

A PREACHER YOU WOULD NOT TOLERATE

He frequently arrives a few minutes late for his Bible class (even though he's teaching), thus delaying the beginning of the class. He sometimes misses his class altogether because he stayed up so late on Saturday night that he just "could not" get up in time to attend.

He and his wife sit silently during the singing of praise to God during the worship hour. He sometimes misses Sunday evening worship, especially in the fall and winter because his favorite NFL team's game is not over in time for him to attend. He attends on Wednesday night once in awhile. Sometimes he "has a headache" or is "just too tired." On other occasions there is a movie in town he wants to see or some program on television that appeals to him. He has also missed a few times on Sunday evening when friends or relatives "dropped in" just before worship.

He drives an expensive car and a late model pickup, owns a summer home on the lake, a travel trailer, and a fishing rig. He lives in a more-than-comfortable house, dresses his family well, eats sumptuously, and spends a minimum of \$2,500 on the family vacation each year. However, he gives only \$10.00 per week to the Lord, and he does that only when he sporadically attends and if it is convenient. He sometimes refuses to give any amount.

When he finds himself in the presence of those who drink, he drinks with them "to avoid offending them." When he visits a denominational meeting, he sings spiritual songs with their instruments and calls their preacher "Reverend" "to avoid offending them." His wife takes her daily walks in her halter top and short shorts during the warm months. They both smoke and smell like a tobacco barn. They allow their children to do, say, and dress as they please.

When asked to assist with the visitation program, he refuses because it conflicts with his bowling night. Besides, the last time he helped they would not do everything just like he thought it should be done.

Such a preacher would and should not be tolerated. He could only have a damaging and depressing influence on the church. Any growth in the church would be in spite of his influence instead of because of it, regardless of how powerful or “dynamic” he might be with words in the pulpit.

While a congregation would not begin to tolerate such a preacher, it often tolerates other members of this sort without giving them any of the appropriate attention. When the faithful preacher applies the Word of God to such materialism and tries to root it out, brethren sometimes think he should be more tolerant. In fact, they will often listen much more to the stingy, selfish, worldly, materialistic brethren than they will to God’s messenger who calls for their repentance.

The Bible does not teach a double standard (Acts 10:34–35). The “convenience controlled” Christian should not be tolerated indefinitely, be he preacher, elder, deacon, or any other saint.

—Dub McClish
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