



KILLER RELIGION

RELIGIOUS IDEAS THAT BRING SPIRITUAL DEATH

PT. 5, LOAN COAL RELIGION

Today's Killer Religion is Lone Coal Religion. This is the idea that once you are a Christian it is not necessary to be part of a church. After all, if a church can't save you why join one?

Acts 2:40, 41, 47—From the very beginning of the Christian church it was naturally expected that when you became a Christian you: a) Believe, b) get baptized, c) join God's church—His organized church.

The church in the New Testament was a very organized church.

Acts 5—Organized system for giving.

Acts 6—The church got too large for the 12 Apostles to do everything so they appointed Deacons to take care of the physical needs of the church while the Apostles devoted themselves to studying and preaching the word.

Acts 15—When a theological debate arose the Paul and the other apostles believed that God would lead through his organized church—like our General Conference Sessions.

As the Apostles went out they made disciples for Jesus then organized a church in every town that they could. Most of the books of the New Testament were written to a specific, organized church. The book of Philemon even tells us that there was one church that met right in Philemon's home.

Titus 1:5—Paul instructed Titus to set up a church structure in the place where Paul had brought many people into a saving relationship with Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:15—Some people avoid joining a church because they don't want a human organization dictating what they must believe and do. A true church doesn't dictate what the Bible says it submits to it; so the church doesn't dictate what you believe—the Bible does. The church's role is preserving and proclaiming Biblical truth.

A campfire has a bunch of beautiful, bright coals. But if you take one lone coal out of the fire it will fade and die. When a Christian is in the church he/she can shine brightly. But when he/she gets away from the church he/she will begin to fade away spiritually.

GOD'S ANTIDOTE: NOT ALONE BUT TOGETHER

Three reasons for being actively involved in a church

1. Fellowship and exhortation

- **Hebrews 10:24, 25**—Even back then people were pulling their "coals" out of the "fire". Paul says don't give up assembling together at church! This imperative is even more important today 2,000 years later as we near Jesus' Coming.

2. To use our gifts/talents.

- **1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 14-18**—To use our gifts for the benefit of all. When you take your coal out of the fire. You will end up burning low because you will not be able to use your gifts to edify the church.

- **Ephesians 4:12, 13**—Gifts are to be used for the edifying of the church.

3. Evangelism/Missions

- **Acts 13:1-3**—Commission to work. God's method of commissioning people for His work is usually through His church.

- **Matthew 28:19, 20**—An organized church is the best way that we can be personally involved in the worldwide work to which God has called every believer.

Does God expect you to be part of a faulty church?

Luke 21:1-4—Jesus praised this widow for supporting her faulty church. The church in her day was faulty, church leaders were swindling they members by overcharging for sacrifices, The Temple had been turned into a market place. Church leaders were very legalistic.

Luke 4:16—Jesus' custom was to support his faulty church, The very church who was plotting His own death.

Matthew 23:2, 3—Jesus said to do what the church leaders say not what they do.

Every church has faults because it's made up of faulty people. Isn't it interesting how many people can't stand to hang out with a church family who has imperfections but they overlook imperfections when they are with their non-church friends.

What if I'm too tired at the end of the week to go to church? See the last sermon, Multiple Personalities Religion: We need to see our Christianity as #1 instead of the earthly things.

Matthew 6:33, 34—God says, "Put me first in your schedule, plan in church, and church activities etc. and when you do I'll take care of the other things that you are so stressed out about."

The Devil wants us to be Lone Coal Christians because when we are out of the fire (church) we will more easily be tempted and drawn away without the exhortation/fellowship, use of our gifts and commission to mission.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Commit to being an active part of God's church regardless of the things that might draw us away.
2. If you have offended or discouraged someone in the church, make it right with him or her.
3. At church find and take an opportunity to encourage someone in good works.
4. Think of ways that you can use your gifts and talents for God and let the church know.