

The Hypocrites That Leave the Church

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1 Peter 3:10-16 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

- I. First, let me say that there are certainly many times when people who leave a church have been done wrong.
 - A. Offenses are a part of life in any kind of social setting, including church.

Luke 17:1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

- B. There are an abundance of Scriptures that instruct us and command us concerning the issue of being offended, and how we are to deal with it Biblically and righteously before God.
 - 1. In the first place, we should not be easily offended at all by anything.

Psalms 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

Ephesians 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Colossians 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

- C. But in spite of this there can be people in any church who are offensive, condemning, and even false accusers.
 - D. I have seen situations where there was really no choice for the person, or family, but to leave.
 - E. That is always a tragedy and most of the time ends up in the destruction of that family.
 - F. So those who offend and condemn and spread false information about others in a church should be dealt with and not tolerated because of their money, or their relatives in the church, or the length of time they have been at that church.
 - G. But again, this kind of situation is not always handled properly and with true godly charity, and this is also a tragedy and results in souls and families being lost to the world and the devil.
 - H. So I want to make clear that I do understand that people leave a church sometimes because they really do not have any other wise choice to make.

- II. But it is also clear to me after over 40 years of preaching and being a part of churches, that most people who leave a church offended do it because of a manufactured offense, not a real one.
- A. Their number one charge against the church when they leave is that the church is a bunch of hypocrites.
 - B. I have watched it through the years in so many circumstances and it almost always begins when a family, or a member of a family, especially the children, begin to form their social circle outside the church family with worldly people and worldly activities.
 - C. They complain because the church keeps them too busy, but they always have time for anything else.
 - 1. They develop that appetite for what the world has to offer and it spreads through that family.
 - 2. They cannot forego worldly pleasures and associations, such as sports, movies, entertainment of all sorts, extravagant vacations like everyone else in the world takes now, camping, fishing, hunting, races, gym memberships, etc.
 - 3. They form friendships and alliances with worldly people and their children mix together and the bad results soon appear.
 - D. It does not take long before the church is looked at with displeasure and becomes an annoying obligation that interferes with their lives of worldly pleasure and fellowship.
 - E. The people who remain in the church and do not follow the same path they are on become “holier than thou” to them, and they develop a contempt for them.
 - F. Then it is inevitable that they are going to be offended by someone at the church; most likely the Preacher, if he has the courage to say anything about their worldliness and waywardness.
 - 1. But they will have the same amount of ire toward any person in the church who even looks at them in a way that they perceive as condemning.
 - G. They immediately go to work on that person, or persons, with a fine-tooth comb to find anything they can portray as inconsistent or hypocritical.
 - 1. And of course, that is an easy task when you are looking for fault and desiring to find it.
 - H. Then they have their justification for leaving that church that is full of hypocrites.
 - 1. They justify themselves through the perceived or imagined faults of others.
 - 2. So they leave and make sure that their very good reasons for leaving are known far and wide, and what a bunch of hypocrites that church is made of.
 - I. That is the process, and it is always the same, and it is accelerated greatly if there is a Christian school at that church, or if that church and pastor hold to any kind of standards of modestly, holy living, and morality.
- III. It would be wonderful if people could just see the truth about these matters, but that is not going to happen fully until we stand before God, and then all WILL see the truth.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

- A. Those people who leave a church angry and offended and hating the people, the pastor, and anything associated with that church are the true hypocrites.
- B. Their reasons for calling the church a bunch of hypocrites are usually over petty, ridiculous, or personal things.

- C. They obviously have a great knowledge of what a Christian is supposed to be, and they hold others to that standard, while they allow themselves liberty in everything.

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

- D. All the people are not hypocrites in any church; so they are falsely accusing good people, and trying to blacken their names with false accusations.
- E. And yet for all this they consider themselves better and more acceptable to God than those “hypocrites” at that church.
- F. Not only church members do this, but children do this to their godly parents.
 - 1. They follow exactly the same pathway and end up doing the same thing to their parents.
- G. Family members do this to relatives who are godly people, also.
- H. What do you think the Prodigal Son told all his newfound friends in the far country when he arrived there, about his father, his elder brother, and his father’s house?
- I. What do think the conversation was like between Judas and those who paid him money to betray Jesus?

IV. This is going to happen until Jesus comes for his bride and the church age is ended.

- A. It is impossible but that offenses will come; and tale is told by how those offenses are handled.
- B. I have watched scores of young people, old people, and families as they were offended by something or someone in a church and they forsook the ways of God and wasted and destroyed their lives, and their children’s lives in the wickedness of the world.
- C. I have also watched scores of faithful people who were falsely accused, slandered, lied about, treated with contempt, and who suffered great loss because of it all, but continued to be faithful in the same church and with the same bunch of so-called hypocrites, and live godly lives, for the rest of their lives.
- D. So who are the real hypocrites?
 - 1. God knows, and He has promised to reveal them for all to see.
 - 2. And God has also given us plenty of Scripture truth to identify the real hypocrites and commanded us to beware of them.

Psalm 31:18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

Proverbs 18:5 It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

Matthew 7:19-20 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

- 3. In the meantime, this is the counsel of Jesus to those who are falsely accused and hated:

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

- 4. Just make sure that their accusations against you are false and not true.