

The Convictions and Conduct of Christians Matter

Not every believer has the same convictions. There are believers and then there are disciples. There are disobedient believers, and disciples who are always looking to be more obedient.

The Word of God and the Holy Spirit shape us. Associations also aid in shaping and molding us into true disciples. I'm grateful to have had good mentors, teachers and godly friends and fathers in the faith who made a great impact in my life. Your associations can be a huge factor in determining your course in life and in how you run your race and finish your course, or even whether you finish at all.

I watched Christians before I became a serious disciple. For instance, the young man who led me to Jesus had impeccable character. It was because of his witness that I stopped drinking alcohol, stopped listening to bad rock music and dating unbelievers. Our conduct adorns our doctrine (Titus 2:15). He adorned the gospel he preached to me and made it appealing and attractive. On the other hand, the misconduct of believers blasphemes our doctrine. The church is the pillar and ground of truth (1 Tim. 3:15). If people can't find truth in the church in both doctrine and conduct, we have no true witness.

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Your misconduct as a believer can be a stumbling block to unbelievers and even contribute in sending them to hell. That is serious business. For example, I remember hearing a story about a new convert who walked into a restaurant to witness

pastors sitting at a table eating and sipping on wine. She had been recently delivered of alcohol, but when she saw those pastors sipping it, she concluded that it was acceptable. She started drinking again, and that alcoholic devil returned to rule her life. Those pastors are responsible. I'd hate to stand before God and have that on my conscience. Our conduct and convictions matter.

When I was a young believer, I was careful to provide a strong witness of my new Christ-founded life anywhere I was employed. When sinners know you are a believer in Christ, they watch you. Recently, my younger brother led a woman to Jesus at his workplace. She told him that the greatest determining factor in her even listening to him was that she never saw him get angry or cuss like all the other employees.

The church is the prophetic voice of society and conscience of our culture. When ministers are caught in scandals and gross misconduct, living a double life, it greatly hurts the cause of the gospel. It blasphemes our doctrine and its effect on the unbelieving world (1 Tim. 6:1, Titus 2:5).

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Believer, please examine your life. Walk your talk and stop blaspheming the gospel of Christ. Cleanse yourself from the filth of the flesh and spirit and perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1).

Minister of God, stop living a double life and being one way in public and another way in private. Stop sipping alcohol and dabbling in porn. Stop watching R-rated movies that promote foul language and loose morals. Because you teach the Word of God, you are held to a higher standard and a stricter judgment.

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Bert Farias' books are forerunners to personal holiness, the move of God and the return of the Lord. They also combat the departure from the faith and the turning away from the truth we are seeing in our day. His recent five-book bundle, written under a fresh anointing, is a forerunner of what the Lord is doing in His church today.