



STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE

TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 24

NO ONE HAS MADE A GREATER DIFFERENCE THAN JESUS.
TO BE HIS FOLLOWER MEANS TO STAND UP AND BE
COUNTED – AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE

24 – STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

Irish alternative music band, **The Script**, who've shared the stage with U2 and Paul McCartney, on their debut album sing, "You've gotta stand for something or you'll fall for anything."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR (1929-68), was someone who stood for something. A third-generation American Baptist clergyman and Nobel laureate, he was one of the world's best advocates of nonviolent social change. He emerged as a leader of the American civil rights movement against racial oppression after organising the famous 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. An eloquent speaker, he pressed for equal treatment for blacks and for the eradication of institutionalised racial inequalities.



On October 16, 1962, King met with President Kennedy at the White House. In 1963 he led a peaceful march between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, where he delivered his most famous speech, "I Have a Dream."

"I have a dream that my four little children will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character, I have a dream..."

Time magazine named King "Man of the Year" (January 3, 1964). On July 2 he witnessed the signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by President Lyndon Johnson. It guaranteed blacks the right to vote, access to public accommodations and authorised desegregation of public facilities and schools. Awarded the Nobel Peace

Prize on December 10, 1964, he was the 12th American, third black, and at 35, the youngest person to win the coveted prize.

Martin Luther King stood up for what he believed in, but at great personal cost. In 1956 his home was bombed. He was stabbed in the chest in 1958. Twelve times he was arrested for his nonviolent protest and spent time in solitary confinement. In 1966, he was assaulted with stones as he led marchers in Chicago.

Finally, while involved in a peaceful protest in Memphis, Martin Luther King, Jr, was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Some 100,000 attended his funeral and millions watched it on television. April 7, 1968, was declared a national day of mourning for King. In 1983 the third Monday in January was designated a federal holiday in honour of his birthday, and his Atlanta birthplace and gravesite were made a national historic site. He stood up to be counted and made a difference. (Flip Schulke,

King Remembered; Clayborne Carson, *King's Biography*)

NELSON MANDELA (1918-) is another who stood up to be counted. In his fight against apartheid he was imprisoned for 27 years, from 1962 to 1990.

Born the son of a Tembu tribal chief, he became a lawyer and in 1944 joined the African National Congress (ANC), a civil rights group. In 1956 Mandela went on trial for treason, but was acquitted in 1961.

In the early 1960s Mandela led the ANC's paramilitary wing, "Spear of the Nation." Arrested again in August 1962 and while in prison he was convicted of sabotage and treason. In June 1964 he was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island.

Mandela's statements in court during these trials are classics in the history of the resistance to apartheid and they have been an inspiration to all who have opposed it. He ends with these words:

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.



During this period Mandela became a worldwide symbol of resistance to white domination in South Africa. He rejected offers made for remission of sentence in exchange for abandoning his political agenda against apartheid.

Mandela was released by President F W de Klerk on February 11, 1990. He assumed leadership of the ANC. He led negotiations with the government for a new constitution granting political power to the country's black majority. In 1991 the government repealed the last of the apartheid laws. Mandela and de Klerk shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts. In May 1994, after the country's first national elections in which blacks could vote, Mandela became president of South Africa. (Microsoft Encarta, 1994; *Time*, Jan 6, 1986; Paul Brians (ed), *Reading About the World*)

To be a follower of Jesus is to stand up and be counted - and make a difference! Sadly, too many professed Christians aren't doing that! Researcher George Barna, in his book *Generation Next*, reports on a survey of 13-to-18-year-old teenagers in the USA, including both Christians and non-Christians. His findings are disturbing.

He found that the lifestyles, attitudes and beliefs were "virtually identical among Christian and non-Christian teenagers." In case we think, "Well, they're teens, what do you expect?" Barna found a very close parallel between what Christian teenagers believe and what their parents believe. Christian adults are conforming to society standards, not the Bible, and their children are following. He says:

"During this survey, seeing how teenage believers deal with life was consistently startling. It did not take much of an imagination to wonder sometimes if the

Christian faith of these young people really makes any difference at all in how they think about, perceive and handle life....”

