
“The Spotlight”

You do not have to go very far or wait very long to see or hear an account of another professed Christian do something totally foolish or behave absolutely moronic in the public eye. The headlines are littered every month with another person who has publicly declared that they are a follower of Jesus but yet act in such a way that it demeans the very title that they have given themselves. We see it all the time, do we not? The popular music or Hollywood star that declares Jesus as Lord and Savior who publicly gives God the glory and praise, yet poses in seductive and inappropriate pictures for a magazine. Or the actor or actress that shoots scenes in a movie that would have anyone question the legitimacy of their self-proclamation of being a Christian. We do not need to travel far to see or hear politicians that claim to be Christians yet vote for everything that stands against the beliefs of the Christian faith. What about the preachers and pastors who father children with women who are not their wives or are caught having extramarital affairs? Or those who have the attention of the public eye yet use their ministering platform to make outrageous comments, buffoonish gestures, and basically “act the fool?” Yet still another account where a hotel manager was ‘turned off’ to the idea of Christianity when on a Sunday morning checkout (after a men’s ministry retreat that weekend) the billing charges for ordering in-room porn was the highest he had ever seen (even more than with customers on a secular business meeting weekend). The accounts are endless and come in all forms and situations. In fact, you and I can fill in our own personal such accounts, couldn’t we?

Now, bringing it closer to home, we may not pose inappropriately on a magazine cover or it’s inside pages, we may not be a well-known pastor/preacher, we may not hold any political office, in fact we may be just like ‘Joe Christian’, trying to live the best Christian life we can. Yet we share a common ground the moment we confess Jesus as Lord and Savior and begin to live for God. The common denominator now whether a music star, politician, pastor, or Joe Christian, is that we are in the spotlight as well. This means that, whether or not you are cognoscente of it, outsiders are watching your actions and behavior, and hearing your words to see if they measure up to whom you say you are. That family member, or co-worker, or friend, or acquaintance is keeping you in the spotlight and inspecting under a microscope everything you do or say. This inspection can either lead someone to see the goodness of Christ through you or turn them off because you have shown them nothing Christ-like in your behavior. In fact, you have really shown them nothing different than what they would see in the world and in their non-Christian circles. As such, the Bible says that we have a responsibility to win the respect of outsiders through our daily lives (1Thes. 4:12). This extends itself to include living a life that is admired by the non-believer and viewed as authentic. What can an outsider say about a professed Christian who goes about acting no different than a non-Christian? What value can he see in living a reformed Holy Spirit-filled life when he looks at you and only sees hypocrisy? This is also why in Colossians 4:5 we are called to be wise in the way we act towards outsiders and to make the most of every opportunity. This is a central exhortation given in the Bible because we can acknowledge that when we are not using wisdom in our choice of actions, or words, or behavior we lose credibility and, hence, the opportunity to draw outsiders to a relationship with Christ and a changed life.

We have a responsibility that comes along with the proclamation that we are Christians. That responsibility carries an enormous weight and incredible ramifications. To a lost and dying world, their only hope is to find God and build a relationship through His son. If we are to “...let our light shine before men so that they may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16), then we cannot afford to blow it. As long as we continue in our commitment to Christ and to holy living, then we can never forget that the eyes of a dying world are on us and our lives will always be in the spotlight.

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