

Christians, We Must Wake Up to the Blinding Effects of Sin

"The church is physically alive, but spiritually dead."

I recently referred to a true story. A young girl, devastated by the choice her father made to leave her family for a younger woman, had a nightmare following his announcement. She dreamed that she, her mother and her sister all died in a horrific car accident. When she told her dad about the dream, he sympathetically replied, "I'm really sorry to hear that. I'm glad it was only a dream." Her response was shattering, "Dad, right before we hit, through the window I saw that you were driving the other car."

Fortunately, this man broke. He repented and worked to restore his marriage. Some of you reading this—men and women—wake up. Is this what you are doing to your family? Others reading this might ask this as well. Perhaps it's not an affair but selfish pride that makes you difficult to live with. Sadly, it is this very thing, pride and spiritual blindness, that prevent us from seeing. We are alive but spiritually dead.

Some time ago, we received the following email, "I'm leaving my husband and our two small children. I know what the Bible says, but God knows my heart. He just wants me to be happy." Another woman who was separated recently complained about her marriage but said that she was "seeking God's will" as she headed to Vegas with her boyfriend. We wanted to shout, "Wake up!" Sin blinds us from the truth, and we blame everyone and everything, instead of looking within.

Are many of us playing games with God? This is often why "Christians" bear little resemblance to Christians defined by Scripture. The cares of the world choke spiritual life out of

us, as described by Jesus in the parable of the seed and the soil. They are the walking dead, dead to the things of God. In light of this, consider the following:

- America is the No. 1 distributor of the gospel and the No. 1 distributor of pornography. The largest group of viewers are said to be kids between the ages of 12 and 17. Parents, wake up. This is happening under our watch.
- America has set millions of people free but has destroyed millions of babies.
- In America, the Bible is the best-selling book of all time, yet sexual perversion is an epidemic.
- In America, healthy marriages built this country, but divorce and selfishness are killing it.
- We read our Bibles yet degrade and dishonor our spouses.
- We quote the Bible but don't obey it.
- We're quick to point out the flaws in others but not our own.
- We go to church smiling, but anger dominates our home.
- We hate self-righteous people but rarely look in the mirror.

"Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Eph. 5:14).

Our only hope is spiritual resuscitation. Again, many go to church sporadically but would rather see a movie. We are disengaged and bored during worship. Our social media posts resemble Hollywood, not the work of the Spirit. We choose friends who complement our worldly lifestyle rather than friends who challenge us to live for God. Our film choices look no different than what the culture promotes. Sadly, we

aren't even aware of this dichotomy. Many have religion but not a genuine relationship.

This should alarm us, especially in light of Ephesians 5:8-12, "For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light—for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth—proving what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; instead, expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret."

If you find yourself saying, "Yeah, I know all that, but...", you have a doing problem. As one commentator states, "Wake up from your sleep, climb out of your coffins; Christ will show you the light." To awake, we must repent and renew our relationship with God. We are to apply the Word of God, not merely quote it. We cannot mix the purity of God's Word with the filth of rebellion or pride. The problem is not with God; it's with us.

This article was designed to be a little painful. The criminal and the surgeon both use a knife—one to help, the other to harm. The purpose of conviction is to help you hold fast or turn you back to God, back to truth. Its walking in the truth that lights the path that sets us free.

The good news for those who are dying spiritually is that God provides resuscitation through worship, prayer, repentance and His Word. These spiritual disciplines crush pride, eliminate excuses, soften hearts and transform impossible situations.

Wake up. Stop going through the motions. It's possible to be physically alive but spiritually dead. We must stop confusing God's patience with His approval.

Check out the message "Wake Up" here. {eoa}