

Part-Time Christians

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Some may have the mistaken idea that Christians only have to be faithful when we are in a church building, or maybe just when we are around other Christians. They may think they can be “part-time Christians” and still go to Heaven, but is that true? Does God command us to be faithful at all times, or does He tell us that it is fine to be worldly sometimes? The Bible teaches us to be faithful always, even if our lives are threatened because of our faithfulness! (Revelation 2:10; cf. Romans 12:1-2). Are we “part-time Christians” or “full-time Christians”?

Are we Christians when we are at work? There is a difference between being a “football coach” and being a “Christian football coach.” There is a difference between being a “construction worker” and being a “Christian construction worker.” No matter what a person does for a living, if he is truly a Christian, that fact should be evident to others. If someone with whom you work found out that you call yourself a Christian would he be surprised? Our actions should be Christ-like, and they should glorify God: *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16). When we are at work do we treat others as we would have them treat us? *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”* (Matthew 7:12). Do we use vulgar language at work? *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers”* (Ephesians 4:29). There may be some things taking place at the office in which Christians should not be involved. Some companies host “Christmas parties” where sinful activities take place, and a Christian should not be involved in such. If we abstain from those things, our coworkers may think we are strange, but that is a small price to pay for eternal salvation through Christ! *“For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you”* (1 Peter 4:3-4 NKJV). Do we ever invite co-workers to services of the church, or ask if they would be interested in studying the Bible?

Are we Christians when we are at home? A person who considers his home a “haven for sin” may think that nobody knows about the sinful things that go on inside the four walls of his house, but God knows: *“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”* (Ecclesiastes 12:14). For those of us who have families, do our families see a much different side of us at home than what is seen at services of the church? Do we remember what the Bible teaches about relationships in the home when we are at home? If we are children, are we obeying our parents? (Ephesians 6:1). If we are wives, are we in submission to our husbands? (Ephesians 5:22-24). If we are husbands, do we show our wives our love for them? (Ephesians 5:25). If we are parents, are we bringing our children up in the way they should go to get to Heaven? (Proverbs 22:6).

Are we Christians when we are driving? Do we obey the laws of the land, such as driving under the speed limit or wearing our seat belts? God gives a strong warning to those who violate the laws of the land: *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,*

resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Romans 13:1-5). Unless a law of the land requires us to compromise our faithfulness to Christ, we must obey it (Acts 4:18-19; 5:27-29). Do we let our tempers go unchecked when driving in traffic and find ourselves committing sin because we cannot control our tempers? Being angry is not a sin, but we must control our anger: “Be ye angry, and sin not...” (Ephesians 4:26). Patience and self control are fruits of the spirit that Christians should possess: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Are we Christians when we play sports? Do we use vulgar language when playing sports? Why would *any* setting be an acceptable environment to violate the Scriptures and sin? Do we dress immodestly when we play sports? (1 Timothy 2:9). There are some sports which seem to require a person to dress immodestly in order to participate. Is competing in a sport more important to us than going to Heaven? If it is not possible to be described as a “Christian athlete” in a particular sport, then we must choose the description “Christian” over “athlete”!

Are we Christians when we are with our friends or extended family? Do we compromise our faithfulness to Christ when we are around certain friends? “*Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals”* (1 Corinthians 15:33 ASV). What about when family members want us to compromise and do something we know is wrong? “*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me”* (Matthew 10:34-38).

Are we Christians when we are in the church building? Just because someone may come to every single service of the church, that does not make him a Christian! As one preacher has said, “Sitting in McDonald’s doesn’t make you a hamburger!” It could also be said that sitting in a school building does not make one a student; neither does it make him a teacher. Sitting in the White House does not make one the President of the United States. Likewise, merely sitting in a church building does not make one a Christian. A Christian is one who is faithfully following Christ. A person could regularly attend all services, but fail to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). A person who has obeyed the Gospel may “faithfully” attend services, but he may be involved in some sin of which he will not repent (Galatians 6:1; 2 Peter 2:20-22). A person could regularly attend services, but not properly take part in one or more of the acts of worship (John 4:24). A person could be present because he claims to love God, but if he does not love his brethren, he is in sin! “*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also”* (1 John 4:20-21).

God realizes that even Christians who are fully committed might sometimes commit a sin, but they are commanded to repent of that sin and receive forgiveness through confession and prayer (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). Are we fully committed? The truth is that there is no such thing as a “part-time Christian.” We must love God with all of our being (Matthew 22:36-38). If a person is only slightly dedicated to Christ, then that person is not a Christian at all. If we want to go to Heaven, we must be “full-time Christians”!

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