



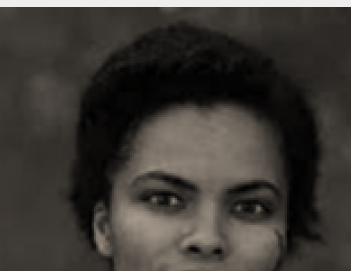
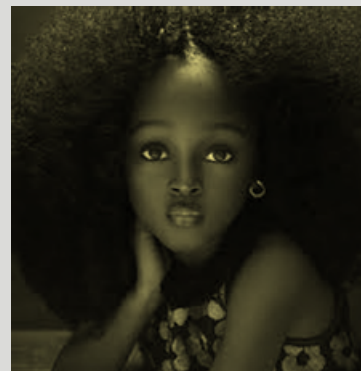
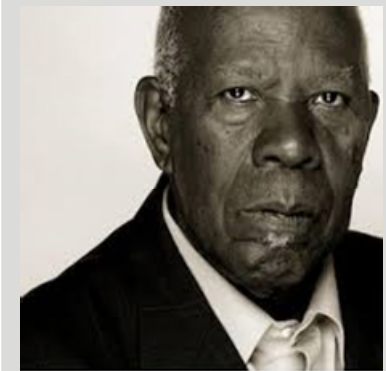
LESSON 5



I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

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I WILL LEAD MY FAMILY TO BE HEALTHY CHURCH MEMBERS

“His name was Bob. He died a few years ago, but if he influenced just a few people like he influenced me, this relatively unknown and quiet man changed the world. Bob always seems to be at the church. I understand that some people show up at church every time the doors are open out of guilt or legalistic obligation. Not Bob. He was always joyous, always serving, always kind. You could just tell he loved serving the church. The same could be said about Bob’s wife and two sons. They too seemed to love the church and to find joy in serving. The whole family was, well, different. But different in a good kind of way, if you know what I mean.

I was a young businessman in my early twenties. I had been married for three years and had just become a dad. Fatherhood hit me like a ton of bricks. I wanted to be a good husband and a good dad. And that meant getting involved at church. Really involved. I didn’t know it at the time, but Bob was watching me. He was concerned for me. He loved my youthful enthusiasm, but he knew what was coming. The more I got involved, the more I would see the imperfections of the church, the minister, the elders, the staff, and other church members.

[Rainer, Thom S.. I Am a Church Member (p. 55-56). B&H Publishing Group]

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It is so easy to see the imperfections in others, while neglecting or justifying one's own weaknesses and shortcomings.

Matt. 7:3-5 says: “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴ Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? ⁵ Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

- I.e., is it possible to focus on the flaw in someone else's life and yet fail to notice the glaring flaws of your own?
- Is it practical to think we can say to a friend ‘*Let me show you where you're wrong,*’ when you're guilty of even more?
- Both behaviors makes the judgmental one to be a hypocrite; for one should first know their blind spots and deal with them before they try to deal with the blind spots of others.

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Now, if we are honest, we all were taught this great truth by either our parents, grandparents, brother, sister, Pastors and Sunday School teachers

- And from this truth, there are other observations:

A. *There is a biblical correlations between the Church and the Family*

❖ We are taught this in Eph. 5:22-26 *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*

❖ Paul would then make clear the relationship between the church and the family in V 32-33.

❖ The biblical text continues in Ephesians 6:1-4, but this time the subject is parents and children.

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- ❖ These passages remind us that, just as we are supposed to sacrifice and love our families unconditionally, so are we to love our church.
- ❖ Our family members are not perfect, and neither are the members of the church. We are to find our joy in serving both our families and the church.

B. *We also learn it is important we Pray Together as a Family for the Church*

- ❖ We should learn to pray for the leadership of the church in a number of ways:
 - ▶ **Spiritual protection**
 - ▶ **Protection from moral failure**
 - ▶ **For physical strength**
 - ▶ **For the preaching of the word**
 - ▶ **For courage**
 - ▶ **For their families**
 - ▶ **For discernment**
 - ▶ **For encouragement**
 - ▶ **For wisdom in their leadership**
- ❖ Part of the honor of being a church member is the opportunity to teach our family to love Christ and His church.
- ❖ And that teaching often begins by praying together as a family for the church where God placed us.

