

5 More Ways Christians Use God to Excuse Ungodly Behavior

Jesus dealt with the very interesting issue of using Scripture to justify or excuse unbiblical practices. We see this mentioned in Mark 7:9-13 when the Jewish leaders of His day replaced honoring and caring for their parents with offering sacrifices to God, which they called “Corbin.”

Also, as we read the Gospels, we notice that even Satan knows and quotes the Bible to further his own ends (See Luke 4:9-12).

As an observer of human nature in the body of Christ, I have seen this kind of behavior over and over again: people using or hiding behind God to cover up their real motives, to run from responsibility, to manipulate others or to justify their ungodly behavior towards others.

In part 1 of this article, I shared the first five ways people justify wicked behavior. Here are five more.

6. When people replace practical living with mystical practice.

There are some leaders I have heard teach who actually think that they can set up righteous governments on the earth merely by making declarations of faith as the “*ecclesia* of God”.

I am all for prayer and intercession and believe that it is the most important arena to win the battle (since we fight not against flesh and blood, as it says in Eph. 6:12); however, praying alone without voting or nurturing leaders to stand in the gates of societal leadership is mere mysticism. This negates all the passages in the Bible that speak of the

believer working for justice, righteousness and fighting oppression. (To name a few, see the book of Proverbs, Amos and passages like Isaiah 58.)

7. When people minister out of their “false self.”

More often than we want to admit, we are all unconsciously ministering for God out of undealt with, unsurrendered and broken areas of our soul that deceive us. This all deceives us into thinking that what we are doing in ministry is for God's glory, when truthfully we do it for our name, recognition and to alleviate inner feelings of insecurity and failure.

Only when we allow the Word of God to separate soul and spirit under His blazing light can our blind spots be penetrated and we be changed into His image and likeness (see 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 4:12,13).

8. When people are motivated to do great things to satisfy their ambition.

It is very possible that many of the most impressive ministries we have witnessed in our life have been motivated more by the ambition of the minister than by a true leading of the Lord or His glory. This would explain why some leaders and or ministries do not survive or thrive during periods of testing and attack. (See 1 Cor. 3:10-15.) Unless the Lord builds the house, those who labor work in vain (see Ps. 127).

9. When people hide behind church (ecclesial) titles as an ego booster.

When I was consecrated as a bishop in 2006, many people came up to me congratulating me for my “elevation”! I was shocked when people said this because I sensed that I was being brought lower in the kingdom as a servant of Christ (read John 13), not “elevated.” I never viewed it in the same way a corporation would promote a person and give them a higher rank in a company. This illustrated to me how many people actually

see ecclesial titles as an ego booster as part of some religious, hierarchical pecking order. (Of course, I do not believe every bishop has this wrong assumption; there are many sincere bishops and pastors I know who have integrity and humility and serve God for His kingdom's sake.)

When a person longs for a position or title in the church they may be attempting to use the things of God to boost their ego instead of advancing His kingdom and glory.

10. When people constantly judge others.

When you read some of the posts on social media and see Christians acerbically attacking each other in public, you have to wonder, whose spirit they are emanating?

When a person comes to Christ, if their false self related to pride, anger, bitterness, ego and self-righteousness is not dealt with, they can easily fall into the trap of thinking their judgmental spirit is being used in service to God (see John 16:2).

As a Christian, it is possible to espouse biblical moral and social values while not allowing God to transform your inner life related to agape love, brokenness, empathy, mercy, kindness and humility. (See the Sermon on the Mount for the Jesus ethos for social, cultural and relational engagement, especially Matt. 5:1-16.)

A case in point—when Lauren Daigle appeared on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, she was castigated in public by many so-called Christians. I was disheartened when I saw this since it exposed the fact that religious, fundamentalist legalism is still rampant in the world! Why wouldn't she want to appear on a show to sing songs about Jesus in front of millions of unchurched people? As a matter of fact, I would rather be on Ellen's show than TBN, God TV, Daystar or any other Christian network since it would give me an amazing opportunity to connect millions of non-Christians to the Jesus I know and

love.

If Ellen asked Jesus to appear on her show (if hypothetically Jesus's first Advent was in our current time instead of 2000 years ago) I am sure He would have had no biblical objection since He regularly ate and fellowshiped with those not identified as righteous by the religious standards of His day. As a matter of fact, Scripture says He ate and drank with sinners (see Luke 7:34).

Unfortunately, many who castigated Lauren justified their rants by hiding behind God and His Word (which is worse than merely giving an honest opinion). Conversely, by being present in the world with those who don't know Christ, we are able to incarnate the love and person of Jesus to people without losing our identity or condoning their lifestyle.

In closing, my prayer is that those who read this will have more discernment and understand that it is possible to use the things of God related to His Word, church and behavior—to justify ungodly, unbiblical behavior.