



Devotional Study Guide Journal

January 18th

The Phantom Christian

See illustration below.

“Coming to Jesus is as wonderful as believing in Jesus, but living for Him is difficult.” We probably never said these words, but this is what we came to believe. The joy we knew “the hour we first believed” was crowded out by religious expectations and led to misery, but we didn’t notice. Like the proverbial frog enjoying his warm bath became someone’s dinner, we didn’t notice until we were burned out how miserable we’d become.

We didn’t understand this glorious truth: We are to walk out our Christian life in the same manner we received Him—by grace through faith.

Colossians 2:6-10

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ *rooted and built up in Him and established in the **faith**, as you have been taught, abounding in it (faith) with thanksgiving.*

⁸ *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

⁹ *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*

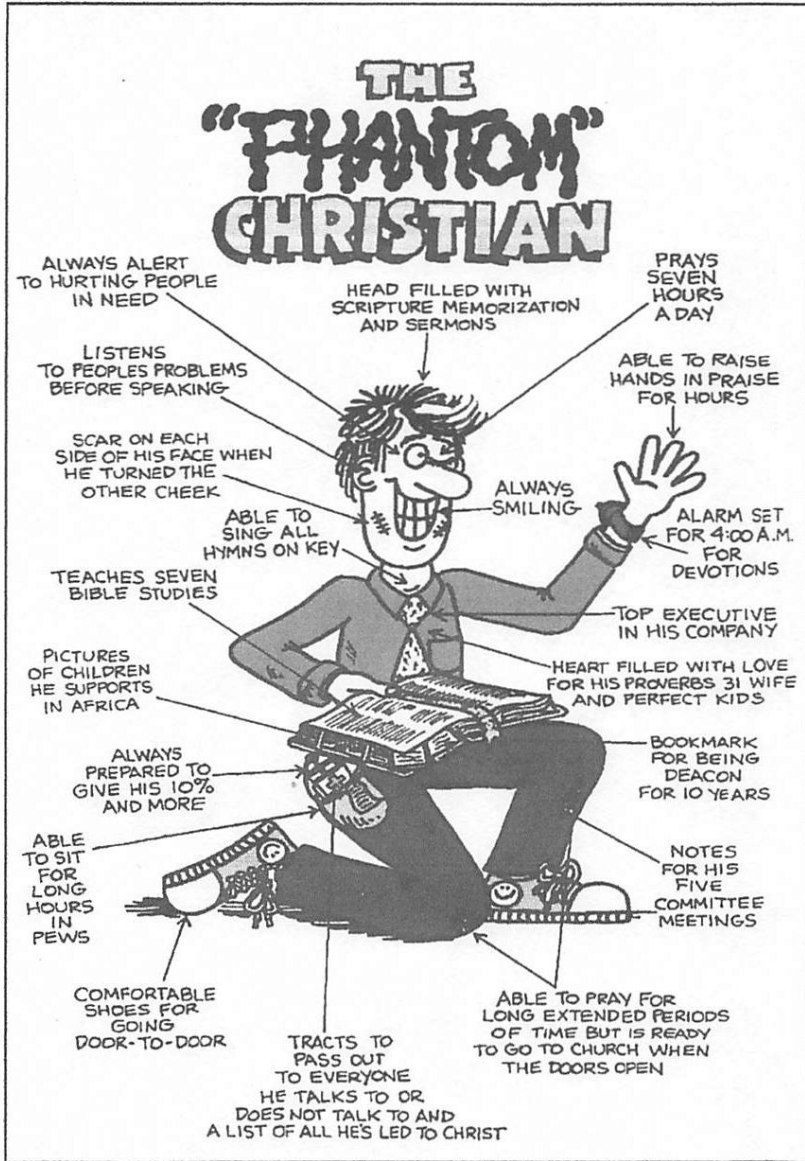
¹⁰ *and **you are complete in Him**, who is the head of all principality and power.*

We receive Jesus by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9), and that is how we walk **in Him**. We are to be rooted and built up **in Him** and established in the **faith (belief)** abounding it faith with thanksgiving. You might want to read that again. We walk by grace through faith not by law through works.

Notice the warning that immediately follows! Don’t let anyone cheat you!. I would add, “Don’t cheat yourselves.” It’s easy to blame those who taught us a long list of religious expectations, but if you have a Bible and can read, at one point you have to take responsibility for what you believed and practiced and may have even taught. We are told to “prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.”

It isn't through the traditions of Christianity that we are saved or live this life and that is because all of God's fullness dwell in Jesus and we are **complete in Jesus!**

For years I have loved this illustration found in Bob George's book Classic Christianity Illustrated.¹



¹ From Classic Christianity Illustrated by Bob George, Used with permission, Bob George Ministries, <https://bobgeorge.net>

The title of this illustration implies this person doesn't really exist, but believe me, we did our best to do EVERYTHING we were told would bring us closer to God, have more of the power of God, please God, and advance in ministry—show ourselves to be “pillars in the house of our God.” As the list grew with each new Christian fad that developed in Consensus Christianity, we would pile that on top of it all.

Jesus came to give us everlasting life, not only in the world to come, but as we walk out this life by grace through faith. If this picture looks way too familiar, ask God to help you to be set free to understand the freedom we have when we understand that we are complete in Him. Remember also that we are to walk in Him, in the same way we received Him—by grace through faith.

