

WHICH DESCRIBES YOU?

I made my first attempt at preaching fifty-three years ago. While this is not a record, it has given me a backlog of experience from which some reliable observations may be drawn. I have observed that there are at least six levels of spiritual behavior to be found within any local church. Let us engage in some self-examination. Am I a:

Deserter? This person has utterly quit the church. He is not bashful about it. He openly criticizes everything about the church and wants nothing to do with it. He will tolerate no pleas from concerned brethren to return. In spite of the fact that his allegiance is blatantly to the world, and though he could not care less, often the name of such a one continues to appear in the church directory.

Hanger-on? This member has quit the church, practically speaking. He may attend Sunday morning worship a few times a year, but he insists that his name continue to appear in the church directory. He knows (and frequently employs) all of the excuses for not worshipping regularly, giving generously, and doing his part of the work.

Spasmodic? This person is “hot as a pistol” for awhile, but then turns “cold as a cucumber.” He may zealously work for a few months, but not over the long term. Just when he really gets involved, he becomes offended or disinterested and drops out. He cannot be depended upon.

Sampler? He sort of nibbles at religion. He dabbles in it somewhat like a hobby, picking it up when he has nothing better to do or when he becomes bored with other things. We need never worry about his becoming offended—he never personally applies the teachings of Scripture sufficiently to take offense.

Performer? His religious “commitment” is for the sake of appearance (Mat. 6:1ff). He may rarely miss an assembly and may give quite generously at times. He is

good at seeing what “the church” needs to be doing, but he is not about to do much about it if it involves any work, sacrifice, or commitment. Many in this level are known to be hypocrites between Sundays.

Trooper? He is consistent—the same Monday–Saturday as he is on Sunday. When there is work to be done, he will be there to help. He sees work that needs to be done and does it without having to be told. He fulfills the work the elders ask him to do. If he is physically able, he is present every time the doors are open, and he gives thoughtfully, cheerfully, and generously. The church grows and is stronger spiritually because of him.

Which of these describes you?

—Dub McClish

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