

Careless Christians

(www.voicewithvision.org)

Who is a Careless Christian?

These are days of activities in the Body of Christ. Many things are being done in the name of Jesus. Many messages are preached from the Bible, in the name of Jesus. Christian TV has entered many countries. Some preachers who come on Christian TV ask Christians all around the world, to just sit in their comfortable arm chairs, with the remote control in their hand, watch them on TV and send them money. They say that they will evangelize the world for you.

All you have to do is send them money!! Lots of them!! They say that when you send money, you become a "missionary - supporter" and they are "missionaries", since their programmes go to many countries around the world.

These are days of "Arm chair missionary - supporters" and "TV studio missionaries". I pity such people. These are people who do not know what it takes to be a missionary. They do not know who a missionary is. They do not care to know. Because they are Careless Christians. They do not care what the Bible says about being an apostle or a missionary.

When a man or woman is called to be a missionary or an Apostle, he or she is at the top, in the hierarchy of the Body of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:28 the order is given clearly.

Here is a list of some of the members that God has placed in the body of Christ:

First are apostles,
Second are prophets,
Third are teachers,

This is the highest calling a man or a woman could get. Anyone called to be a missionary has a high price to pay. Those who are called as Apostles are the ones who make the most sacrifice. There are no "TV studio missionaries" in the Kingdom of God. The only missionaries the Bible talks about are the ones who go!!

An appeal to those who sit in TV studios and call themselves "missionaries":

"If you want money to run your show on TV, just ask for it, please do not distort the truth to get money!!" "Do not compare someone sitting in a TV studio with all the comforts and luxuries, to a missionary who gives all the comforts and security of a home to go to remote areas to live and die, doing what God has called him/her to do, in relative obscurity!!"

This is an example of a Careless Christian. People who have the Bible but do not care to know what it says about a certain thing. They preach and teach what their mind thinks of, using the Word of God. These are people who have the resource and the time to know the truth, but do not care to know or obey it. They do many things in the name of Jesus, but they do not do it the way God wants them to!

Carelessness is the prelude to disobedience. Most cases of disobedience mentioned in the Bible started with carelessness.

Let us meditate about three groups of Careless Christians from the Scriptures. For two groups their carelessness cost their lives. One group repented of their careless attitude and set things right, but still their carelessness cost a man's life.

1. Aaron's sons - They were careless and disobeyed the Lord, by burning a different fire before His presence. They served the Lord carelessly. They paid for their carelessness with their lives.

2. Eli's sons - They were careless in handling the Lord's offering and abused their God given position. As a result of their carelessness they lost their lives at a very young age and also lost their priesthood.

3. David and his army - They were careless in transporting the Ark of God by not following God's

guidelines. As a result, their grand celebration was turned into a funeral procession, as Uzzah lost his life. But eventually they turned from their carelessness and set things right.

Aaron's sons

"Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu put coals of fire in their incense burners and sprinkled incense over it. In this way, they disobeyed the Lord by burning before him a different kind of fire than he had commanded. ² So fire blazed forth from the Lord's presence and burned them up, and they died there before the Lord" (Lev. 10:1,2)

This is a very tragic incident. Two young men who served the Lord were careless in their service. They paid with their lives for their carelessness. Remember, these two young men were called by God to serve Him in His temple. They were God's chosen servants.

Clothe Aaron and his sons with these garments, and then anoint and ordain them. Set them apart as holy so they can serve as my priests. (Exodus 28:41).

God personally chose Aaron and his sons to be his servants. There was no problem with their calling. They did not become ministers by chance. They did not become priests because some men chose them. They were God's personal choice.

This is true of many who serve God today. Many who serve God are called by God. There is no reason to doubt their calling. And God's word says that when He calls, he also gives gifts according to the calling. There is no reason to doubt their gifts. Their gifts are also God given. God is a faithful God and He always does His part faithfully. He calls and He gives gifts. After He calls and gives the gifts, the responsibility shifts to the men called. And God is so faithful that He never withdraws His calling and His gifts, once given.

"For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn." (Romans 11:29).

Many abuse of God's gifts occur when the men called and gifted by God are careless enough to ignore His instructions on how to use it. Once they get the gifts they start to use it the way they seem fit, but forget to look into the "Users manual", that is God's word, on how to use the gift. These are careless Christians who serve God carelessly. They do serve God, alright, but they do it carelessly.

Many Christians are confused when they see the life and the activities of a minister does not correspond to God's word, but they still see the gifts operate through them. (Especially some spectacular gift such as healing or miracle working). This confuses many. They know that his actions are not Biblical, but they also see this spectacular gift operating. This contradiction confuses many Christians these days.