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C. *Another critical element is Worshipping Together as a Family*

- ❖ As a church members, we are responsible for encouraging and leading our entire family to worship together in the church.
- ❖ As a married man, we should seek to include my spouse and if we are parents, we should seek to include our children
- ❖ Many church members are single. They have no immediate family with whom they can worship in the church.
- ❖ Regardless, there are still people watching them and how they love the church. They are to be an example to others (I Tim. 4:12 -- typos)
- ❖ This worshipping situation is especially poignant when a church member has a family member who is not a Christian or part of the church.
- ❖ Paul addressed the issue of divorce and separation in I Cor. 7.
- ❖ In essence, he instructed that the believing spouse should never take the initiative to leave the unbelieving spouse (V. 10-13) – because the believing spouse may serve as a testimony of Christ to their spouse (V 14)

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D. *Another benefit is Falling Deeply in Love with the Bride of Christ*

- ❖ As church member, we are not merely to like our church or only serve our church, but we are to **fall deeply in love with our church.**
- ❖ Remember Christ is the bridegroom, and the church is the bride.
- ❖ Our commitment is to love that bride with an unwavering and unconditional love.
- ❖ Unconditional love is not always easy. If someone is perfect and meets our every perceived need, it's easy to think we love that person.
- ❖ But such love is one-way. When it's all about me and my needs that is not unconditional love.
- ❖ Unconditional love means my love for the church will grow even as I may disagree with something or encounter disagreeable people.
- ❖ And as we grow more deeply in love with our church, we will do all we can in God's power to bring our family with us.
- ❖ We will pray together, worship together, and serve together.



Church?



Nah

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Why is there difficulty relating to the younger generation on the church?

- ❑ There is a decline in black millennials– like attending the building and honestly not just in staying in the building, but within God’s church – actually leaving the faith.
 - We have hung our hats on the Prov. 22:6 “Train up (hānak)a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
 - ❖ hānak means to dedicate or to consecrate stemming from a root meaning the roof or lower part of the mouth
 - ❖ Mid-wives creating a sucking sensation in babies with crushed dates
 - ❖ Bit or bridle that you put in a horses’ mouth to point in the right direction and control its natural energies (*Matt’ 5:13, 14 – we are salt and light*)
 - We always thought that as millennials grew older, at least some would return to a more traditional religious life.
 - But a recent Pew research poll indicates that today’s younger generations may be leaving religion for good.

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- The key Hebrew word in the phrase is *derek*, or “way.” It can refer to a literal way, such as a road, or it can be less literal and refer to the manner in which something acts, as it does in Prov. 30:18-19: There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Four which I do not understand:
 - The way of an eagle in the sky,
 - The way of a serpent on a rock,
 - The way of a ship in the middle of the sea,
 - And the way of a man with a maid
- What do the ways of an eagle in the sky ... a snake on a rock ... a ship in the ocean, and a man with a woman have in common?
- Some writers say the ways of these four are mysterious; others say their ways are nontraceable; others suggest that they each easily master an element that is seemingly difficult.
- But one thing for certain, they each go where there are no paths.
- “The way of a man with a maiden” refers to a man’s affectionate courting of a woman

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- In each of these, the term “way” refers to a characteristic manner.
 - We are to train a child according to his or her characteristic manner or bent that has been placed in them by their Creator. Some will be artistic, others athletic, and still others academic.
 - One may be strong-willed, and another compliant. One child can be encouraged by rewards or recognition, while another couldn't care less.
 - “Training up” calls for a relationship in which parent/teachers and child dedicate themselves to a shared purpose
- When you start to see the hypocrisy and some people want to make you change your life – are they being judgmental?
- Another Pew Research project noted many millennials never had strong ties to religion to begin with, which means they were less likely to develop habits or associations that make it easier to return to a religious community.
 - They also noted Changing views about the relationship between morality and religion also appear to have convinced many young parents that religious institutions are simply irrelevant or unnecessary for their children.

