

“Are You A Closet Christian?”

John 12:37-50

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Teaching Aim: To realize how easy it is for us to become closet Christians when we succumb to peer pressure around us. To understand, many of us are more concerned with what others think of us than what God thinks of us. To recognize those who are ashamed of the name of Jesus now will find Jesus being ashamed of them before His Father on Judgment Day. To understand the importance of taking a stand for Christ right now and not being a closet Christian.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: John reveals the one who is in Isaiah’s vision in Isaiah 6:1-13 (John 12:37-41)

1. According to **John 12:37**, how did the nation of Israel respond to their Messiah? Why did this rejection lead God to punish the unbelieving Jews with “*judicial hardening?*” (**vv. 38-40**)? (See **Isa. 53:1; Isa. 6:10**)

2. What amazing revelation does John give about “*Adonai*” in **John 12:41**? (See **Isa. 6:1**) What can we learn about the identity of Jesus Christ from this passage? Does this revelation change your view about Jesus in any way? If so, how?

3. What specific request did Jesus make to God the Father on the night before His crucifixion as He prayed what is known as His High Priestly prayer? (See **John 17:5**) How does this request tie together with the glory of God as seen in **Isaiah 6**?

4. How can the continual rejection of the gospel message by an unbeliever lead to “*judicial hardening*” in his or her heart today? What might happen if we are persistent in our sin and do not repent? (See **Exod. 9:11-12; Rom. 1:24-28; 2 Thess. 2:8-12**) William MacDonald writes in his commentary, “*When the Lord Jesus presented Himself to the nation of Israel, they rejected Him. Over and over again, He came back to them with the offer of salvation, but they kept saying ‘no’ to Him. The more men reject the gospel, the harder it becomes for them to receive it. When men close their eyes to the Light, God makes it more difficult for them to see the Light. God causes them to be struck with what is known as judicial blindness, that is, a blindness which is God’s judgment on them for refusing His Son.*” How would you define “*judicial hardening?*”

5. The following Child Evangelism Fellowship statistics show the ages at which people typically come to Christ: 0-4 = 1%; 4-14 = 85%; 15-30= 10%; 30-death = 4%. What can we learn about the importance of Children's Ministries from these statistics? Why is it important for us to serve in Children's Ministries and reach our children for Christ while they are still young?

Part II: The danger of desiring the praise of man more than desiring the praise of God (John 12:42-46)

1. Apparently, there were several closet Christians in the days of Jesus among the religious leaders, they believed in Jesus, but didn't want others to know because of the consequences. (vs. 42). Why do you think so many "Christians" today are closet Christians (vs. 43)? Would Jesus want His followers to act this way? What would He want us to do?
2. Throughout the Gospel of John, John has been demonstrating the unity between the Father and the Son. What can we learn from the following verses about how the Father and Son interact together? (See **Luke 10:16; John 12:44-50**)
3. **In John 12:45**, Jesus said, "And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me." According to **Heb. 1:1-3** and **Col. 2:9**, how can we see the Father in Jesus Christ?
4. Jesus uses a favorite metaphor of Himself in **verse 46**, what is it? Why do you think Jesus uses this metaphor so often to describe His ministry? (See **John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46**) Why is it important for every Christian to walk in the light today?

Part III: To recognize how important it is to share the gospel today (John 12:47-50)

1. What can we learn about the first advent of Christ from **John 3:16-17 (vs. 47)**? Will Jesus return as the tender Lamb of God or as the roaring Lion of Judah at His Second Coming? (See **Rev. 19:11-16**) How will the Second Coming of Christ be different from His first advent?

2. The decisions we make in life right now count forever. How do we see this principle played out in **verse 48**? For those who believe in Christ, we have a hope that cannot be taken away. (See **John 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:9-11**) In the future, born-again believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ according to **2 Cor. 5:10**. What will the Lord Jesus be judging? What will believers receive according to their works? (See Commentaries)

3. How is the judgment of born-again believers different from that of unbelievers? (See **Rev. 20:11-15**) What can unbelievers expect at the Great White Throne Judgment?

4. Under whose authority did Jesus speak (**vs. 49**)? When speaking of the Trinity, the orthodox view is, *"We believe in one God revealed in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; equal in essence (or deity), but different in role."* What can we learn from **verse 49** about the Lord Jesus Christ and His human nature? The Father is supreme in authority within the Trinity, does this in any way diminish the deity of Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit? Why or why not? (Hint: See definition above.)

5. Question: Have you received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so right now in pray? If so, how has your life changed since coming to Christ? What can we learn about the Christian life from the following verses? (See **Matt. 16:24-25**)

6. Today in the United States, our faith is being challenged like never before. *"Thom S. Rainer and his book "The Bridger Generation" examines the decline of the Judeo-Christian values among various generations within the United States during the 20th century. Please notice the following pattern: Builders (born 1927-1945): 65% were raised as Bible-based believers; Boomers (born 1946-1964): 35% were raised as Bible-based believers; Busters (born 1965-1983): 16% were raised as Bible-based believers; Bridgers (or Millennials, born 1984 or later): 4% were raised as Bible-based believers."* Why should these statistics trouble every Christian?

7. Ron Luce in his book *“Battle Cry For A Generation”* sites the following statistics: *“In 2005, Sociologists conducted a survey of 104 of Hollywood’s elite, asking the most influential writers and producers a number of ideological questions. Here are the findings: 93 percent seldom or never go to worship services; 97 percent believe in a woman’s right to abort; 5 percent strongly agree that homosexuality is wrong; 16 percent agree that adultery is wrong; 99 percent believe that television should be “more critical” of Judeo-Christian values.”* What are some ways that you see Hollywood changing our society today?

8. Erwin W. Lutzer writes in his book, *“We Will Not Be Silenced”*, *“Revolutions begin with a cultural moment, a pretext that will hide the real agenda to justify the revolution. You need (1) the triumph of an ideology over science, reason, and civil liberties. Then you (2) recruit people who are willing to advance the revolution of anarchy in the name of justice and equality. And finally, (3) you must silence all dissident voices. Submission to the ideology is enforced either by shaming, by laws, or simply by exclusion, such as firing opposing voices from the workplace.”* How do you see this battle for the mind being played out in our culture today? Is this move toward the radical left good for the future of our country and the freedom of religion that we’ve enjoyed for so long, or is it a major threat to who we are?

9. How should the Church respond to these new challenges in our country today? Why is it important for every Christian to do his or her best to live out the Great Commandment in their everyday life? (See **Matt. 22:36-38**) On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your Christian walk? Is your faith a living and vibrant one, or have you retreated and become a closet Christian?

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 53:1** that most people would reject the Messiah at His coming; this has proved true with Jesus!
- Isaiah also prophesied in **Isaiah 6:10** that God would judicially harden the hearts of those who continuously reject the Messiah (Jesus Christ).
- John reveals that the *“Adonai”* (Supreme Sovereign One) Isaiah saw in his vision was the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ in all of His glory. (See **John 12:41**)
- The Jewish religious leaders were more concerned about getting the praise of men than they were about getting the praise of God; this is a danger for us today as well.
- Jesus came as *“a light into the world, that whoever believes in Him should not abide in darkness.”* (See **John 12:46**)
- The Lord Jesus has called us to be His witnesses in a hostile world, not closet Christians.