

General Topics :: I want to leave this church...

I want to leave this church... - posted by YY, on: 2006/1/2 18:51

I'm about to make the decision to leave the church which my husband and I have been attending for the past 3 years. I'm really thankful that I came across this website cause there's nowhere else to turn to for insights and advices. I know that we have Bible, but I want to make sure that I'm doing the right thing.

I will start with some background info. Please bear with me if it's a bit long.

I came from China to the U.S. in my late 20's, and became a born-again Christian 5 years ago in a Baptist church. Due to graduation and moving to West coast, I stayed there for only a year after my baptism.

We settled with our current church shortly after my husband joined me. I was initially attracted by their lively worship and warm home-like atmosphere. Grown up with none exposure to Christianity and being a fairly young immature Christian, I knew little about different denominations. Besides, I have to admit that I was not spending much time reading Bible. To me, a Christian church is a Christian church. Later, I learned that it's a Pentocostal church. At first I was uncomfortable with the tongue speaking, spiritual dancing, and slaying by the Holy Spirit, etc, but I thought that they were the free work of the H.S. Who am I to judge? So I accept (their teaching).

At one miracle healing gospel meeting, I did experienced a healing of my back pain which had troubled me for 6 years. At another "Filled by the Holy Spirit " meeting, I received my "tongue" under the guidance of a senior guest pastor. I was excited cause I was taught that it's the first sign of filled by the H.S. although I didn't understand a bit of my own uttering.

At Sunday services, Pastor and his wife often say that the presence of Holy Spirit is very abundant. Sometimes I can feel a warm and peaceful presence both in church gatherings or in private, like a warmth on my back. Is it the presence of Holy Spirit? Sometimes Pastor or his wife say that there were special attainings from H.S. flowing, which I can never sense.

The church also had a painful dividing not long after we joined. The assistant preacher left or was forced to leave according to some. More than half people left gradually. Not knowing the facts and whole truth, we stayed. From what I know, the pastor didn't seem to be at fault. I sensed that something spiritual must be wrong, but I don't know what it is.

Then a couple of weeks ago, pastor's wife started to preach the book "Heaven is so real" (I posted one post asking about the book here). Her teaching deeply confused and troubled me. There were things apparently conflicting with the Bible, even I can pin point it and found the Bible verse. How could she not see and believe that book?

I haven't got the chance to talk to her or the pastor about my thoughts on her teaching. Shall I do so? What does the Bible say on situations like that? Moreover, shall we leave this church because of the unbiblical teachings? I still believe that my pastor and his wife are sincere Christians who love the Lord. And I like the brothers and sisters in the church. It won't be easy to leave, and won't be easy to stay either. I fear that my spiritual growth will suffer if we stay.

Thanks very much for reading. Please pray for me that we would make the decision according to His will.

Re: I want to leave this church... - posted by lamuskrat (), on: 2006/1/2 19:06

First let me say that it is good that you are comfortable here and are seeking council from your brother and sisters in Christ.

It is a difficult situation to be in, but your approach to the problem is correct. Seeking God about this and seeking the prayers of your church family.

It might be awkward, but yes I would ask about / confront the error. If you do not feel the Lord is leading you to do the confronting and exposing this error, then possibly He would lead you to contact the denominations elders or leaders and let it be dealt with within the church structure.

I personally cannot advise leaving, only God can dictate that, but our prayers go with you.

Re: - posted by CyberCarbon (), on: 2006/1/2 19:49

Welcome to the inner circle of most churches, people leave for all kinds of reasons, do not assume the ones that left were correct they might be following a man and not God. It happens all the time. I often wonder why someone preaches something other than the bible, I have not read the book in question so I can offer nothing for or against it. However I do not understand why the wife is preaching and not the Pastor. If you follow the brothers suggestions and want to leave do this:

Before you decide one way or the other, you should visit at least 10 other churches over the next few months. Go to Wednesday Nights Services, or any other meetings they may have and see what the Holy Spirit would lead you to do.

