

Lesson – Christians Are Far From Perfect

What does the word Christian mean to you?

- A person that supposedly claims to follow Christ. Can't be sure anymore.
- A Christian is a person that believes totally in Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross.
- I think it is a label that makes people feel better about themselves as a whole.
- Little but a moniker which has been irreconcilably torn from its original form and inextricably woven into the system of empire.
- Having a relationship with Jesus Christ, putting your trust in Christ for eternal salvation
- Having a vibrant loving relationship with Christ

I'm not perfect. You're not perfect. So as a Christian, what do I tell people? There seems to be a myth that came about years ago that people from all religions bought into, that Christians are supposed to be perfect. They are not supposed to mess up. If they do, then they are hypocrites. The myth came from the enemy, not Jesus Christ, the basis for Christianity. Yes, Christians have done little to say this myth is not true because, I suspect, they have believed it too.

When I became a Christian, I did not experience an instant change in my heart. The desire to sin did not go away. The temptation to lie did not just disappear. My problems did not all of a sudden get fixed. I did not instantaneously become a better person. I did not become perfect. If you too are a Christian, I suspect the same is true of you. But then why do people watch us with judging eyes? Why do people believe these things happened?

If someone believes there is a god and that when you get saved you become better or even perfect then why do they not choose this path? It could be that they see others still messing up and sinning and conclude for themselves that God failed. Why bother with this mumbo jumbo if this god cannot even do what they say he can do? This may give insight as to why so many Christians find themselves back in their old ways after years with Christ. The belief is that God failed. He cannot even make one person good enough to keep them from sinning or messing up. So how is He supposed to change the world and make it better? And if this God cannot make good people better, there is probably no chance for *me*! Why bother trying? I believe there is a second myth that God failed and is not able. He is not strong enough. He is not powerful enough. He is not *enough*. Sadly, this myth affects Christians, even me.

Have you come across this mentality? When I am up against these things in life, here's what I tell people. First, I explain that it is *not* true that these things will happen by simply choosing this faith or saying a prayer. Then, I must acknowledge that I have faults, temptations, problems, and hard times. God did not fail my *idea* of who God *is* and what He *will do* is incorrect. It is not in line with His true character which I must discover

for myself. If I do not *know* Him, I cannot *show* Him. If I do not *know* His character, than my *idea* of Him will be wrong. I believe that is what causes so many Christians to walk away from God; not because He failed but because their idea of who He is was not true.

I must finally say in humility and in all honesty that I do not have all the answers. It is ok to say I do not know. When I pretend to know it all, I fall into the trap of thinking I have it all together and pride enters my life. I must humble myself, be real, and admit I do not know then go to God to find out.

It took me more than a decade to understand that I believed this myth. I felt I had to be perfect, that I was not allowed to mess up or be real. I had to be super human or I was misrepresenting Christianity and God. What I have come to realize though is that in faking being perfect, in pretending I had it all together or knew all the answers, I was in fact misrepresenting Christianity and God. All those years I was doing what I so passionately wanted to avoid.

I am still learning how to be flawed. Yes, my flaws come naturally, but living as a flawed Christian does not. It takes a lot of work to be real, to constantly learn that I know so little about things I am passionate about, but I am thrilled to now learn more about God and unlearn religion.

Challenge Your Thinking

1. What are your thoughts on flawed Christians?
2. Have you found yourself judging someone based on these myths? What is God showing you about the situation or person now?
3. What is your idea of who God is and what His job is?
4. Can you relate to the why bother mentality? How so?