

3 Ways Religion Destroys the Work of Christ

I want to be vivid, I am broken in heart, and crying in my spirit as I write these words. I am coming from a very deep and passionate place of praise to my Lord and Savior by which I write.

When I first met the Lord, I was passionate about Him. I ran with the greatest of speed. I devoured the Bible day and night. My goal was to read the Word of God 40 hours per week. I never reached my goal, however I read my Bible, sang praise songs and prayed daily for up to 10 hours, the average being 3.

Why am I telling you all this? I can promise you, it is not to say that I did anything right. It is not to say, you should do that too. I am only telling you this, to prepare you for the reason I am writing today. This will be the most humiliating thing I have ever shared with you.

Seven years had passed as I had been chasing after God. My husband did not share the same passion that I had. He had been raised in a church and, I guess for the point of survival, was not willing to break the hardness around his heart to run anymore. Because he was not running at the same speed, I became disillusioned about our marriage. I wanted to be married to an "on-fire Christian". I wanted to pastor a church, lead worship, pray for the sick, be an evangelist and go on mission trips. There was no sacrifice too high, to give to this great Lord, Jesus.

I did everything I knew how to do. I talked about God. I prayed that my husband would change. I talked to him about my passion and asked him to come on board. According to him, he was on board. I never see him read his Bible, pray or worship.

I knew, based on the Word of God, when we love Him we obey Him. I did not see an obedient, on-fire, can't-wait-to-please-God husband.

I can honestly say, my attitude about my husband became worse and worse with each day. As I became more radiant and passionate about Jesus, he remained the same, sometimes worse. I was going to ministry school, and I was part of an international ministry called Cleansing Stream Ministries. I had gone to one year of Bible college, and felt like a failure, because my husband did not share the same passion as I did.

I was at a Cleansing Stream Retreat, and at the retreat everyone worships and then receives prayer. They always pray against pride first, before any other category. When it was my turn for prayer, I told the person praying for me, that I needed a lot of prayer for this. That although my heart was pure for God, I struggled with always wanting to be right. They brought four people to pray for me. I stood there as four people prayed for me, and for a long time I felt no change. They would stop and ask, "Do you feel like you are free from this?" I said, "No!"

I wanted to remain free from frustration, so I said, "Please keep praying!" Within a few minutes, my husband's face appeared in my mind and Jesus very clearly said to me, "You are no better than he is. Just because you read your bible, pray and worship for hours each day does not make you better than your husband. You are not better than anyone because you do those things. Spending time in My Word does not make you better than anyone".

I fell to the ground and cried. The **religious pride** had been removed, and I saw myself in full view. **Religious pride** is an ugly, detestable thing. It harms innocent people and is counter-productive for the work of Christ. So many Christians

are full of religious pride and, like me, don't see it. My heart broke, as I laid there exposed to a living, loving, restoring God. My heart was not breaking for me—it broke for my husband. I thought: How has he put up with me? **I am not that important.** I don't get it, I would have left me a long time ago.

When the session was over, I went to the pay phone, called my husband and apologized. I told him how much I loved him, and that I was sorry. He was shocked and happy, yet had no clue why I was saying what I was saying.

What is your story? Are you a Christian? Do you know Christians? Are you a victim of **self-righteous** Christians? What can we do?

How can we detect a **religious mindset** that aims to destroy the work of Christ?

1. A **religious mindset** aims to destroy. Is what you are doing helping others love Christ and people more, or do you bring forth critical attitudes?

2. A **religious mindset** believes they have something to offer and it makes them feel good (prideful) when they offer it. Like, I pray for someone, then have to tell the world of my great praying techniques. Do you have to feel important and valued around your peers at church? That is **religious pride**.

3. A **religious mindset** will stop at nothing to achieve its goal of destruction. If we are using any form of manipulation to achieve our goals, we are way off base. Arguing, fighting, name calling, using Scripture as a weapon and bringing harm to others, just to prove we are right, is not advancing the cause of Christ. Do you plot, scheme and meditate on proving a point for **religious** reasons?

Points to remember: When Jesus is involved, restoration happens. When he is not involved, division happens. The whole

point of Jesus is to restore ... **relationships**. If we are harming people with our “**righteousness**” we are not righteous at all. Righteous means right standing with God. We can’t be standing right with Him if we are bringing forth division because we aim to be “right.” That is called **pride** and arrogance, not **righteousness**.

In closing: I pray that the body of Christ will do whatever it takes to become unimportant, so that the real cause of Christ will become the most important thing to us. If you are not a Christian and have been disillusioned by the whole idea, I just want to say on behalf of all the dumb-dumbs like me, “I am sorry if we have ever hurt you, because we were more concerned about being right than bringing forth a “right standing with Christ.” Please forgive me and know that Christ is way cooler than anyone I have ever met in church, including, but not limited to, myself. I have sincerely learned the importance of insignificance.

I pray that you will desire to be insignificant, too. Please leave a comment, question or praise. I really want to see us all do the work of Christ, and pride has to go for that to happen. **I am not that important.**

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