I would suggest fasting and praying for an answer and be slow to speak and even slower to act.

Re: - posted by groh_frog, on: 2006/1/2 20:18

It's a hard decision, emotionally, to leave a church that's filled with friends. It can be especially hard to set those emotions aside and make a choice based on where the Spirit is leading you.

Remember that when there's a problem with your church, there's generally two things you can do, and one thing you must do.

You must- pray.

You can- either leave, or help solve the problem.

Where you draw the line can be difficult. If you ever find a church that you agree 100% with, no disagreements, perfect as it can be, then you've either found a very rare thing, or you're brainwashed into a cult. But when you do find the "little things", you can work with the church to fix them. If the pastor said something that just itches to be explained, the approach and ask.

On the other hand, there is a point where you should leave a church. I believe the best example of this is either when the leadership is teaching heretical doctrine, or isn't teaching at all- lack of spiritual accountability within the church, whatever.

The very first church I attended when I became a Christian was great. Good people, and for all I know, they were doing things the way they should. Not long after, however, I ran into some Jehovah's witnesses who said that Jesus wasn't God. Well, I came back to my church to get their help in refuting this craziness. But what did I find? Not that anyone believed such heresy, but that only one person that I talked to out of all of my peers had any biblical evidence as to why that doctrine was incorrect. There was an almost complete lack of accountability within parts of the leadership to the point that at very few of the people were doctrinally sound, or held accountable in any way. Oh, the pastor could give a nice history lesson Sunday morning, but beyond that, the shepherding was almost nil.

In that example, I left. I was a weak, fairly new Christian, and I knew enough to know that this wasn't a very good example of what the Church should be. Now, if I was an elder at that church, on the other hand, I would've stayed. Not just stayed, but started working to take care of the problem.

So, pray about it. If you're not growing there, not being held accountable, not being shepherded, and not able to change the problem, it might be time to move on.

Grace and Peace...

Re: - posted by groh_frog, on: 2006/1/2 20:22

Also, be careful of any church that has to tell you about the "warm fuzzies" that are happening there. Revivals don't occur with smiles- they happen with tears. And any church that offers these "warm fuzzies" as evidence that you're growing, or whatever, I would watch carefully. I have yet to have a growing experience that didn't bring me to tears before my maker.

Grace and Peace...

Re: - posted by tacklebox (), on: 2006/1/2 20:40

It is great to seek wise counsel on this matter, but ultimately seek God. If you are not being fed a spiritual diet that is satisfying, then seek nourishment. Most importantly, discuss your concerns with the people you have them with. A wise man once told me that if you talk negatively about someone without praying for them, it's gossip. Honesty really is the best policy, and God can still visit in the midst of great strife and conflict. Get to know God and His Word better, and love your enemies. I encourage all here, including myself, to remember this dear sister in our prayers. May God be with you!

-Chris

Re: - posted by four4Him (), on: 2006/1/2 20:46

-There can be a big difference between doing something right and doing the right thing. If a believer who is young in the faith finds himself / herself in a church that is moving away from the Word of God (i.e., anyone - regardless of who they are - preaching or teaching something unscriptural), then leaving may be the best solution. Church members may think that everything is right in the church, when, in fact, it is not. I have seen young believers who were overwhelmed and intimidated by church leadership, and the result is bitterness and the development of a "toxic faith."

-Don't wait until it's too late. Find a church where the Gospel is preached, the Bible is the final Word of truth, and the peace of the Holy Spirit dwells..

-I have no qualms at all about advising someone to leave a "toxic" church. I am a pastor who cares deeply for the spiritual well-being of my congregation..

-Blessings...John.

Re: - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2006/1/2 22:52

"I fear that my spiritual growth will suffer if we stay."

I would say this is reason enough to leave. If you felt that you were strong enough to lead those in the church who were straying, I would say to stay. I would not seek guidance from someone who is questionable.

