

# Why I am a Christian:

*in a scientific, humanistic and atheistic world*

## **Part 1:** *Other people taught me to believe*

<sup>7</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.  
<sup>8</sup> Listen, my son, to your father's instruction  
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.  
<sup>9</sup> They will be a garland to grace your head

A. My \_\_\_\_\_

1. They taught me to have \_\_\_\_\_ in God

a. This is often used as a criticism:

*"You only believe because your parents taught you to believe."*

b. The greatest indicator of whether one has faith is the church attendance of his/her parents:

- \_\_\_\_\_% for those whose father attends worship regularly (regardless of the mother's attendance)
- \_\_\_\_\_% for those whose moms worship regularly (without the father)
- \_\_\_\_\_% for those whose parents don't worship, even if they claim to believe in God.

c.. We are more likely to \_\_\_\_\_ those values that our parents taught us.

1) This is true of our politics, values, and morals as well.

- Most people whose parents were politically liberal/conservative grow up to be politically liberal/conservative.
- Most people whose parents value education will value education.
- Most people whose parents love the Pitt Panthers, love the Pitt Panthers.

2) If something is \_\_\_\_\_, we pass it on to our children.

2. We don't accept our parents' lessons \_\_\_\_\_, however

a. We examine most of the values and lessons our parents teach us.

- There are many things my parents taught me that I've found to be \_\_\_\_\_
- There are other things my parents taught me that I've \_\_\_\_\_.

b. I've considered the faith of my parents, and I have decided that much of what they taught me is:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- an accurate expression of my \_\_\_\_\_.

*Thank you, mom and dad, for gifting me with something of such great value!*

B. The Early \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

<sup>2</sup>Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3

1. The characteristics of the early Christians

a. Faith amidst \_\_\_\_\_

- The early Christians were an oppressed political minority in the first century, most of them \_\_\_\_\_ . They had no rights and no power, and yet...
- People were attracted to Jesus and his message, even when it was clear that Jesus was not the hoped for \_\_\_\_\_ Messiah who would deliver the Jews from Roman oppression.

b. **Diversity**

1) In the later 1<sup>st</sup> Century, Christianity expanded rapidly across cultural and racial lines

2) Most other religions of the world were \_\_\_\_\_ in nature.

- \_\_\_\_\_, one of the few ancient religions that was culturally and racially diverse, took over 300 years before it was finally introduced outside of India into China in the East and Alexandria in the West.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was dominated by the Arabs for the first 500 years of its existence, until the Turks embraced Islam as their religion in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- However, by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD (in less than 50 years), there were Christian \_\_\_\_\_ in Rome, Syria, India, Greece, and Asia Minor

2. The early Christians did not use \_\_\_\_\_ in order to spread their faith

a. Early Christians gave their \_\_\_\_\_ for what they believed in, but did not \_\_\_\_\_ for what they believed in.

b. This is an unusual sociological phenomenon: most religions or political isms gain followers through military \_\_\_\_\_ or by the accumulation of political \_\_\_\_\_.

C. Christian \_\_\_\_\_

1. Other Christians have faith for me when I \_\_\_\_\_...

a. In my despair and desperation, they are there for me

b. We need each other and need to be connected to the \_\_\_\_\_.

c. Faith is not about Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_, but Jesus and \_\_\_\_\_:

- God is known in the \_\_\_\_\_ of believers
- Those who “do” God on their own at home cannot and do not \_\_\_\_\_ God.

<sup>9</sup> Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their work:  
<sup>10</sup> If one falls down,  
his friend can help him up.  
But pity the man who falls  
and has no one to help him up!  
<sup>11</sup> Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.  
But how can one keep warm alone?  
<sup>12</sup> Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
<sup>13</sup> A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

<sup>20</sup> “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. John 17:20-23

2. Those who \_\_\_\_\_ from the church...

a. are ripe for \_\_\_\_\_ and a cooling of their relationship with God.

- It is not that the life of a Christian is \_\_\_\_\_ than those who are not.

- However, those who do not live their lives within the protective umbrella of the church will not have the support to \_\_\_\_\_ them when life gets difficult.

b. are being \_\_\_\_\_

- They are not giving of themselves to others who are in \_\_\_\_\_
- They could be a blessing to others by their presence and by the gifts that God has given them, which are to be used in the context of the \_\_\_\_\_ (I Corinthians 12)