Remember, the only way to discern such people, is to see whether their lives and work correspond to God's word, not the operation of gifts. **When a man of God who is called by God does not serve God according to His word, his work does not please God. God expects His servants to serve Him with the right fire, not just any fire!!**

God is faithful and He never withdraws the gift even when people He chooses, abuse it. He is patient and gives them time to turn from their erroneous ways. Since we live in the period of grace, God does not strike to death like He did with Aaron's sons then. But many careless ministers who abuse God's gift think that God is approving of their actions because He does not deal with them like he dealt with the sons of Aaron!.

They mistake God's patience as His approval of their actions. God wants to give them as much time as possible for them to turn from their wrong ways.

Aaron's sons were given clear instructions on what fire needs to be brought before God. The instructions were very clear but they brought a different fire. As a result, fire from heaven consumed them, and they died. Their mistake was, they disobeyed God and brought a different fire.

Remember, they were in the temple, they did bring the fire, they did things. God did not accuse them of not doing anything for Him. God did not accuse them of not serving Him. Understand this clearly, they were in the temple, they were serving God and they were punished because they served God differently with a different fire.

Many today say they serve God by doing this and that. Ask yourself, are you serving Him the way He wants you to serve Him or are you doing it the way you seem fit? Do not think that just by serving God somehow you can please Him. You please Him only when you serve Him the way He wants you to serve Him, not the way you want to serve Him. It is better not to serve Him at all, if you do not serve Him, His way.

Many will do many things in His name, but only those who do it according to His instructions will be accepted. Do not mislead yourself that you can please God by doing something for the Him, somehow. You will please Him only if you do what He has called you to do, His way and with His authorization.

"On judgment day many will tell me, 'Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.'²³ But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Go away; the things you did were unauthorized'" (Mathew 7:23)

May be you are called by God to serve Him. Serve Him the way He has called you to serve Him. Carefully obey everything He wants you to do - Everyday. Read His word thoroughly; find out how He wants you to serve Him. Never be aloof or be careless when it comes to serving God. God want His servants to serve Him, His way - not any other way.

Eli's sons

"Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels who had no respect for the Lord¹³ or for their duties as priests. Whenever anyone offered a sacrifice, Eli's sons would send over a servant with a three-pronged fork. While the meat of the sacrificed animal was still boiling,¹⁴ the servant would stick the fork into the pot and demand that whatever it brought up be given to Eli's sons. All the Israelites who came to worship at Shiloh were treated this way.¹⁵ Sometimes the servant would come even before the animal's fat had been burned on the altar. He would demand raw meat before it had been boiled so that it could be used for roasting.

¹⁶ The man offering the sacrifice might reply, "Take as much as you want, but the fat must first be burned." Then the servant would demand, "No, give it to me now, or I'll take it by force."¹⁷ So the sin of these young men was very serious in the Lord's sight, for they treated the Lord's offerings with contempt"
(I Samuel 2:12-17)

Aaron's sons were careless in their service to God by burning a different fire. Eli's sons were also careless in their service by treating the Lord's offering in contempt.

Like Aaron's sons, Eli's sons were also called by God. And they did serve the Lord. But they were careless servants. They did many things they had to do as priests, but not everything they did was done God's way. They took advantage of their position as servants of God with the offerings. They helped people offer sacrifices to the Lord, at the same time, they also took all the fine cut meat they wanted from the sacrifice.

According to God's law, the priest has the right to take some portion of the meat. But Eli's sons wanted more. They wanted the fine cut meat, not what God wanted them to take. Sometimes they even took the meat before it was burned on the altar. God's word clearly prohibits them from eating the fat from the meat, but Eli's sons liked to eat meat with fat. They did not like boiled meat, so they would demand raw meat to roast!!

They were careless about the work God gave them and this carelessness led them to abuse their position as servants of the most high God. Similar things are happening in the body of Christ these days. Many servants of God are called by God to serve Him. But after sometime, they become

careless in their work. Soon, instead of concentrating on the work the Lord has given them, they begin to concentrate on what they could get out of the work. They begin to abuse the position the Lord gives them for personal gains.

Like Eli's sons, many in the Body of Christ today use the position the Lord has given them to fulfill all their fleshly cravings and even call it "ministry". The sin of Eli's sons was not taking the sacrifice meat. What displeased God was, that they took more than the meat allotted to them, by demanding it from the people, even threatening them sometimes. What God gave them was not sufficient for them. Their greed made them want more...constantly. It was they who decided what they wanted, how they wanted it and how much they wanted.

Taking offering or asking money for the work that God has called you to do is not wrong. But if the minister takes more than he needs and still asks more to satisfy his fleshly desires by manipulating peoples' emotions, then he is doing something that greatly displeases God. It is heartbreaking to see these days some ministers exploit peoples' ignorance and even scare them into giving money. Some even threaten (Indirectly, of course) people with a curse if they do not give to their ministries.