I almost got a job under someone who had obvious sin, but I would have done so, knowing that I was prepared to help that individual overcome, though I didn't mention that in the interview.

However, I would not seek guidance for spiritual living under someone when I am looking for them to lead me in the way of righteousness.

Like our brothers and sisters, said though, seek the Lord first, we are only offering advice to what we know:

James 4:15 "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

Re: - posted by YY, on: 2006/1/3 2:28

Quote:

A wise man once told me that if you talk negatively about someone without praying for them, it's gossip. Honesty really is the best policy, and God can still visit in the midst of great strife and conflict.

Thank you all for the encouragements and advices. It's a good reminder to pray for someone before talk negatively about them. I surely haven't spend as much time praying as talking, although I have restrained myself only talking to my husband and about it.

Another factor that I didn't mention in the original post is that it's a Mandarin speaking church with mostly Chinese Christians. The local Chinese Christian community is not very large with less than 10 churches, so rumors/gossips travel fast. At least that's the impression I learned from the pastor regarding the dividing, and I'm afraid it's true. Among the few I know outside my church, one elder brother seems a wise man, but I hesitate to call him asking for advice, at least not before I talk to the pastor. My husband is a lukewarm Christian at best (which he admits), so I truly have nobody to turn to for counseling until I found this forum.

I guess that it's a good thing cause it will force me to seek the Lord who says that he will never forsake me. Thank you for your prayers.

Re: - posted by YY, on: 2006/1/3 2:39

Quote:

Church members may think that everything is right in the church, when, in fact, it is not.

That's exactly what I've been thinking until that wake-up teaching. Looking back, I realized that there were quite a few signs of unsound doctrines, which I naively and carelessly brushed away. I am responsible for my ignorance.

Now I treasure the Bible more than ever, more than when I was first saved. What shall I be without the Word? Whom shall I listen and trust?

Re: - posted by Wildhorse (), on: 2006/1/3 4:08

Hello YY,

May I ask one question which is slightly deviating off topic? What do you mean exactly by Spiritual Dancing?

Also, there is nothing in the Bible that talks about being slain in the spirit - that is unbiblical. As for Tongues, I have never spoken in Tongues.. I don't know what to think about that so I think in this case it would be safer if I left that alone.

I personally cannot offer any advice other than seek God, ask what his will is. Ask him to reveal it to you. In this case I would personally probably leave, but having not been in this situation - I can't really say.

God Bless You
Michael

Re: - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2006/1/3 11:16

I would encourage you to earnestly pray with your husband and reach a consensus based on what the Holy Spirit is telling you to do. If the Holy Spirit has spoken to you to leave surely He will speak to your husband as well.

My wife and I were faced with a very similar circumstance over a year ago. It was a very painful thing at the time but it was as something the Lord clearly dictated.

Blessings to you in the name of Jesus...

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2006/1/3 11:33

Sister YY wrote:

Quote:
-----I haven't got the chance to talk to her or the pastor about my thoughts on her teaching. Shall I do so? What does the Bible say on situations like that? Moreover, shall we leave this church because of the unbiblical teachings? I still believe that my pastor and his wife are sincere Christians who love the Lord. And I like the brothers and sisters in the church. It won't be easy to leave, and won't be easy to stay either. I fear that my spiritual growth will suffer if we stay.

I have left two churches in my 9 year walk as believer. I have since returned to the second church that I left two years ago. Both times, I left for basically the same reasons. The Holy Scriptures were being compromised by those who choose not to believe all the Scripture.

One day the Lord brought me to the Scripture in Revelation speaking of the conditions of the churches under Christ. In all but one church there was something wrong within the church. What I learned from that was that **My** carnal desires had clouded my relationship with my Lord. I had allowed my desires for an Acts 2 type church to grow roots in my life that at probably manifested itself in sin.

The Holy Scriptures are the foundation for all believers. The local church, most of the time, strays away from that foundation in one way or another. The Holy Spirit's teaching does not conflict with the Holy Scriptures, it confirms the Truth contained in the Scriptures.

