

Ever Meet a Christian Vampire?

Are you a Christian vampire, or do you know one? As a life coach, I have found that one of the biggest drains of our energy can be found in relationships. Many relationships, of course, bring great joy and peace into our lives. Others can suck the joy and peace right out of us. I call people who deplete our joy and peace “Christian vampires.” Believers are taught to “love our neighbor” and “turn the other cheek.” Consequently, Christians may have a difficult time dealing with these sorts of people because of our giving nature.

This blog is a direct result of my personal quest to find a way to deal with a Christian vampire relative plus my desire to help others who have one in their lives.

How do you spot a Christian vampire? Here are a few examples:

Poor Me – They constantly whine about their problems. No matter how many times you try to put a “positive” spin on things, Christian vampires go back to wallowing in their “poor-me” mindset.

My Christian vampire has complained about the same “problems” for years. People ascribing to the “Poor Me” mentality want you to drop everything and feel sorry for them so they can manipulate you. When your Christian vampire telephones you and starts whining, it’s best to be forthright and say something like, “This isn’t my problem to solve for you” or “You’re making demands on me that are unreasonable.” If that doesn’t work, then you may have to brush them off with “I’m busy now” or “This isn’t a good time.”

If you are the “Poor Me” type, you can choose to be a “victim” or a “victor.”

Self Absorbed – It's all about me! No matter the situation, Christian vampires have to be the center of attention. They lack the ability to put themselves in another person's shoes.

I confronted my Christian vampire about feeling "entitled" to everyone standing up, cheering and kissing her ring when she entered a family event. She seemed incapable of understanding that life is not all about her.

Master Manipulator/Controller – A Christian vampire has unrealistic expectations of your part of the relationship. You "owe" the person to do whatever he/she wants you to do. Christian vampires don't want to take "no" for an answer. They will even use Christianity as a means to manipulate.

For years, my Christian vampire put great pressure on me to "fill the gap" other people in her life weren't filling. After all, it was my "duty" to meet her needs as a relative, a Christian and absolutely as a pastor, even though I was not her pastor. This toxic relationship began to infiltrate and put strains on my relationships with my husband and others. The Christian vampire would attempt to manipulate others through me.

The fact is you and I were never meant to fill a void that only God can fill. This is a false sense of responsibility that we should never take on. Christian vampires need to go to God. He is the only one who brings true fulfillment!

These relationships are toxic! They can even become distractions to our fulfilling God's plans and purposes for us. Let's look at this from a biblical viewpoint: "You shall love your neighbor *as [you do] yourself*" (Rom. 13:9, AMP, emphasis added).

You Need Your Oxygen First!

Everyone who's flown on an airliner knows that prior to taking off, part of the flight attendant's instructions are, "If you

are traveling with a child or someone who requires assistance, secure your mask first and then assist the other person." If you are a parent, you know that your first instinct is to put your child's mask on first and then put on yours. The folly of that thinking is that you could pass out before you finish putting on your child's mask, and then both of you would perish.

As a pastor and life coach, I must constantly guard against putting the needs of others before mine. You and I cannot take care of others if we are not well. Recently God reminded me that if I don't put Him first and myself second, then the rest of my life will not operate properly. I must get my oxygen before I can help others. This was a very freeing revelation. Hopefully, you will grasp this as well and apply it to your life.

Although I could give you clinical advice, I hope you will embrace this concept of putting God first and yourself second—but not as a narcissist. If you do this, all of your other relationships will begin to be enhanced. You will be healthier. You will be able to set proper boundaries. You will start loving yourself enough to stop Christian vampires from manipulating or controlling you with guilt, pity, obligations or other things. Most of these people will not stop or change without kicking and screaming. If a Christian vampire in your life cannot respect and honor your boundaries, you may have to put that relationship on the chopping block. It is possible that this person will turn totally to God for true fulfillment and become a victor rather than a victim.

Remember that God loves you unconditionally! He is on your side. He is rooting for you! Love yourself enough to be an overcomer. Do not allow a toxic and demanding Christian vampire to suck the joy of life out of you.