

# False Converts and Fashionable Christians

If you are walking in willful disobedience to God's Word, if the consistent pattern of your life is the practice of sin and the deeds of the sinful nature that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21 and Ephesians 5:3-7, then you must question your salvation.

Any teaching that opens the door to false assurance and loose living is not from God.

A wave of watered-down and milquetoast "Churchianity" has flooded the church world. A nonconfrontational gospel has failed miserably to deal with sin and repentance. We have forgotten that the central message of the gospel is that Jesus came to save us from our sins (Matt. 1:21), not in our sins. He didn't just come to forgive us of our sins, but to free us from our sins. This is one of the most tragic fundamental errors we have made in our contemporary gospel, and it largely explains the degradation in our society today. A weak church has opened the way for the devil's onslaught.

Not only has our gospel been watered down, but the themes of holiness and sanctification in the church are hardly ever mentioned. As a matter of fact, there's been a diabolical silence on it as the "I'm OK, you're OK—once saved, always saved" mantra gains popularity. And all at the expense of the many urgent appeals of New Testament writers to warn the early saints of the dangers of deception (1 Cor. 6:9), falling back (2 Pet. 3:17), drifting (Heb. 2:1), stumbling (1 Pet. 1:10), changing the grace of God into a license for immorality (Jude 4), and giving heed to seducing doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). The church world is fast adrift into an "easy believism" salvation void of His Lordship that Christ would not recognize today.

Men who profess Christ are not meeting God's own conditions for true conversion. "Christian" is almost a meaningless word to the masses today, because so many believe they are Christians, when in fact, they are not. And sadly, there are very few voices today strong enough to change that and stir the church and shake the world.

It has been estimated that over half a million were converted to God as a direct result of Charles G. Finney's ministry in the 1800s, and that by a conservative estimate over 80 percent remained true to Christ to the day of their death, without backsliding or falling by the wayside. Figures are nowhere near that today.

"Examine yourselves, seeing whether you are in the faith; test yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5).

Only the dishonest fear the truth. If your faith is real, it will stand any thorough examination. If it is false, God knows it, and you shall know it too. Please do something about it before you go out into eternity.

Christian, God's question to you is not "What are you doing?" but "Why are you doing it?" It is possible to look exactly like a true Christian in every outward detail, but for a fundamentally different reason. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. Other professing Christians judge you by the ways and means you live out your life, but God looks at the reason and purpose for which you are living (see Matt. 6). Almost any means of Christian service can be counterfeited by a deceived person, but unless there has been a change of heart, or ultimate purpose, nothing you do is really true.

So a person may believe that Christ came to save sinners, and on that ground may submit to be saved for his own safety, without submitting to His Lordship. His submission is only on the selfish condition that he will be happier. It is never

with that unreserved trust in God's character and love for the complete will of God. And in large part, this is what we have come to today: Christianity is a religion of happiness and prosperity. But that is not the gospel, dear ones.

The false convert obeys God, not because he loves Him, but only because he hopes to get something good out of it for himself. The true child of God delights in doing God's will. When love for Christ and the gospel is central, there is no weariness or struggle in serving the Lord. It is your delight! His commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3; Matt. 11:30; 23:4; Luke 11:46).

Do you enjoy Christianity or do you serve God only for what He can do for you?

A true convert loves the Word of the Lord. He loves hard truth. He loves to hear about being holy, fearing the Lord, denying himself and taking up his cross and following Jesus. He is not the least bit offended by these themes.

The false convert never enjoys hearing these types of messages.

Christ's words commanding supreme love of His followers over all other earthly loves have no meaning to the false convert. They do not supremely love Him. They love themselves, and everything connected with their own happiness (Matt. 6:33, 22:36-40, 10:37-39; Luke 14:25-26).

We have a radically defective Christianity today. It is not an exaggeration nor unloving to say that these aforementioned descriptions of false conversion seem to fit a very large majority in the church.

Now, let me ask you another question. Is Christ the center of your life, or are you trying to fit Him in for your own happiness?

The problem has been that it has become quite fashionable today to take Jesus as your Savior, but not as your Lord as if He is somehow divided. However, if you do a study on the word "Lord," you will find it listed more than 400 times in the New Testament as opposed to Savior, which only appears 15 times. The New Testament calls Him our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. His Lordship always has preeminence. To our own detriment, preachers today have subtly excused His Lordship by saying things such as, "Sinners just need to take Jesus as their Savior," as if His Lordship is optional or something you do later on when you become a stronger Christian.

The common thought has been that this nominal "Christian" may partly serve God while at the same time partly living in sin. His ticket to heaven is guaranteed; his discipleship is optional. It appears by this that a man can be saved, but not surrendered to Christ; following Him, but still serving himself.

Once again, friends, that is not the gospel! This line of thinking is at the root of all the church's problems today.

Maybe it is time to face the hard truth. The real answer is that the person who displays these characteristics is a false convert. Our churches are full of them.

They are "fashionable Christians!" Their style of religion is fashionable and popular and they generally follow the spirit of this age in their thinking, behavior, fashion, dress and custom. No matter what God requires, they are carefully determined not to offend His enemies. If they are ever faced with a choice between pleasing man or pleasing God, they will offend God. They will do more to gain the approval of men than the approval of God. This must change in the church today if we are to see nationwide revival.

Will you surrender now and trust in God's empowering grace to live no longer for yourself, but to live for God and His

glory? Will you, preacher and pastor, begin to proclaim the real gospel and the real salvation?

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