Heb. 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Maturity comes from living in Scripture. It does not happen overnight. Signs and wonders are gifts of God given to His people. Yet there is much more ahead for you to live through, both the sufferings and joy that come to those who live and eat His daily bread.

Be still and know He is God. Do nothing rash. Wait upon Him. He will direct your path.

God Bless

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by YY, on: 2006/1/4 0:50

Quote:

May I ask one question which is slightly deviating off topic? What do you mean exactly by Spiritual Dancing?

I don't know for sure what it is. It was also called 'dancing in the Spirit'. I saw a few sisters 'dancing in the Spirit' in several occasions, in some special meetings, and during 'Wait upon the Lord' time after Sunday service. The dancer was said to be under influence or under control of the Holy Spirit. It was also said that she has to loose herself up to let the H.S. move through her. It does sound suspicious, doesn't it?

Re: - posted by PTywama3 (), on: 2006/1/4 1:56

I cannot say that dancing before God is illegitimate. Dancing "in the Spirit" may not be so, either. If a person truly does have a gift of dance, or the Holy Spirit is indeed impressing them to dance, then that person might just be doing exactly what they're supposed to be. But in Charismatic circles, this may be overemphasized. I've been there, but I've seen it be real, too.

I would also highly council against so easily leaving a church. Charisma and zealousness can be overbearing (and overreaching,) but they can also be good to learn from.

Somebody once talked to me about the tent revivals in Toronto (I think,) where people were being "laid out" or "slain" "in the spirit" as well as shouting out in tongues and other such things. That person (as it goes) left in disgust at an utter show of nonsense. He commented in his prayers that at least 80% of it was show... and God agreed. But then he tells that God said right back to him 20% is more than you've ever seen.

I have a pastor at the only church I have ever called home. There have been several times when the church gossiped against him to a large extent, one pastor and some of the congregation played games with his spoken character, and other such events. There have been many times he has spoken about something I didn't agree with, although to the best of my knowledge nothing unbiblical. There have been several pastors that came into the church and taught over something I didn't hold biblical accord with, as well as several Sunday school teachers. Yet even though I have recently been more often away from this man and his parish, I have held this church as family and maintained a deep respect for this pastor.

I would encourage you to approach your pastor and ask about the message his wife brought forward. I would also encourage you to write down what it is you found wrong with the message, as well as the bible verses you found for them. Then I would encourage you to ask for his explanation. I have had to do this myself before, and even though I may not agree, I have walked away with something more to look at, think about, and compare.

Act 17:11 - These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

The Greek word for search is more like scrutinize, which relates to a close examination of much of scripture.

You may be quite perfectly correct in all of your thinking if you approach your pastor. He will probably have something new for you to consider. And, should the first scenario occur solely, you will have helped establish a biblical grounds for concern which your pastor can then approach safely and with a greater authority.

But, I must also echo the greatest bit of advice as many have already said here - please, Let God be your Judge.

General Topics :: I want to leave this church...

Re: - posted by suzy (), on: 2006/1/4 13:55

Hello YY

My husband and I have been in a few churches over our many years of Christian life. We had some good advice given to us when we left one church, which I would like to share with you.

We were told to write down and list all the churches in the area; cross off the ones we knew we would not want to attend. Then to go through the list of remaining churches attending each one for about 4 weeks so we had a better idea what each was like. We were also advised not to make any decision until we had been to all. But of course, if you find one you really liked en route through your list, then you could stop!

You should write down a list of specific things you would like: eg whether they were welcoming, had prayer meetings, supported missionaries, etc. During your 4 week or so 'visiting times' you could find out a little bit more about the church and the way it is run; most churches have literature - read through this - can be revealing, and people are often willing to answer questions. If you have friends there, you could ask them a few leading questions. Yes, it will take time, but it is important that you are happy where you attend church. There is so much nonsense passed off as church nowadays, the last thing you want is to land up in one of these places!

