

Steve Hill: It's Time for Some Christian Profiling

The term *profiling* is relatively new in today's vocabulary. It became nationally popular in the early 80s, when the public suspected and targeted a person, or persons, on the basis of some characteristic, behavior, color, race or religion. This has become known as *profiling*, usually carrying a negative connotation.

Before jumping into *biblical profiling*, which is a major step in God's direction, let me share with you my horrifying experience of *personal profiling*. I speak from an event sketched in my memory forever. This is a story I'd rather not relive, but I will offer it up for your benefit and to lay a firm foundation for the value of profiling others.

During my B.C. (Before Christ) days, I was known for trouble. Serious criminal behavior. There was really no need to profile me. One look and you knew I was guilty of something. I had been arrested 13 times for everything from car theft to heavy narcotic drug dealing. Even today there are countries that won't permit me across the border because of some felony charges committed close to four decades ago. Sounds ridiculous, but you reap what you sow.

Here's the story. Several decades ago, a vicious murder took place in our city. The victim was a wealthy socialite, known city-wide for her generosity and philanthropy. A reputable witness saw a black man and a white, long-haired hippy-type fleeing from her home. A bloody knife was found at the scene. The evidence seemed to be conclusive.

In those days, there were very few blacks and whites hanging together. Everybody stayed in their own neighborhood. Since I never understood prejudice, my friends came in a kaleidoscope

of color. They wanted to hang out with me, and I wanted to hang out with them.

It sure would be nice to see more of that in Christianity. After all, we are all bought by the same blood and are all part of the same family. *Anyway. On with my nightmare.*

Many of my friends were African-American. (I even operated a small restaurant in a black bar.) One of my black friends, Lee, and I were always in trouble. We were heavy drug addicts. This was a crime against a wealthy family, probably to rake in some drug money. We were the obvious culprits. The authorities scooped us up like fish in a net. My friend, Lee, was put in one room. I was stuffed in another. Convictions came quickly in those days. Prosecuting attorneys were under extreme pressure to wrap up high-society cases regardless of the guilt or innocence of the criminal. *Just get somebody behind bars, now!*

I remember bright lights and probing questions that penetrated my conscience. Should I lie or tell the truth? Thank God we both chose the truth. If I lied, or if Lee decided to launch into a masterpiece of deceit, we would both lose. Nothing would match up. We were great individual liars but failed when separated. Like professional prospectors, the police dug for hours. Finally, after hours of interrogation, we were released, at the same time, with the same verdict: *Not guilty!*

Why? Believe it or not, it was because we both told the truth. Every detail of our stories matched up. We were innocent. They professionally profiled us and came to only one conclusion: *Their alibis match up. They did not kill her. Set them free.*

The Need for Biblical Profiling

Now, let's conclude. Throughout the Bible, we find plenty of profiling into the lives of others to find out the truth. Joshua profiled Achan, resulting in the death of innocent soldiers and Achan's entire family. He lied and died. Others

chose pride and paid a horrible death. Herod received the glory due to God, was eaten of worms and died. Paul warned Timothy to publicly identify those in sin so others would fear: "Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear" (1 Tim. 5:20). That takes profiling.

I've just begun to touch the surface of the value of Christian profiling. No one calling himself a Christian should be afraid of a little, or a lot, of profiling.

Line everyone up. Ask them how much they prayed that day or if they prayed at all. Or read their Bible. Or shared the gospel. That's not being judgmental; that's profiling a group of people who claim to be living the Christian life.

The benefits would be overwhelming. We could define why so many people do not want to adhere to Christianity. I've heard it too many times: "If that's Christianity, I don't want it. I see no difference between the Christian life and my life. Christians have nothing to offer."

Getting Through to Backsliders

A friend of mine recently preached a message titled, "When God Goes on a Killing Spree." Sounds like God did some personal profiling, found some serious character flaws and took care of business. Read the Word. It's in there!

I encourage everyone to do an extensive study on God's profiling techniques. I have. It is fascinating and reveals a characteristic of God that we choose to avoid. He gets extremely upset when we shun His rules and disregard the death of His only Son.

A few days ago, I was verbally assaulted by a former friend, now obviously backslidden. I politely shared with him my Christian profile and concluded that he was a long way from God. Anyway, he bashed me for a few minutes and then admitted

that my profile of his life was right and that I was correct in my assessment. The bright light of truth had revealed clearly that he was living in sin. His confession gave hope that he wanted to be restored. The Bible offers an incredible promise: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Wouldn't it be great if we would all become more involved in Christian profiling? If the person being profiled gets mean, frowns and perhaps even curses, *rejoice!* You could be getting through! Perhaps within a few minutes, their total attitude will be overwhelming joy. Why? Simple! Truth penetrates and sets men free.

I would welcome a profile. Remember the old adage: "If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Or, "If you were arrested after being profiled for claiming to be a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

Now, what's wrong with Christian profiling? Nothing. The world profiles Christians continually. However, when another Christian brings up a fault, or sin, we violently respond with, "Don't judge me, brother! Who do you think you are, holier than me?" My friend, that is one of our problems today. People don't want to come clean. What's so wrong with being confronted about your Christian faith?

The other day while in a men's clothing store, the manager came up to me teary-eyed and asked, "Are you Steve Hill?"

"Yes," I answered, "and what's your name?"

He told me his name was Damon, and then he immediately profiled himself: "I'm away from God. Is there any hope for me?"

The store was extremely busy. We spoke for a few minutes, and

I left him some biblical homework, a smile, and said that I'd be back. That was a few weeks ago. Now we talk a lot. I will admit that it has cost me some clothes, but I'm convinced that he's coming home. He doesn't care about me profiling him. He weeps openly in the store. He's not right with God, and he knows it. A little prophetic profiling is just what he needed. For Damon, it's a long road home, but he's going to make it. He wants to be free.

Is There Something Wrong?

I'm convinced there are millions of individuals who wander around under the umbrella of Christianity but are a long way from Christ. If everyone who called themselves a Christian radically lived it, our nation would be challenged and changed.

So, what's wrong with asking some pointed questions? Why not come straight out and say, "I know you go to church, you have a Bible, you attend a fellowship group, but there is something wrong. You can go to hell with a Bible in your hand. You can go to hell with baptismal waters dripping from your face. My friend, you smell like alcohol, and you just cursed in front of all of us. Yesterday you were bringing shame to Christ with your girlfriend. Can we talk about it?"

If they rebuke you, something is definitely wrong. If they receive your "profile," then perhaps we're heading for a blessed outcome.

There is a sharp sword about to fall dividing the sheep from the goats. This profiling sword has *TRUTH* engraved throughout. When the two-edged blade comes down, all our lies fall to the ground. The Lord's profiling is complete. He knows those who belong to Him:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day,

'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' (Matt. 7:21-23)

This Scripture identifies those who have Jesus as their Lord. To have Him as Lord means He is in total control of your life. Before His return, it would be wise to invest time into some intense Christian profiling.

Steve Hill is the founder of Heartland Church in Las Colinas, Texas. He is perhaps best known as the evangelist for the Brownsville Revival in Pensacola, Fla. You can reach him online at Steve Hill Ministries or check out Front Lines TV.