

5 Signs of a Mean-Spirited Leader

I was astounded when a close friend of mine recently forwarded a tweet to me sent out by Dr. Chuck Swindoll a few months back that read, “The problem with mean Christians is that not enough people have confronted them and told them to get lost!”

Go Chuck go! No one can say it any clearer than that. Mean Christians are very dangerous and can kill a person spiritually, and yes, I’ve personally witnessed physical death as a result of Christians being mean toward those who aren’t mature in the Lord. This is serious stuff my friends, and Chuck’s attitude is the right one to have toward these deceived people.

You might ask, “Why is this topic of such importance?” It’s important because now, more than ever, mean Christians are really starting to have a negative effect in the body of Christ and it’s becoming more and more evident and widely discussed globally. Our adversary has been pretty effective at tricking “so-called” Christians into becoming ravenous wolves. On the outside they display compassion, but on the inside they are filled with judgmental attitudes that ultimately hurt, divide and kill.

This sounds awfully close to how Jesus describes the devil in John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy.” Now is the time for more genuine-hearted leaders like Dr. Swindoll to stand up and call out those who are living the fake Christian life. These people do nothing but make it their business to go about the body of Christ injecting poison into the genuine work of Christ, and we must do all we can to make it stop!

As a leader, it’s important that you recognize some of the

signs that can influence you toward being mean to those God has called you to lead. Jesus was clear as to how our attitude should be always in Matthew 10:16, “Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

Here are five (although I could give you 50) signs that you might be a mean-spirited leader:

1. You are quick to “accuse.” This is always found specifically in the leaders of ministries who produce mean Christians. Leaders are quick to point out the failures of others, and then put them in “time out” for a specific period of time. They do this because they are “experts” at pointing out the sin more so than they are at bringing healing and restoration. They have no clue how to deal with sin because they have spent years filling their hearts with spite instead of genuine grace. Don’t be this kind of a leader!

2. You are well-versed in the rules and regulations of your church. It’s always amazing to me how a mean leaders can fast-talk all the rules of the church, but can’t give one scripture on a particular subject if their life depended on it! Jesus was very clear in Mark 7:13 when He told the Pharisees that their rules and regulations have made God’s word of no effect. This needs to send a resounding message to leaders who lead mean ministries—your traditions that are producing spiteful Christians have chased out the Holy Spirit! When you hold up your “man-made” rules higher than God’s Word, you will be ineffective in all you do. Yes, there might be some element of success, but never God’s best. Don’t be this kind of a leader!

3. You are “critical” of other Christians. I mean, didn’t Jesus make it clear that there will be those who don’t do ministry the same as others, but not to worry, the message still points to the cross! In Mark 9:38, Jesus’ disciples were offended at the fact that there were others who were casting out demons in Jesus’ name, but were not a part of the clique!

I'm reminded of hearing one of these "mean" pastors who said to his congregation that whoever criticizes his ministry will lose rewards in Heaven! And what is so humorous about this story is that these same leaders were life-long experts at criticizing other ministries! Friends, this kind of critical spirit only brings division into the body of Christ and God says in Proverbs 6:19 that among the seven things He hates is a man or woman who brings strife into the church. Don't be this kind of a leader!

4. You use guilt and shame as a way of controlling. Mean leaders will come up with some of the most unbiblical tactics to keep people in their fold. Often times they make others believe that leaving their ministry will result in personal harm or might even lose their salvation. I've heard it said that if a married couple left a particular church that their marriage will end in divorce.

My friends, these are real curses being spoken into weak Christians. Many of these weak Christians buy into this nonsense out of pure ignorance and end eventually end up in very bad personal situations simply because mean bullies who call themselves Christians went about spewing poison into these innocent lives. Don't be this kind of a leader!

5. Your heart has been "hardened." Matthew 15:8 says, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." A Pharisee's heart is always far from God. What I have found is that when you are hard with people you are miles from God. There are lots and lots of such mean Pharisees within the church. I have had numerous opportunities to confront mean leaders whose hearts have been hardened, and many of them have refused to see the error of their leadership and have gone on to wreck so many lives.

There is a good reason why Jesus basically told his disciples in Matthew 7:22 that there will be people who will stand

before Him on the day of judgment and who thought they were doing the right thing, but will face open rejection. Mean leaders are taking a huge gamble at treating others with spite. Jesus also told his disciples in John 13:35 that the world will know we belong to Him by the “love” we show toward each other. Be this kind of a leader! Let me close with the last part of Dr. Swindoll’s tweet that I saved for last in what I pray will be a wake up call to mean leaders:

“I don’t mess with mean Christians anymore. I’m 72 years old; what have I got to lose? Seriously, I used to kowtow to these people, but they’re dangerous. They are grace-killers. They’ll drive off every new Christian you bring to church. They are enemies of the faith.”

My friends, don’t be this kind of a leader!

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