



Speak Up, Jackson County

submitted by Ray Dalton

What Does It Mean to Say We’re Christian?

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” – James 1:22

Around here a lot of us will tell you we’re Christian without thinking much about it. It’s just how a lot of us were raised. We grew up going to church, hearing the Bible, and learning right from wrong. I’ve called myself a Christian most of my life.

But every now and then I think we need to stop and ask what we really mean when we say that. I know I do. What actually makes me a Christian? Is it just because I grew up in church and believe in God, or should the way I live show it somehow? That question gets harder when I look at myself instead of everybody else.

It’s easy to talk about faith when you’re sitting in church or around people who already believe the same things. It gets a lot harder when somebody disagrees with you, says something you don’t like, or questions something you feel strongly about. I think that’s when what we believe starts to show.

I’m not writing this because I’ve got it figured out. I’ve gotten frustrated and responded too quick before. There have been times I was more interested in making my point than listening. I can look back and see places I should’ve handled things better. I’m still working on it.

Sometimes we look around at what everybody else is doing and figure if they’re doing it, it must be okay. But that’s not the standard we’re supposed to use. The Bible didn’t tell us to live by what the people around us are doing. We’re supposed to follow Christ, and sometimes that means looking at ourselves even when we don’t like what we see.

Things have changed a lot since many of us were kids. The world has changed, people have changed and what society accepts has changed. But Jesus hasn’t changed. His teachings haven’t changed just because the world around us has. That’s something I have to remind myself of too.

It’s easy to look around and use what everybody else is doing as our standard, but that was never supposed to be our standard. If we’re going to call ourselves Christians, the question should be whether the way we’re living lines up with Christ, not whether it lines up with everybody around us.

That brings me back to some of the conversations we’ve had through Speak Up. We’ve talked about roads, budgets, county decisions, communication, and a lot of other things. People aren’t always going to agree on those, and I don’t expect them to. But if we’re going to call ourselves Christians, the way we handle those disagreements matters too.

Somebody asking a question you don’t like isn’t a reason to tear them down. Somebody disagreeing with you doesn’t make them your enemy. Finding out you were wrong about something shouldn’t be something to be ashamed of either. Sometimes we need to listen. Sometimes we need to explain our side. Sometimes we just have to accept that we see it differently and still treat each other right.

I’ve thought about the Ten Commandments a lot lately. I believe teaching our kids what the Bible says is important. But they also need to see us trying to live it. They’re watching how we talk about people, how we handle disagreements, and how we act when we’re mad. We can tell them what we believe all day long, but they’re also watching what we do.

My faith can’t depend on where the Ten Commandments are hanging. It has to start at home and in my own life. That’s something I have to remind myself of too. Putting the words where people can see them is one thing. Living by those words when nobody is watching is another.

So maybe the real question isn’t whether we call ourselves Christians. Maybe the harder question is what that means after we say it. I want it to mean more than what I say or what I do on Sunday. I want people to be able to see it in how I treat them, especially when we don’t agree. I don’t always get that right, but I know it’s something I need to keep working on. Maybe that’s a question worth asking ourselves once in a while. If we’re going to say we’re Christians, does the way we live and treat each other show it? Not just at church, not just when things are going our way, and not just when we’re around people who agree with us. What about the rest of the time?

Jesus hasn’t changed. The world has. Maybe instead of changing our faith to fit the world around us, we need to keep working on changing ourselves to better follow Him.

That starts with me.

Until next week, God bless, and remember: If we want better, we have to do better. Speak up, stay involved, and never stop caring about Jackson County.

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1st Amendment

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The Road to Mental Wellness

With Desert Rose

Decision fatigue is a psychological phenomenon that has garnered considerable attention in both academic research and popular discourse, particularly in an age characterized by information overload and a seemingly infinite number of choices. It refers to the deteriorating quality of decisions made by an individual after a long session of decision-making, resulting in a decline in decision-making capacity as the day progresses. The width and complexity of choices available today mean that decision fatigue can manifest in various forms, impacting everything from mundane daily choices to significant life-altering decisions. The concept of decision



fatigue stems from the reality that humans have a limited pool of mental resources. According to psychologists like Baumeister, decision-making is an ego-depleting task; it requires mental effort, which can drain our cognitive resources. As the day wears on, individuals who are constantly confronted with choices — whether trivial, like what to wear or what to eat, or more consequential, such as career moves or financial investments — may find their ability to make decisions significantly impaired. This depletion can lead to hasty, careless choices or even decision avoidance altogether, wherein individuals opt to postpone decisions or let others take the lead. One critique of decision fatigue is that it can unfairly blame individuals for poor decision-making during times of mental exhaustion. While it is essential to recognize the psychological limits of decision-making, it is also crucial to consider the environmental and contextual factors that compound these challenges. For instance, the modern consumer landscape bombards individuals with advertisements, social media campaigns, and endless product selections, creating a perfect storm for decision fatigue. When individuals are trained in decision-making frameworks, such as the use of heuristics or rules of thumb, they can mitigate decision fatigue by simplifying their choices, but such training is not universally available. Thus, society’s structure and the economic forces at play can exacerbate an individual’s vulnerability to decision fatigue, suggesting a nuanced understanding of responsibility that transcends individual choice. Moreover, decision fatigue intersects with larger social issues such as inequality. Those in privileged positions often have the resources to delegate decisions or break them down efficiently, whereas marginalized communities may face compounded pressures that lead to chronic decision fatigue. For example, a single parent juggling multiple jobs may find themselves perpetually in a cycle of exhaustion, making suboptimal choices that negatively affect their quality of life. This points to an urgent need for systemic changes that alleviate decision burdens on disadvantaged groups rather than solely focusing on individual decision-making strategies. In examining this phenomenon critically, one must also acknowledge the positive aspects of decision fatigue. Certain repetitive or less critical decisions can lead to a simplification of life; for instance, Steve Jobs famously wore a black turtleneck and jeans daily to reduce the number of decisions he faced. He effectively utilized limited resources to enhance his focus on more significant decisions. This raises the intriguing possibility that decision fatigue could be strategically managed by implementing routines or simplifying choices in a way that preserves cognitive resources for more critical decisions. In conclusion, decision fatigue is a profound concept that reflects the challenges of navigating an increasingly complex world. While it underscores human limitations, it also invites a deeper inquiry into how societal structures influence our decision-making capacity. Acknowledging both the individual and collective dimensions of decision fatigue reveals a complex interplay of psychological resilience and external pressures. Addressing decision fatigue thus requires a multifaceted approach that respects the nuances of human behavior while advocating for broader changes to create environments that foster better decision-making outcomes for all. As always, if you or someone you love feels suicidal or that they are in a crisis there is the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 for confidential, free, 24/7/365 help. You can also chat at 988lifeline.org. Another resource is the Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741. The Crisis Hotline: 844-755-5325 Until next week, I’m Desert Rose signing off and wishing you all good mental health.

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