**Word Pictures of Christianity**

Pictures aid our comprehension tremendously. Even before we could read, illustrations “told the story” that our parent was reading. And who hasn’t skipped over the written instructions (or failed to comprehend them) and gone straight to the illustrative diagrams to assemble something? To greater or lesser degrees, we are all “visual learners.” Perhaps this has something to do with diminished reading comprehension skills in our “visual world,” but point is that pictures help. God knew this. He gave us many word pictures in the sacred text. So let’s consider just a few of the many enlightening images of Christianity He provides to help us understand who, what, and how we are supposed to be:

* **Builder**, 1Corinthians 3:10-15. A Christian is to be *constructive*, building on the proper *foundation* of Jesus Christ, and as a *wise masterbuilder* is also *careful how he builds upon it.* We are to be *builders* rather than demolition experts, cf. 2Corinthians 10:8. Are you *building* for the Lord, or just watching and applauding the efforts of others? Or even worse, are you *tearing down* what you ought to be *building up?*
* **Farmer**, Matthew 13:3-9,18-23; 2Timothy 2:6; James 5:7. A Christian is to *sow the seed everywhere* (on *hard, rocky, thorny,* and *good* soil) rather than being mere *soil-testers.*  The Lord expects *laborers in the field* who are *hard-working* and *patient* instead of spiritual loafers content to selfishly and myopically eat the seed. Are you *sowing the seed* without partiality, with patience and diligence?
* **Soldier,** Ephesians 6:10-17; 2Timothy 2:3-4. A Christian is to be *fully-armored* and *“strong in the Lord,”* having freed himself from the *entanglements* and *affairs* of *everyday life* that he might *please the One who enlisted him.* There can be no conscientious objectors in this battle, nor will those M.I.A. be excused. Courage, fortitude, and undying allegiance are required, and will certainly be rewarded. Have you allied yourself with the Lord, and properly equipped yourself to engage the enemy? Or has spiritual pacifism become the course you pursue? Many take up arms initially only to become A.W.O.L. later in life. Are you still “in the Lord’s army” and actively engaged in the fight?
* **Athlete**, 1Corinthians 9:24-27; 2Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:1. A Christian is one *runs the spiritual race* of life *according the rules,* with great *self-control* and *undaunted purpose.* Though ever-vigilant, he recognizes it as a *marathon* rather than a *sprint* and strives to *run with endurance* the *course set before him.* Are you *running the race* the right way(s), or just passively sitting on the sidelines in the shade? The *right way* receives the *crown of life,* but those who fail will be *disqualified.*

There are passages that teach these same lessons without the added benefit of such vivid visuals. But God knew we did better with instructions that had illustrations. So, He graciously provided these and many more to help us “get the picture.” I hope they do just that! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)