



# On Begging Christians to Remain Christians

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- One great blessing in Christ is support from brethren when in times of crisis.
  - The strong support the weak
    - Rom. 15:1 - “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak.”
  - The spiritual help those overtaken in a fault
    - Gal. 6:1 - “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”
  - Christians bear one another's burdens
    - Gal. 6:2 - “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

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- At the same time, we all have the responsibility to become strong.
  - Each Christian must bear his own load.
    - Gal. 6:4-5 - “But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.”
  - We will be held accountable for our own actions or lack thereof.
    - Rom. 14:12 - “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”
  - It is our responsibility to strengthen ourselves.
    - Heb. 12:12-13 - “Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.”

# On Begging Christians to Remain Christians

- Some Christians never progress from being supported to the point of self-sustainment. They remain very dependent on brethren; unless constantly visited or coddled, they fall away or become apathetic.
- “High maintenance Christians” (Mark Copeland)

# The Definition of Disinterest

- “High Maintenance” refers to the need for a lot of attention required to maintain something in good order; demands a lot of time, energy, or money; any person or thing that requires a lot of attention.
- Christians are high maintenance if they require a lot of attention in order to remain faithful, or if they require a lot of coddling or pampering to do their part.

# The Definition of Disinterest

- Christians that are high maintenance for good reasons:
  - Babes in Christ just starting their new spiritual life
  - Christians bearing up under a severe trial
- Christians that are high maintenance for no good reason:
  - Those who attend and work only when constantly prodded

# The Definition of Disinterest

- Churches can be high maintenance.
  - The church in Corinth was.
    - 1Cor. 3:1-4 - “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?”

# The Definition of Disinterest

- Churches can be high maintenance.
  - The church in Corinth was.
    - 2Cor. 12:20-21 - “For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, back-bitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; 21 lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.”



# The Definition of Disinterest

- Churches can be high maintenance.
  - The church in Philippi was *not*.
    - Phil. 1:3-6 - “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

# The Difficulty in Discernment

- Where constant attention is necessary:
  - Newborn Christians: weak in faith, weak in knowledge, very vulnerable
  - Hurting Christians: just as for someone who is physically sick or injured
  - Overtaken in a fault, grieving, suffering physical illness, enduring hardship, or weakened by trials
- In such cases, constant attention is certainly called for.
  - 1Thes. 5:14 - “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”

# The Difficulty in Discernment

- Where it is harmful:
  - When it hinders the growth of the church, which grows through evangelism, edification, and limited benevolence practice by all.
  - These works cannot be attended to if undue effort is spent on a few who are in a persistent state of immaturity.

# The Difficulty in Discernment

- Where it is harmful:

- When it holds back the efforts of workers

- Rom 15:20 - “And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation”
- 2Cor. 12:12-15 - “Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. 13 For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong! 14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.”

# The Difficulty in Discernment

- Where it is harmful:
  - When more serious needs are not being met
    - Babes in Christ are not being taught because others expect coddling.
    - The physically or spiritually sick and dying are neglected because others require undue attention.
  - There may be times in our lives when we all require some high maintenance. However, to avoid diverting proper attention away from those who truly need it, we must make the effort to grow up.

# The Defiance of Dullness

- Through personal growth
  - We must grow to become the providers of help, not perpetual recipients.
  - Heb. 5:12-14 - “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

# The Defiance of Dullness

- Through individual strength
  - We must become the producers of strength, not perpetual consumers.
  - Phil. 4:11-13 - “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

# The Defiance of Dullness

- Through individual strength
  - 2Cor. 1:3-6 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.”



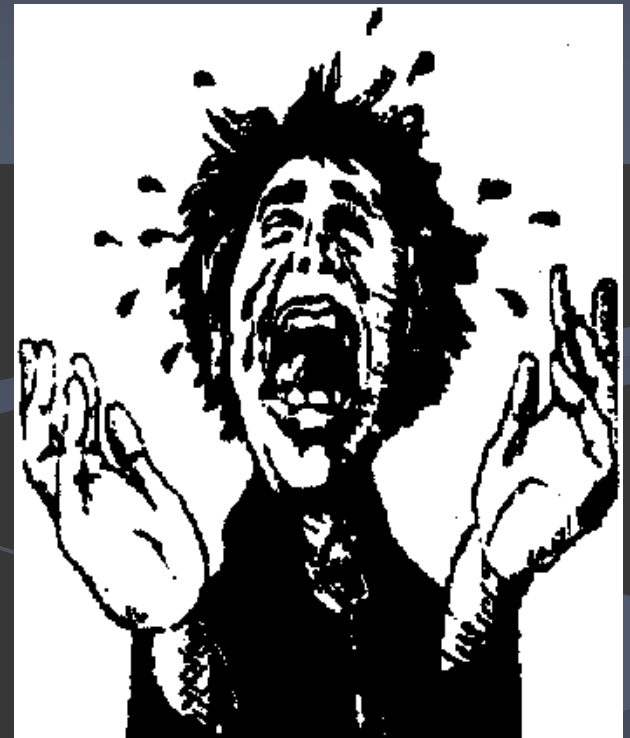
# On Begging Christians to Remain Christians

- I am not discouraging constant attention when it is rightfully needed by new converts and suffering Christians.
- My purpose has been to challenge you in thinking about your service to Christ.
  - Are you bearing your own load?
  - Or, do you have to be constantly begged to remain faithful to Christ?

“He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer” (Prov. 18:9).



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Slothfulness is Equal to Destructiveness