

"I'm Not Very Compatible with the Church"

Dub McClish

Several years ago I was visiting with a young man who had attended worship and Bible classes frequently where I preached. He had moved away for a while but had moved back to town for a few months before I ran into him in a service station. I had not seen him at worship since he moved back, so I mentioned this to him. He replied, "We (including his wife) may see you some Sunday." Then he added, as a quick afterthought, "I'm not very compatible with the church."

Wondering exactly what he meant, I asked what his specific problem was. He then told me that he was playing with a dance band and he said that he knew that a lot of members of the church would not approve. I agreed that this was a true observation. "We all have to choose what is most important in life to us," I replied, ending our conversation.

Could he be typical of many Christians? They have made their choice of the more important things in life to them and unfortunately, Christ and the church are not included. I am thinking of another couple who just don't "have time" to serve the Lord in the church, but they give the appearance of human dynamos in PTA and Cub Scouts. Parents who let everything from homework to football come before the church in the eyes of their children are usually found, sooner or later, in the preacher's study, wringing their hands, shedding their tears and asking the preacher to perform a miracle and straighten their child out.

To say, "I'm not very compatible with the church," must be one of the weakest excuses ever offered. It implies the knowledge of the wise and true course, but the lack of moral purpose to pursue that course. It betrays a condemning conscience. How can a person live under such a burden of guilt?

This excuse displays another thing so commonly seen: the failure to grasp that God is our constant companion. The statement seems to say, "If I could just play at the dances on Saturday night with nobody in the church knowing it, I could worship on Sunday and otherwise serve in the church with no problem." My, how we need to learn that we ought to serve God rather than men. But at least this boy recognized that the church stood for something; he had gotten the message in that respect.

I have long observed that some Christians' lives and habits were not compatible with the church, but I never thought I would hear anyone admit it.

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