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- The Research pointed out that Millennials may be the symbols of a broader societal shift away from religion, but they didn't start it on their own.
- Their parents are at least partly responsible for a widening generational gap in religious identity and beliefs; they were more likely than previous generations to raise their children without any connection to organized religion.

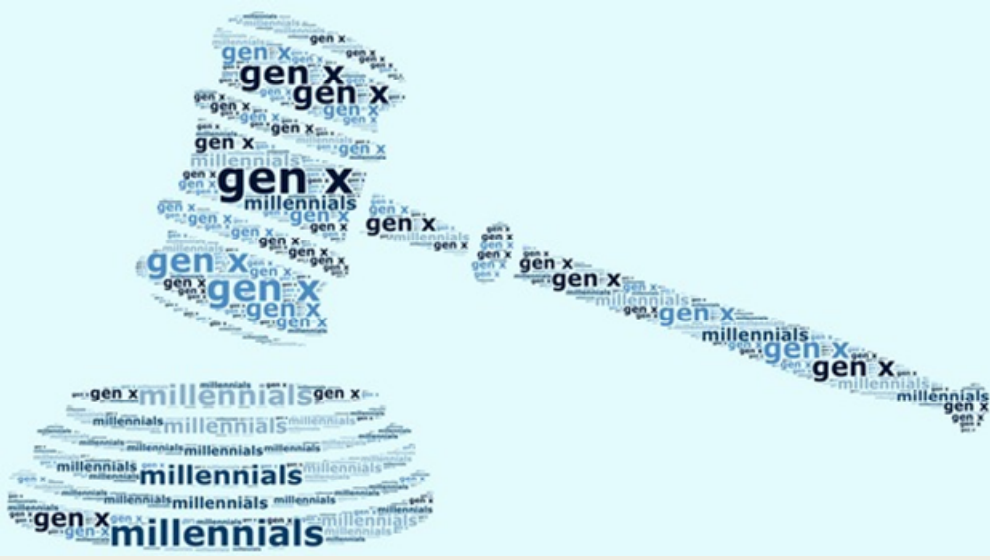
[<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/millennials-are-leaving-religion-and-not-coming-back/>]

- Tied to the Young persons observation was the presence of hypocrisy in the Church – akin to saying one thing and doing another
- **Mark 7:6-8** Jesus said: This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.”
- ❖ Jesus was calling them hypocrites reciting Isa. 29:13 and to counter this hypocrisy one would have to:
 - 1) The one who would worship Him would be classified as holy because they truly embrace His divine will in their lives.
 - 2) Consequently, the honor which they would give to Him with their lips would flow from a pure heart of faith and love.

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- In general, people tend to react more strongly to hypocrisy when it includes criticism or negative judgement.
- Similarly, people are far quicker to notice and call out hypocrisy when it goes against their own beliefs.
- Basically, people aren't 100% rational or consistent. Value judgements which are not static, are typically more subjective rather than objective.
- ❑ **When you are not being taught, it is a lack of discipleship coupled with a high focus on the music, and the singers without a foundation.**
 - We live in a world and society dominated by technology -- the Internet makes it possible for factual knowledge to be accessed anywhere.
 - But it's not solely undisputed information Millennials and Gen Z are interested. They want relational instruction from someone they respect
 - These two sub-groups are driven by activism, being born at a time when things were rough and even pointing to hopelessness. This youthful generation wants to take action against skepticism; having a **critical gaze towards changing the status-quo**

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❑ There is a sense that constantly being told about the same thing is judging. That amounts to being in a negative space and calling it church. For those who are not rooted in Christ they're gone.

- ❑ It helps to recognize that they are not black Christians, they are Christians that are black. A lot of the racial situations is a turn-off.
- ❑ The Church and its leadership has not matured to the place where it can get on the grass-roots level with the youth.
- ❑ There is a problem when the meat and butter of the Church is dealing with someone who is coming out of something (gang-banging, prostitution and the like). But what about those who are not coming our of anything

“Open Church – Open Bible”

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