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? Today, in Western society, we live in a **postmodern culture** that has lost direction. The prevailing world view is that life is the product of matter plus time plus chance, therefore

meaningless. **In the area of morals and values everything is relative.** The individual has become his or her own authority. What is needed is a radical Christianity that will stand against the spirit of our age.

In *Real Teens*, Barna says we have mastered the art of drawing a crowd [marketing, through music, drama, etc.], but at the expense of ministry - impacting lives of teenagers for Jesus. "Perhaps the single most important challenge facing youth workers today is to help young people understand and own absolute moral truth. Until we champion this issue, and help teens to master it, we are just throwing mud on the gaping holes in a dike."

The Bible presents only two groups in the world before Jesus comes again - those who've accepted the true gospel and followed Jesus and those who've conformed to Babylon's false gospel and worship. This guide is a challenge to follow Jesus all the way - out of gratitude for what He's done for us.

The Gift of Salvation

1. How much does salvation cost us to obtain? Ephesians 2:8, 9 (page 827 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

For it is by _____ you have been saved, through _____ - and this not from yourselves, it is the _____ of God - not by _____, so that no-one can boast.

2. How much did providing salvation cost Jesus? Philippians 2:5-8 (page 831)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature _____, ...being found in appearance as a _____, he humbled himself and became obedient to _____ - even _____ on a cross!

3. How does the gift of salvation become ours? Acts 16:30, 31 (page 784)

_____ in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.



We are saved by faith alone in Jesus that leads to a commitment to Him as Lord. There are two extremes people can fall into: **liberalism** on the one hand, and legalism on the other. **Liberalism** is the view that all we have to do is believe and then we can do as we please. **Legalism** is the opposite view, that somehow our obedience or good works contribute to our salvation.

Our Response to God's Gift

4. What is the response of those who really accept this gift?

I DESIRE to do your WILL, O my God: your law is within my HEART. (Psalm 40:8, page 400)

5. How far must we be willing to go for Jesus? Luke 9:23 (page 733)

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must _____ himself and take up his _____ and _____ me."

6. What prayer did Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemane that should be the attitude of every Christian? Matthew 26:36-46 (page 703)

My Father, if it is possible, may this cup _____. Yet _____, _____.

The cup is symbolic for deep suffering and sorrow. Here it refers to Jesus, who knew no sin, accepting the consequences of our sin - separation from God. Jesus could've abandoned us and let us suffer the penalty for our sin - eternal death. His humanity shrank from the task, but He chose to do the will of His Father and save us.

The cross that we are asked to bear is not a wooden or metal cross, but the cross of self-denial. When our will conflicts with God's will, we choose God's will no matter how difficult that may appear for us. In the long run, God's will is always the best way for us.

Fellowship and Worship

7. What counsel does the writer of Hebrews give to Christians as they see the day of Jesus' second coming approaching? Hebrews 10:23-25 (page 851)

Let us _____, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us _____ one another—and all the more as you see the _____ [Jesus' coming].

Just as burning logs on a fire will die out when separated, so Christians are in danger of losing their faith when they neglect fellowship with other Christians.

8. How is the One whom we are called to worship described? Revelation 14:7 (page 874)

Worship _____ the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

9. Which commandment is referred to in Revelation 14:7?

Remember the REMEMBER day by keeping it holy.... For in six days the Lord MADE the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he RESTED on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord BLESSED the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11, page 54)

The Sabbath is one of the greatest gifts of God that reminds us of our need for fellowship and worship. It's for our benefit. It tells us that we're not alone in the universe - God is our Father. In all the busyness of life, we need to take time to be with God.

Because it has to do with time that is invisible, rather than with tangible things, it's well suited to be a gauge of our heavenly-mindedness. It's the only commandment of the 10 that people can flagrantly break, and yet be accepted in respectable society. It's the only one people couldn't have thought out by themselves.

As such it's specifically the commandment that shows our loyalty to God. When Israel came out of Egypt and God gave them manna to eat, the Sabbath was used as a test of their willingness to follow God (Exodus 16:4, 5, 23-28, page 51). Their failure to honour the Sabbath was the reason for the Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 17:19-27, page 549). After the Babylonian captivity Nehemiah challenged the Israelites to honour God by faithful Sabbath-keeping (Nehemiah 13:15-22, page 353).

