

SWIMMING UPSTREAM IN A PROFIT-DRIVEN WORLD**By C.C. Simpson**

Follow Christ in the marketplace long enough, and you will feel it. A quiet pressure, always in the same direction. The room wants you to move with it. Close the deal the way everyone closes it. Keep the numbers happy and keep your convictions to yourself. The current is real, and it runs toward profit.

The Bible often shows this collision. Simon the magician watched the apostles and tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit like another transaction (Acts 8:18–24). Demetrius the silversmith started a riot in Ephesus when the gospel cut into his idol trade (Acts 19:24). In Philippi, a slave girl was freed from demonic oppression, and her owners exploded, because their income vanished the moment her chains fell off (Acts 16:16–19).

Notice what actually lit the fuse. In each case, it was money. When Jesus Christ advances, someone's revenue usually feels it first, and that is where the pushback starts. None of this should surprise a believer. The gospel turns a person around. Everyone else drifts with the culture, while the disciple of Jesus turns to face it and starts swimming upstream.

Picture a packed city sidewalk. Hundreds of people moving the same way, phones out, coffee in hand. Then one man turns and walks straight into the crowd. First, the puzzled looks. Then the shoulder bumps. Somebody mutters. Somebody demands to know why he will not move along with everyone else. Faithfulness to Christ often feels like that.

The Gospel rewires a person from the inside. Desires change. Motives shift. Profit climbs off the throne and becomes a tool. Decisions stop bowing to material gain and start answering to obedience. The focus moves from self to Christ. And when that happens, things get exposed. Jesus said it plainly: "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19). Light does not have to shout to disrupt a room. It just shines.

A believer who works with integrity exposes assumptions people never thought to question. Practices that always seemed normal suddenly feel uneasy in the light. Conversations get quieter. Decisions take longer. Lines show up where nobody drew one before. No one may say why. The light unsettles the room anyway. Greed works best in the dark; when the lights come on, it squirms. Some will feel exposed. Some will assume you are judging them when you have not said a word. Others push back because your obedience interrupts the drift they were already following and enjoying.

Scripture braces us for it: "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). Most of the time, it will not come with headlines. It shows up more quietly. A deal that evaporates. A promotion that skips you. Invitations that stop arriving. Pressure, subtle but still pressure.

香港工商基督徒協會 (CBMC Hong Kong Ltd)

地址：香港上環禧利街2號東寧大廈11樓1102室 Tel: (852) 2805-1923

Email: enquiry@cbmc.org.hk Web: www.cbmc.org.hk

支持本會使命，服侍工商界及職場，請下載奉獻表格

<https://www.cbmc.org.hk/file-download.html>

But friction is not failure. Sometimes it is the clearest indicator that the prevailing current is real, and you are no longer floating in it. Dead fish drift downstream. Living fish swim against the current. God has always used men and women willing to walk the wrong way down a crowded sidewalk. Not loud. Not smug. Just steady. And through that quiet obedience, He wakes people up who never knew they were drifting. Some of the ones irritated by your walk today may thank Him that you refused to turn around.

© 2026. C.C. Simpson is dedicated to fostering a bold and triumphant Christian faith within the global marketplace. Before becoming President of CBMC International, Chris dedicated 28 years to a distinguished career in the public sector – as a Commanding Officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, and serving in the U. S. Secret Service, responsible for protecting seven American presidents and leading elite teams in complex, high-stakes international missions. With his wife Ana, Chris resides in Boca Raton, Florida.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Where is the current pushing you to drift at work now? Name the specific thing the room wants you to go along with that you know is not the right thing to do.
2. In the New Testament book of Acts, the pushback was rarely about doctrine. It was about threatened income. Where might resistance to your integrity actually be mostly about someone's profit, maybe even your own?
3. Friction is not failure. Where has faithfulness cost you something lately – a deal, a promotion, an invitation – and how are you perceiving and responding to that cost?
4. Think of someone you know who has successfully swum against the current of profits, even if it proved costly in the short-term. How did that person respond? What was your reaction to their actions or decisions?

Challenge for This Week

Name one place where you need to keep swimming upstream this week instead of drifting. Say it out loud to your CBMC team or a trusted discipleship partner, and ask them to pray that you would stand firm with quiet courage. Then watch for the friction.

When the friction comes, as it most likely will, take it as evidence that you are still alive in the current, and not as proof that you have failed.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Matthew 5:14-16; John 3:19-21; Acts 16:16-24; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:11; 2 Timothy 3:2

香港工商基督徒協會 (CBMC Hong Kong Ltd)

地址：香港上環禧利街2號東寧大廈11樓1102室 Tel: (852) 2805-1923

Email: enquiry@cbmc.org.hk Web: www.cbmc.org.hk

支持本會使命，服侍工商界及職場，請下載奉獻表格

<https://www.cbmc.org.hk/file-download.html>