Again, many people mistake the Lord's patience as his approval of their actions. Let me tell you, if you abuse the position given by God and abuse His offerings and think, God is approving of your actions because fire has not fallen from heaven and destroyed you, you are sadly mistaken. Again I repeat, God's patience is not His approval.. He is just giving you time to repent. Examine yourself.

"But if we examine ourselves, we will not be examined by God and judged in this way". (I Corinthians 11:31)

But where was Eli when all these things were going on? He was a man of integrity. Why did he not do something about the abuse that was happening before his eyes? Surely he heard about the happenings. Eli did warn his sons, but by the time he did it, it was too late.

"Eli said to them, "I have been hearing reports from the people about the wicked things you are doing. Why do you keep sinning? ²⁴ You must stop, my sons! The reports I hear among the Lord's people are not good. ²⁵ If someone sins against another person, God can mediate for the guilty party. But if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede?" But Eli's sons wouldn't listen to their father, for the Lord was already planning to put them to death" (I Samuel 2:23-25).

Eli's warning was of no use because it was too late and their wickedness had already hardened their hearts. Was Eli at fault here? Yes...He did not discipline his children at the right time. He too was careless. He was careless in his responsibilities as a minister and was also careless as a father. By the time he understood the seriousness of the situation, it was too late.

*"One day a prophet came to Eli and gave him this message from the Lord: "Didn't I reveal myself to your ancestors when the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt? ²⁸ I chose your ancestor Aaron from among all his relatives to be my priest, to offer sacrifices on my altar, to burn incense, and to wear the priestly garments as he served me. And I assigned the sacrificial offerings to you priests. ²⁹ **So why do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings? Why do you honor your sons more than me—for you and they have become fat from the best offerings of my people!** (Bold mine).*

³⁰ *"Therefore, the Lord, the God of Israel, says: The terrible things you are doing cannot continue! I had promised that your branch of the tribe of Levi would always be my priests. But I will honor only those who honor me, and I will despise those who despise me. ³¹ I will put an end to your family, so it will no longer serve as my priests. All the members of your family will die before their time. None will live to a ripe old age" (I Samuel 2:27-31)*

The prophet came to Eli and asked him "Why do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings?" It was his sons who directly did all those evil things, but the prophet tells Eli that he was responsible! He was responsible because he was careless and did not do his job as a minister and as a father. Not only was he careless in disciplining them, he was careless enough to eat all the fine cut meat brought home by his wicked sons! (verse 29).

Eli and his sons had become fat from the best offerings of God's people!!

Remember, when you see people abusing God given position and God given money for personal gains, to make themselves fat and if you are in a position to discipline such people, but keep quite, afraid of being unpopular, then you are partaking in their wickedness. When you know it is wrong but keep quite because you don't want to hurt anyone, then remember, you will end up hurting yourself and others. Eli did not want to hurt his children so he kept quite and ate the fine cut meat and judgment came on him.

We are living in days when ministers of God shamelessly abuse God given position and God given money (which they erroneously assume as their own money) for personal gains. The other day I saw the wife of a preacher shamelessly flaunting that God had given her a brand new Lexus car and God could give anyone a Lexus. She said "all you have to do is Claim it in the name of Jesus"!! These are the people who have become fat from the best offerings of God's people!! It is these careless Christians who bring shame on the name of the Lord Jesus.

Dear beloved, If you see anyone abusing God given resources and if you are in a position to discipline them, please do not be careless and ignore your responsibility. Because Careless Christians are a liability in the Kingdom of God.

David and his army

"Then David mobilized thirty thousand special troops.² He led them to Baalah of Judah to bring home the Ark of God, which bears the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim.

³ They placed the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the hillside home of Abinadab. Uzzah and Ahio, Abinadab's sons, were guiding the cart⁴ with the Ark of God on it, with Ahio walking in front.

⁵ David and all the people of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all their might, singing songs and playing all kinds of musical instruments—lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.

⁶ But when they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah put out his hand to steady the Ark of God.⁷ Then the Lord's anger blazed out against Uzzah for doing this, and God struck him dead beside the Ark of God.⁸ David was angry because the Lord's anger had blazed out against Uzzah. He named that place Perez-uzzah (which means "outbreak against Uzzah"). It is still called that today." (II Samuel 6:1-8)

King David mobilized thirty thousand special troops to go and get the Ark of God. It was a very high profile event for Israel as a nation. Understandably, everybody was excited that they were going to bring back the Ark of God which the Philistines had captured. And David wanted this to be a massive celebration. There were 30,000 special troops, a big choir with all kinds of musical instruments. It was grand. All the people were singing and enjoying. I am sure their intentions were right and they were doing it with a pure heart. Everything seemed perfect.....until... the oxen stumbled. And when Uzzah put out his hand to steady the Ark of God, the Lord's anger blazed out against Uzzah and he died there.

