

# Does Anyone Know That You're A Christian?

By Bill Denton

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Illustration

It is a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians-and I am one of them.

Saint Cyprian

### B. The thing that strikes you when you read Cyprian's comment is that he noticed something That made Christians stand out, appear as different from those around them

1. In many ways, this is something lacking in today's world
2. Often, it is hard to distinguish a Christian from anyone else
  - a. do they look any different – not often
  - b. do they speak differently – perhaps they don't use curse words, but otherwise, there may not be anything about their speech that distinguishes them
  - c. do they act differently – often, if they do, it's not so you can see much that's different from anyone else
  - d. fact is, we often try hard to blend in with the world around us so that we won't stand out
3. This is not a problem of age group, or income level, or education as much as it's a problem of the human heart
  - a. we don't want to be rejected by friends, associates, business partners or even our neighbors
  - b. we don't want to be thought of as weird, or that we're some kind of religious fanatic or just a nut-case
  - c. so we want just enough faith and religion, just enough Christianity, to put us on speaking terms with God, but not enough to radically change us from the world around us
  - d. therein is our problem

### C. Question: Does anyone know that you're a Christian?

1. What I'm not asking
  - a. I'm not asking if people know you go to church
  - b. I'm not asking if people know your general religious preference
2. What I'm asking
  - a. I'm asking if people know that you're a disciple of the man named Jesus
  - b. I'm asking if they know you're a Christian from your lifestyle
  - c. I'm asking if they know you're a Christian because your faith in Jesus moves you to both speak and act in ways that are distinctly different from the world
  - d. What I really want to know is what people know about you from the life you present to the world – not what you claim, but what you live

## I. A BRIEF LOOK BACK AT RECENT SERMONS

### A. Remember what we've discussed recently?

1. Jesus is our standard for living – he is our Lord, his example and teachings are that which we follow in life; in essence, we are to become like him
2. We talked specifically about sexual morality in an immoral world
  - a. because our bodies are indwelt by the Holy Spirit
  - b. because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit
  - c. because we've been bought with a price (Jesus on the cross), therefore we are to glorify God in our bodies
  - d. sexual morality is one of the clearest ways that we either honor or dishonor our Lord and Savior
  - e. it matters how you live
3. We talked about the importance of Christ being alive in you (Gal 2:20)
  - a. as Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ"
  - b. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"
  - c. "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me"

### B. Illustration

Most Christians would be better pleased if the Lord did not inquire into their personal affairs too closely. They want him to save them, keep them happy, and take them to heaven at last, but not to be too inquisitive about their conduct or service.

A. W. Tozer

1. There is the greatest problem of the church
  - a. people who want to be saved, but who have no desire to act saved
  - b. people who want to be called holy, but who don't want to live holy
  - c. people who want to argue theology, but who don't want to have to go to the trouble to live godly
2. This is largely the reason that the church has ended up impotent and sterile, unable either to change the world for good, or convert the lost to the Savior
  - a. instead we nit-pick the scriptures to death and spend out time debating points that no Bible writer ever thought significant
  - b. we cloister ourselves into our buildings, shut ourselves off from the rest of the world, and congratulate ourselves on how we're not like the rest of the world, when the truth is we're more like the world than we're different from it

### C. Illustration

Our greatest need today is not more Christianity but more true Christians. The world can argue against Christianity as an institution, but there is no convincing argument against a person who, through the Spirit of God, has been made Christlike.

Billy Graham

## II. CHALLENGES FROM THE BIBLE

### A. Matt 5:13-16

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. NASU

1. The reason both salt and light can have the proper effect is that both are different from whatever they are applied to
2. Light is not like darkness at all; neither is salt like that to which it is applied, and in the same way, followers of Jesus are to be different from the world they live in
  - a. Rom 12:1-2 -- Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. NASU
  - b. There comes a crisis, a moment when every human soul which enters the kingdom of God has to make its choice of that kingdom in preference to everything else that it holds and owns.  
-- Catherine Booth. "William and Catherine Booth," Christian History, no. 26.

### B. John 13:34-35

34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." NASU

1. I always come to this passage when I think of being a Christian, for it seems to state the basic of discipleship more directly than any other passage
2. Love has always been the foundation of man's correct response, both to God and to other people
  - a. Luke 10:27-28 -- And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." NASU
  - b. does anyone know you are a disciple of Jesus?

### C. Eph 4:17-32

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and

that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. 26 BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. NASU

1. Bottom line, folks – do you live differently than the “Gentiles?”
2. 1 Peter 1:14-16 -- As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." NASU

## CONCLUSION

### A. Illustration

Because we have been so willing to accommodate the message of the Bible to the limitations of contemporary culture, the modern world does not regard the church as a threat; I suspect that it regards us as merely boring. We are giving the modern world less and less in which to disbelieve because it senses no difference between what the church is saying and what is being said by a variety of secular voices. Thus, the modern world is not called up actively to decide for or against the church, because it sees so little against which to take a stand. The world which once imprisoned our ancestors now responds to an utterly enculturated church with mere indifference.

-- William H. Willimon in *Shaped by the Bible*. Christianity Today, Vol. 35, no. 13.

### B. Does anyone know that you're a Christian?

### C. Invitation