

# IF CHRISTIANS ARE PECULIAR PEOPLE – ARE YOU?

The above question will be addressed in the context of two Scriptures: **Titus 2:14** and **1 Peter 2:9**.

**Titus 2:14** <sup>14</sup> *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own **peculiar** people, zealous for good works.*

**1 Peter 2:9** <sup>9</sup> *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

The phrases **peculiar people** as used by the apostles (Peter and Paul) comes from the Old King James Version and is not seen in the Modern English Translations including the New King James Version. This is because all the time the Old King James Version was translated, the word **peculiar** which is **periposisis** in Greek, was often used to refer to something belonging to someone, as in someone's property. If we look up the word **peculiar** in a deep dictionary today, we would still see that is one of several meanings this word can have.

Probably the most common usage of the word **peculiar** today is referring to someone or something that is strange, odd or uncommon. In the verses quoted, Peter and Paul are not saying that Christians are odd or unusual people even though the world looks at us that way. What these passages are communicating is that Christians or believers are people who belong to God, they are His own possession. Another way of saying it is that Christians are **God's special people**.

As we compare the different English translations of these verses and consider the alternative meanings of the word **peculiar** it becomes clear that **peculiar** is referring to Christians as **special people** because they were chosen from before the foundation of the earth to be **God's own possession**. Christians are different from the world because they are being transformed by the in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

While it is true that Christians are different, it is the believers standing as the adopted children of God and God's special people that make us peculiar.

Many brethren professed to be God's children but the peculiarity or the holy living required is lacking. The Hebrew people of Jesus day thought that because they were inheritors of their kingdom of God regardless of their personal status relating to sin.

Jesus was teaching some of the **believing Jews** and told them that if they would continue to be His disciples indeed and they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. They answered **we be of Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man.**

The Jews were people laden with iniquities yet they felt they were God's people while rejecting His Son and continuing in sin because they are of the seed of Abraham. Today, we have a generation of people laden with iniquity yet making a profession of godliness since they have been baptized into the kingdom of God which is the church of Christ. Little does our profession amount to, if we fail to live according to God's word. And what does the word of God say we should do to be **peculiar people**? For one to be **peculiar** in the context of the lesson, one must reflect it in his Christian living and Christian character.

## CHRISTIAN LIVING

The Bible not only provides the instruction and teaching needed for one to become a Christian, but it also gives guidance concerning one's life. The Christian life involves a commitment to become the kind of person that pleases God. The Bible provides instructions regarding the social, moral and behavioural code for Christians. We are called **ambassadors of Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:20** <sup>20</sup> *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

- ✓ The Christian is characterized by humility, compassion, self control, moral purity, honesty, integrity, concern for others e.t.c
- ✓ Christians worship God. They follow the guidance of the Bible in worship.
- ✓ Christians know, respect and study God's word - **2 Timothy 2:15** <sup>15</sup> *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- ✓ Prayers is a continuous act of this new life - **1 Thessalonians 5:17** <sup>17</sup> *pray without ceasing.*
- ✓ Unreserved commitment to doing the will of God is also paramount in every aspect of life for the obedient believer.

**Luke 9:23-27, 57-62** <sup>23</sup> Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? <sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. <sup>27</sup> But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God." <sup>57</sup> Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." <sup>58</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." <sup>59</sup> Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." <sup>60</sup> Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." <sup>61</sup> And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." <sup>62</sup> But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

**Matthew 6:33-34** <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble

## CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Christian character is developed as one follows the teachings of Christ and the Bible. The new birth that results in one becoming a Christian is the beginning of a lifetime process of transforming one's character to be more like Christ. Consider the teachings of **Romans 12:1-2** <sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> 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.

What characterizes the transformed person? Many passages define the Christian.

Love is the dominant trait of a true follower of Christ. The apostle Matthew records this conversation in **Matthew 22:36-40** <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to

him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment.<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

John emphasized the requirement that one practice and possess Christian love in numerous passages:

- **John 14:15**<sup>15</sup> “If you love Me, keep My commandments.
- **John 15:12**<sup>12</sup> This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- **1 John 3:16**<sup>16</sup> By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
- **1 John 3:18**<sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
- **1 John 4:7-8**<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- **1 John 4:19**<sup>19</sup> We love Him because He first loved us.
- **1 John 5:3**<sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

The application and incorporation of love into one’s life results in numerous character traits. Consider Peter’s teaching in **2 Peter 1:5-10**<sup>5</sup> But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, <sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, <sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. <sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.

Another passage that helps define the character of Christians is **Galatians 5:22-23**<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Paul encouraged the Ephesians brethren to be of Christian character as he wrote to them - **Ephesians 4:1-3**<sup>1</sup> I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup> with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **Ephesians 4:32**<sup>32</sup> And be

kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Other traits encouraged in the Scriptures include:

- **Honesty and truthfulness** - **Colossians 3:9** <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds
- **Wisdom** - **James 3:17** <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.
- **Obedient heart** - **Romans 6:17** <sup>17</sup>But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.
- **Ability to sacrifice** - **Philippians 2:4-5** <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus
- **Respect for others** - **Philippians 2:3** <sup>3</sup>Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.
- **To be morally pure** - **1 Timothy 5:22** <sup>22</sup>Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.
- **Prayerfulness** - **1 Thessalonians 5:17** <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing

## CONCLUSION

God has given in His word and it is our duty to apply them in our lives and if we diligently apply it, it will have positive impact on our living and character, this in turn will determine if we are **peculiar** people as alluded to by apostles Peter and Paul. Unless one is part of this **peculiar** people, one cannot be referred to as Christian indeed.

Show me who is a **peculiar** Christian and I will show you his Christian life and character.