**#13 – Aren’t Christian Judgmental and Hypocritical?**

If Christianity is so good, then why are Christians so bad? Christians don’t love others like Jesus did. Instead, they condemn them with ‘holier than thou’ pablum.

**I. Does Hypocrisy Nullify the Truth of Christianity?**

***Common Targets of Criticism***

1) Crusades 2) Inquisition 3) Killing heretics (Anabaptists) 5) Religious Wars 6) Salem witch trials 7) Own slaves/ lynching blacks 8) Extravagance of prosperity preachers 9) White-washing heroes

10) Sex scandals (cover-ups)

* Everyone has their personal stories of fundamentalism, legalism, church splits, church abuse.
* Sometimes non-Christians (e.g. other religions) act better than professing Christians.

*Why are Christians routinely judged by a higher standard than others?*

The high standard: See Matt. 5:38-48; Luke 6:28-33; Phil. 2:3-4.

***Admitting Failure***

Professing Christians often do horrendous things (ILL: Andrea Yates).

Problem exasperated because we say Christianity makes us better people (Matt 5:13-16; 2 Cor 5:17)

Biblical Examples:

* Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
* Paul (1 Tim. 1:12-14)
* Gadarene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20)

*Would there enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian in a court of law?*

***Answering the Critics***

The imperfection of Christians does not argue for the imperfection of Christ or of Christianity. Jesus is the only person who could never be accused of hypocrisy.

“If Christianity is so good, then why are Christians so bad? is not unlike “When did you stop beating your wife?” Beware of ad hominem fallacy – against the person instead of their claims of truth: “You’re just a kid [implication: you don’t know anything], why should I listen to you?”

False Accusations: Christians are routinely portrayed as weak, bigoted, backward, anti-intellectual, anti-science, well-meaning but naive, unable to deal with tough issues, etc. At worst, they are portrayed as evil. This is not new. Early Christians were called atheists and cannibals by Romans.

Neither the Bible nor the Christian faith ignores its imperfect followers. Jesus’ strongest denunciations were for hypocrites: Matt. 23:13-36. Condemning hypocrisy is being like Jesus. Likewise, faithful Christians condemns hypocrisy in stronger terms than non-Christians.

Note important difference between Islam and Christianity:

When Christians do something immoral, other Christians routinely condemn it. When Muslims terrorists do far worse things, other Muslims routinely praise it.

The difference? In Christianity it is fundamentally wrong. In Islam, it is fundamentally right.

Where Christianity has flourished so has a society. Where other religions and ideologies have flourished, societies have suffered.

***Internal Strife*** (Rom. 7:18-19; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; cf. James 4:1-2):

* David committed adultery
* Peter denied Jesus (cursed)
* Ananias and Saphira
* Churches of Rev. 2-3 (Only 2 escape warning: Smyrna and Philadelphia)

***False Conversions*** (Matt. 7:21-23; 24:24-25; 1 John 2:19)

* Parable of the Sower
* Judas
* Simon the sorcerer

True Christians cannot be faulted for what false Christians do.

ILL: We don’t blame the whole medical community when a witch doctor takes on title of “doctor.”

**II. Judgmentalism**

* Matthew 7:1 (not context: verses 1-6).

What are people doing when they accuse Christians of judgmentalism?

Does anyone go around thinking, “I’m wrong about everything I believe to be true!” As soon as you begin thinking you are wrong, you change your mind to some new perspective you think is right.

* John 7:24

Judge = discernment. To say I don’t judge anyone is to say I don’t have any kind of discernment about what is right and wrong. Furthermore, if judging involves discernment and you discern something is wrong for good reasons, then it is morally right to condemn it.

Responding to outsiders – See Matt. 7:6; Col. 3:12; Col. 4:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:13-17

Not: US vs. THEM. But: Slaves who need rescued; Beggars telling other beggars where to find bread.

**Resources:**

Mark Coppenger, *If Christianity Is So Good, Why Are Christians So Bad?*

Mark Mittlelberg, *The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask*

Erwin Lutzer, *Who are You to Judge?*

Rodney Stark. Any book he writes (the positive influence Christianity has had on history).