This is something you and your husband do together and pray about so you come to a mutual decision.

I pray the Lord will lead and guide you in your decisions.

Sue

Re: Update - posted by YY, on: 2006/1/11 13:24

My husband and I both feel that we would leave this church after we prayed together. I also spend time reading the Bible, searching for facts and articles relating the charismatic movement. It's not until recently did I realize that this is charismatic church. The pastor admires Benny Hinn, Peter Wagner, and David Yonggi Cho as today's strong Christian leaders, and many of his teachings and practice in the church echo charismatic movement. Oh, was I shocked when I found out some facts of charismatic movement and the leaders.

Last Sunday, he and his wife excitingly talked about a big Christian conference (with 5000+ including people from overseas) they just came back from. According to them, many leaders called for big donations (\$5000, \$8500, presumably to their ministries) at the conference, promising that you will receive if you give. Benny Hinn was at the conference, and another person mentioned his offerings to Oral Roberts in his witness.

Although we're quite determined to leave, I still want to talk to the pastor in person to confirm his stand on apparent conflict between a book and the Bible. So, last night we invited him over to talk. Below are quote from the author's website promoting her book (<http://www.choothomas.com/>)

Quote:

Heaven is so Real is our Lord Jesus' end time book. He only used my body to write this book. He wants all believers and unbelievers to read it and prepare for His coming. He said, He is giving people a chance to know what it takes to enter His Kingdom through this book. Remember, none of our salvations are secure until the end. We must do our best while we have a chance.

The Lord himself took me to heaven 17 different times, in my transformed spirit body, at an age of about 15 to 16 years old and showed me countless things in heaven that He has prepared for His people, and showed me hell twice. He also showed me things during the time of the tribulation, after He took His people to heaven.

Â...

The book is our Lord Jesus' end time book and He wants all Christians to read it and witness with it to others so they can prepare for His coming. It is changing thousands of lives. This book is for two kinds of people, those who want to go to heaven and those who love the world. So, not everyone will be interested in his book.

I asked the pastor with the following scriptures.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

John 3:16 Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Revelation 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

He gave me some ambiguous answers, admitting that the Bible is the final words, and then went on talking about valid visions and prophecies. In the end, I asked if he saw any errors in this book. He said that he didn't find any errors after reading it TWICE.

There're some other excerpts from the book (from www.amazon.com book review) that contradict the Bible, and are offensive to me regarding the blood of Jesus.

Quote:

"We sat down on the sand near the edge of the ocean. As the waves ebbed and flowed in front of us, an amazing thing happened. The edge of the water turned to blood. A dark red, foaming surf surged in front of us. It seemed as if the blood was filthy, and I asked, "Why is the blood so dirty?" "It is My blood, Choo Nam," He said. 'It has washed away all the sins of My children.' "

"We walked by the river where the tunnel is that I saw before, and I saw the river turn to blood. Jesus pointed out, 'That is My blood- the blood I shed for My children.' "

Re: Transformed by Trouble - posted by bluinos, on: 2006/1/12 11:07

I Hope this Encourages You and draws you closer to him.

TRANSFORMED BY TROUBLE

FOR OUR LIGHT AND MOMENTARY TROUBLES ARE ACHIEVING FOR US AN ETERNAL GLORY THAT FAR OUTWEIGHTS THEM ALL (2 Cor 4:17)

It is the fire of suffering that brings forth the gold of godliness.
(Madame Guyon)

God has a purpose behind every problem. He uses circumstances to develop our character. In fact, he depends more on circumstances to make us like Jesus then he depends on our reading the Bible. The reason is obvious; you face circumstances twenty-four hours a day.

Jesus warned us that we would have problems in the world. No one is immune to pain or insulated from suffering, and no problems. Every time you solve one, another is waiting to take its place. Not all of them are big, but all are significant in God's normal, saying,
(“Don't be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you.”)

