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph 6:1-4
   a. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NKJV) - 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,
   b. Ephesians 6:1-4 (NKJV) - 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: 3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” 4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.
4. Support & Encourage The Preaching of God’s Word – 2 Tim 4:1-4; Col 1:28,29; 4:2-4
   a. 
   
   2 Timothy 4:1-4 (NKJV) - 1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 
   b. 
   
   Colossians 1:28 (NKJV) - 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.
   (1) Colossians 1:29 (NKJV) - 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.
   c. 
   
   Colossians 4:2-4 (NKJV) - 2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5. Become More Active & Supportive Of The Church - Heb 10:24,25
   a. 
   
   Hebrews 10:24 (NKJV) - 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
   (1) Hebrews 10:25 (NKJV) - 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

B. In TEACHING OTHERS:
   1. We MUST set forth a GOOD example - Mat 5:13-16; Ep. 5:8–14; Phi. 2:15
      a. 
      
      Matthew 5:13-16 (NKJV) - 13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
      b. 
      
      Ephesians 5:8-14 (NKJV) - 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”
      c. 
      
      Philippians 2:15 (NKJV) - 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

2. We need to have an understanding of where others are coming from - Acts 19:1-6; Eph 4:15
   a. 
   
   Acts 19:1-6 (NKJV) - 1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy
Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

b. **Ephesians 4:15 (NKJV)** - 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

3. Be patient - Many will NOT understand why some things are wrong - **1 Pet 4:4,5; Jno. 7:17; Ro. 12:2; Col. 1:9; 1 Th. 4:1–3; 5:18; 2 Tim 4:2**

   a. **1 Peter 4:4 (NKJV)** - 4 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.

      (1) **1 Peter 4:5 (NKJV)** - 5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

b. **Romans 12:2 (NKJV)** - 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

c. **Colossians 1:9 (NKJV)** - 9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

d. **1 Thessalonians 4:1-3 (NKJV)** - 1 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

e. **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)** - 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

f. **2 Timothy 4:2 (NKJV)** - 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

4. Be equipped to gently answer questions pertaining to evidences & why we can trust the Bible - **1 Pet 3:15**

   a. **1 Peter 3:15 (NKJV)** - 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

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VI. In Conclusion:

A. We have noted four aspects of A TIMES THAT ARE CHANGING

1. The Reality: Things Are Changing
2. Some Reasons Things Are Changing
3. Consequences of These Changes
4. How We Should Respond To These Changes

B. Our Way or God’s Way - It surely does matter

1. What is your attitude towards the Scriptures? – **Ps 119:97-104**

   a. **Psalm 119:97-104 (NKJV)** - 97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. 98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts. 101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. 102 I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me. 103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 Through Your precepts I get

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understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

2. Will we believe and stand upon what God teaches in His word? – Jer 6:16; Ep 6:10-17; 2 Tim 3:15-17
   a. Jeremiah 6:16 (NKJV) - 16 Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’
   b. Ephesians 6:10-17 (NKJV) - 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;
   c. 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (NKJV) - 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

3. Will we always seek to make the proper application of scripture? – 2 Tim 2:15; Heb 5:11-14
   a. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV) - 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
   b. Hebrews 5:11-14 (NKJV) - 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

4. Will we seek to share our faith - Eph 4:15; 1 Thes 1:8
   a. Ephesians 4:15 (NKJV) - 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—
   b. 1 Thessalonians 1:8 (NKJV) - 8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

C. The term “Christian” means being a follower of Christ -
   1. One who is NOT following Jesus’ teaching is NOT a Christian - Col. 3:17; 1 Pet 4:16
      a. Colossians 3:17 (NKJV) - 17 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.
      b. 1 Peter 4:16 (NKJV) - 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

D. One is NOT following Christ if he/she is NOT following His word - Jn 8:32-34
   1. John 8:32-34 (NKJV) - 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” 33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?” 34 Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.
2. We NEED to be genuine followers of Jesus - ARE YOU? - YOU CAN BE! - Mat 11:28-30

a. Matthew 11:28-30 (NKJV) - 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”