Their celebration was turned into a funeral procession! Why should Uzzah die? Did he do anything wrong? Is it wrong to steady the Ark of God which otherwise would have fallen to the ground? On the surface, the death of Uzzah may seem too harsh, may be unfair to some. But it is not what it seems on the surface.

As we dig deeper, we find that David did a lot of things to bring the Ark home. He gathered the 30,000 strong special troops, made arrangements for the musicians, gathered all the people. He did many things, but failed to do the the single most important thing. He was careless enough to overlook a very important detail.

He did many things but failed to ask this question. "What according to God's word is the right way to move the Ark of God?".

God' word has very clear instructions on how to transport the Ark of God. In Numbers 4: 5-15, very clear instructions are given on how to carry the Ark. It says that the ark has to be carried using a carrying pole and it must be carried by Levites. It also clearly says that anyone who touches the Holy object will die. *"But they must not touch the sacred objects, or they will die."* (Num 4:15).

But David placed the Ark on a cart and brought it. No Levite was carrying it. The other mistake was

by Uzzah, who touched the Ark when there was very clear instruction not to touch.

David did the right thing, with the right intentions but he was careless and did it the WRONG WAY!

Many in the Body of Christ these days do many good things, their intentions are pure but they are careless and do it the wrong way. They do not care to study what the Bible has to say about doing a certain thing. They say, "If it is a good thing and if your intentions are pure, then do it". But in the Kingdom of God, that is not right. We have to do what the Lord asks us to do, the way He wants it done. David had all the beautiful music, the choir, and the 30, 000 special troops. They all went with just one purpose, to bring the Ark home. But none of it pleased God, **because it was not done in God's way.**

Where did David get the idea of putting the Ark on a cart? Transporting the Ark on a cart was the idea of the Philistines. It was they who sent the Ark on a cart. In I Samuel 6:1-12 we read that the diviners and priests of the Philistines advised them to send it on a cart.

David's mistake was doing God's work the Philistine way!

God's work should never be done by the ways of the world. If we try to achieve something for God using the methods and the ways of the world, it will end in disaster.

But increasingly, many things are done in the Body of Christ by the wisdom and methods of the world. Many say they want to win souls for Christ using ungodly music. Many say they want to join political parties and run for elections to change the world for Jesus. Some say that if they had more money they could bring more people to Christ. The Church today wants to use its money, influence, ungodly music to do many things for God.

Their intentions and desires are right but the way they want to achieve it, is the way of the Philistines. The way of the Philistines cannot achieve anything in the Kingdom of God. It will only end in disaster!!

God is not looking for people who would do many things for Him. He is just looking for people who would do His work, His way. Mere activities do not please God, if it is not done His way.

We have all the musical instruments, beautiful choirs; we have many people and many other resources in the Body of Christ. But what is lacking is the sensitivity to listen to every detail of God's word and obeying it completely. 99.9% obedience is not acceptable in the Kingdom of God. God expects us to read everything He has written in His word and obey everything, carefully.

*"You must obey these laws and regulations when you arrive in the land you are about to enter and occupy. The Lord my God gave them to me and commanded me to pass them on to you. **If you obey them carefully, you will display your wisdom and intelligence to the surrounding nations**". (Deut. 4:5,6) (Bold mine)*

God expects us to obey his word carefully not carelessly. There is a carelessness that has crept into the Body of Christ these days when it comes to obeying God's word. Many do not care to read all that God's word has to say and obey it. They only want to read that which makes them feel good or reflect their thinking.

Many wrong teachings, unbiblical practices, Harmful doctrines and useless traditions have entered the Body of Christ because of careless preachers who read, interpret and preach God's word carelessly. They do not want to take the time to sit in the Lord's presence to learn thoroughly what He wants them to learn.

Many ministers and ministries end in tragedy because they are careless in reading and obeying God's word. Many heresies have entered the Body of Christ because of the careless preaching of preachers. They have the music, the choir and the people, but they do not have the truth!! Truth is a rare commodity in the Body of Christ these days.

After Uzzah's death, David found what the problem was and set it right - immediately.

"Because you Levites did not carry the Ark the first time, the anger of the Lord our God burst out

against us. We failed to ask God how to move it in the proper way." ¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites purified themselves in order to bring the Ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, to Jerusalem. ¹⁵ Then the Levites carried the Ark of God on their shoulders with its carrying poles, just as the Lord had instructed Moses." (I Chronicles 15: 13-15).

David did not let this mistake continue. Many tragedies could be avoided if people do not continue in their mistaken ways. If you find that you have made a wrong turn somewhere, wake up, turn around and set things right - immediately. Do not continue in the mistake.

Dear beloved, let us be careful in reading God's word and obeying it. Even when a mistake is made, let us set it right as soon as possible to avoid further pain and misery. Be sensitive to the Word of God and the Lord will do mighty things through you.

God is looking for people who would carefully read His word and obey it - Everyday.

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