It's only God's expressed preference for the seventh day and His own example regarding it, that distinguishes it from the other days of the week. Only the person who wishes to do exactly as God says will be concerned with obedience in this matter.

10. Into which two groups is the entire world divided in the last days? Revelation 14:9, 10, 12 (page 874)

If anyone _____ the beast and his image and _____ his mark on the forehead or on the hand... ..the _____ who _____ God's commandments and remain _____ to Jesus.

As we have said before, it's the gospel that divides the world into two groups. They are those who have accepted the gift of salvation and those who, sadly, have not. They are called the sheep and the goats and the wheat and the weeds (Matthew 25:31-46; 13:24-30, 36-43). The issue in the last days is true worship versus false worship - loyalty versus disloyalty.

Working for God

11. While we're saved by God's grace through faith and not by our works, how does James, the brother of Jesus, say we show our faith? James 2:14-19 (page 855)

What good is it, my brothers, if a man _____ to have faith but has _____? Can such faith save him? ... In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by _____, is _____.

But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith _____, and I will show you my faith _____.

James is addressing people who do not have genuine faith. They only claim to have faith. Good works will always accompany true faith. Remember the story of tightrope-walker Blondin and the Niagara Falls (Guide 8, Get in the Wheelbarrow)? True faith always leads to action - getting in the wheelbarrow.



12. What did Jesus say about our influence as Christians? Matthew 5:13-16 (page 683)

You are the _____ of the earth.... You are the _____ of the world.

Salt is used for flavouring and preserving food. To be of value it has to be mixed with food. Light is of no value if it is hidden. So it is through personal contact and association that people are reached by the saving power of the gospel. The strongest argument in favour of Christianity are Christians who care about the needs of others.

13. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, what behaviour reveals the difference between the two groups?

Matthew 25:31-46 (page 702)

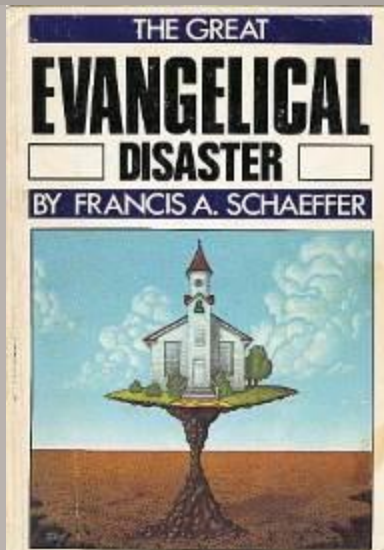
For I was _____ and you gave me something to _____, I was _____ and you gave me something to _____, I was a _____ and you _____ me in, I needed _____ and you _____ me, I was _____ and you _____ after me, I was in _____ and you came to _____ me. The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the _____ of these _____ of mine, _____."

Called to Make a Difference

Both Martin Luther King, Jr, and Nelson Mandela stood for causes they believed in. Both were prepared to make great sacrifices for the benefit of others. In doing so they did make a difference. No-one has made a greater difference than Jesus. To be His follower means to stand up and be counted – and make a difference. Jesus is calling us to be radical Christians, to stand against a secular culture that is dying.

Theologian and thinker Francis Schaeffer has said:

"One of the greatest injustices we do to our young people is to ask them to be conservative. Christianity today is not conservative, but revolutionary... Today we are an absolute minority."



The counter-culture of the 1960s has become the culture of today. Christianity should now be the counter-culture. To be committed Christians is to be salt and light to this dying culture. The greatest need today is for consistent Christian living in sharing the good news about Jesus. The way we live and the way we act says more about Christianity than all the preaching by the greatest evangelists. **Would you like to stand up and be counted and make a difference for Jesus?**

Yes .

I can see that how we worship God and the day of worship is important to God.



How would you like to express and show your gratitude for what you've learned about Jesus and what He's done for you?

In what way can your life make a difference for Jesus in your part of the world?

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