God uses problems to draw you closer to himself. The Bible says, “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit.” Your most profound and intimate experiences of worship will likely be in your darkest days-when your heart is broken, when you feel abandoned, when you're out of options, when the pain is great- and you turn to God alone. It is during suffering that we learn to pray our most authentic, heartfelt, honest-to-God prayer. When we're in pain, we don't have the energy for superficial prayers.

God could have kept Joseph out of Jail, kept Daniel out of the lion's den, kept Jeremiah from being tossed into a slimy

pit, kept Paul from being ship wrecked three times, and kept the three Hebrew young men from being thrown into the blazing furnace-but he didn't. He let those problems happen, and every one of those persons was drawn closer to God as a result.

Problems force us to Look to God and depend on him instead of ourselves. Paul testified to this benefit; "We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us". You'll never know that God is all you need until God is all you've Got!.

Romans 8: 28-29 "We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose in advance, and he chose them to become like his son."

BUILDING CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER:

We are like jewels, shaped with the hammer and chisel of adversity. If a jeweler's hammer isn't strong enough to chip off our rough edges, God will use a sledgehammer. If we're really stubborn, he uses a jackhammer. He will use whatever it takes. :-)

Every problem is a character-building opportunity, and the more difficult it is, the greater the potential for building spiritual muscle and more fiber. Paul said, "we know that these troubles produce patience. And patience produces character. What happens outwardly in your life is not as important as what happens inside you. Your circumstances are temporary, but your character will last forever.

The Bible often compares trials to a metal refiner's fire that burns away the impurities. Peter said, these troubles come to prove that your faith is pure. This purity of faith is worth more than gold. A silversmith was asked, "How do you know when the silver is pure?" When you've been refined by trials, people can see Jesus' reflection in you. James said, "Under pressure your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors."

Since God intends to make you like Jesus, he will take you through the same experience Jesus went through. That includes loneliness, temptation, stress, criticism, rejection, and many other problems. The bible says Jesus "Learned obedience through suffering" and "Was made perfect through suffering." Why would God exempt us from what he allowed his own Son to experience? Paul says, "We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the Good Times with Him!"

RESPONDING TO PROBLEMS AS JESUS WOULD

Problems don't automatically produce what God intends. Many people become bitter, rather than better, and never grow up. You have to respond the way Jesus would—talking to myself because it ministers to me first amen.

Remember That God's Plan Is Good. God knows what is best for you and has your best interest at heart. God told Jeremiah, "The plans I have for you (are) plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". Joseph understood this truth when he told his brothers who had sold him into slavery, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.

It is vital that you stay focus on God's plan, not your pain or problem. That is how Jesus endured the pain on the cross, and we are urged to follow his example: "Keep your eyes on Jesus, our leader and instructor. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterwards."

The secret of endurance is to remember that your pain is temporary but your rewards will be eternal. Moses endured a life of problems "Because he was looking ahead to his reward" (Jesus Christ our exceeding reward). Paul endured hardship the same way. He said, "Our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever.

Don't give in to a short-term thinking. Stay focused on the end result, Yes! "If we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later, amen.

REFUSE TO GIVE UP

Be patient and persistent, the bible says, "Let the process go out until your endurance is fully developed, and you will fi

and that you have become men/women of mature character.

Character building is a slow process. Whenever we try to avoid or escape the difficulties in life, we short-circuit the process, delay our growth, and actually end up with a worse kind of pain – the worthless type that accompanies denial and avoidance. When you grasp the eternal consequences of your character development, you'll pray fewer "Comfort Me" Prayers, Help me feel good and more "Conform me" prayers – use this to make me look more like you. (And to be an example to others and to be able to help others).

You know you are maturing when you begin to see the hand of God in the random, baffling, and seemingly pointless circumstances of life.

If you are facing trouble right now, don't ask "Why Me?" instead ask, "What do you want me to learn?". Then trust God and keep on doing what is right.