

Why Do Christians Leave Biblical Separation and Fundamentalism for New Evangelical Churches and Compromised Christianity?

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

Some church members become somewhat disillusioned when certain Christians leave a fundamentalist church that preaches and practices Biblical separation and begin attending a mainstream evangelical church that promotes secularized, worldly, and carnal music that contradicts God's holy character and Biblical Christianity. Of course, there are various reasons why a family may leave a church ministry but why do some completely disavow Biblical separation and no longer espouse the doctrinal teachings and warnings of Scripture regarding living a separated life?

There are 12 reasons why Christians leave separatist and fundamental church ministries.

1. Christians never internalize the Biblical commands of separation which summons us to separate from error, carnality, and worldliness.

Ezra 7:10

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

Ezra had a prepared heart to seek and follow the right way. His inner man (“the hidden man of the heart” - 1 Pet. 3:4) was ready to say “Yes” to whatever God revealed in His Word. However, this is not always the case with all Christians. Their heart is not prepared to accept the Biblical truths regarding separation because they have not made a commitment to follow these commands of Biblical separation at all cost. We must remember that holiness is a command to be obeyed, a course to be followed, and a commitment to be kept (1 Peter 1:15). But holiness begins in the heart. Psalm 119:10 says, “With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.” Internalizing the truths about Biblical separation and holiness in our heart will keep us from straying into the secularized forms of Christianity today that mimic the world instead of reflecting God's character of righteousness and holiness.

Many times leaving a fundamentalist/separatist church is a heart issue. The heart of a Christian has never really been in tune with Biblical separation. Their heart is actually more in tune with secularism than sanctification. Proverbs 4:23 reminds us to “Keep (guard or protect) thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life” (it is the source that results in the way you live and conduct yourself).

There is always a correlation between what a Christian believes and how he behaves, what a Christian internalizes in his heart and how he conducts himself in life. A transformed mind and heart should result in transformed living that is a reflection of God’s likeness (Rom. 12:2). When we think right, we will live right. When we are in tune with the absolute standard of truth regarding separation from the world (1 John 2:15-17), we will seek to align all of our actions, even our worship and music, with this truth.

Psalm 119:5-6

“O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.”

INSIGHT: The secret of living a Christian life that honors God revolves around the issue of the heart. We need a Biblically informed heart, a prepared heart that is committed to do what is right, and heart that guards or protects itself from the invasion of worldly and wayward thinking. Have you let down your guard? Is your heart open to God’s standard of truth? Are you ready to do God’s will for your life? Once we internalize the truth in our hearts about separation and holiness, we will not waiver back and forth, cross over the line, and see how close we can get to the line (Ps. 119:11).

2. Christians attend a church out of convenience but not conviction.

Numbers 32:12 says that Caleb and Joshua “wholly followed the LORD.” Deuteronomy 1:36 also states that Caleb “wholly followed the LORD.” In Joshua 14:9 we read: “Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children’s for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.”

Wholly following the LORD means to possess a deep conviction and commitment to doing what is pleasing to the Lord. It means that we will not waiver back and forth. We will have complete resolve to do what is right and proper in God's eyes. This truth is important to realize and understand in these days when there are no more boundaries. Many Christians do not actually possess conviction regarding what the Scriptures say about Biblical separation (Eph. 5:11). They are not committed to "wholly following the Lord" in relation to some specific areas of sanctification.

There are Christians like this sitting in fundamental/separatist churches. They might attend a fundamental church because it is convenient to them. The church may be close to their home, they might know some people in the church, or they are simply an ecclesiastical hitchhiker moving from one church to the next. The point is this; a Christian can lack real conviction regarding the doctrine of Biblical separation and not apply and practice it in relation to his own life. This is one reason why it's very easy for some Christians to leave a fundamentalist/separatist church for a New Evangelical church that compromises music and worship. Christians have never internalized the Biblical command of separation and are not committed to following the Lord in the area of separation. A true separatist is willing to sink the whole ship on conviction! This was true of Caleb and Joshua.

1 Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, (in view of what is about to happen – our Rapture, reward, and that our faith in Christ and the future is not in vain!) my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast (sedentary), unmoveable (immovable), always abounding (flouring and increasing) in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

These are words that speak of sticking to the stuff! They mean that we should not waiver in our conviction, Biblical course, our sanctification, and dedication to God and His cause. One key reason why Christians leave fundamental, separatist, and Bible-believing churches for New Evangelical, compromising churches is because they lack steadfastness, sedentary, and spiritual increase in their convictions, living, and commitment to the Lord. They might come to church out of convenience – not conviction. They really are not separated unto the Lord in their heart in important areas of

sanctification. Stick to the stuff, the truth, Fundamentalism, separatism, and keep flourishing in your Christian life – without compromise, changing your course, or trying some new thing, which is not God’s thing!

INSIGHT: A Bible *command* or principle is a truth that I must live by; a *conviction* is a personal belief based on a Bible command or principle taught in the Bible, and a *standard* is a guideline that helps me keep my convictions. Biblical convictions are strong beliefs that will not change.

3. Christians can lack discernment in various areas of sanctification and doctrine.

Christians will sometimes leave a fundamental/separatist ministry because they have chosen not to discern and “put a difference between (the) holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” (Lev. 10:10). As a result, they can leave a fundamental church and begin attending a totally different type of church that reflects the secularized and worldly form of Christianity. Philippians 1:10 calls us to “approve things that are excellent.” The word “approve” means to discern, examine, test. It conveys the thought of testing with the sense of approval. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 declares that we are to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” The “things that are excellent” means that our relationships, decisions, overall living, and church services should reflect what the Bible terms as “excellent” (literally “the things which differ” – things that have been distinguished, discerned, and thought through from a Biblical perspective).

When we approve excellent things (Phil. 1:10) we are actually making proper distinctions in life and possessing Biblical discernment in life so that we might follow God’s holy will. We are called to be discerning Christians who have their “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). Lehman Strauss wrote: “As we develop in this gift of discernment there is a growing appreciation of those things that are best in God’s eyes as set forth in His Word, and that becomes the finest quality of Christian character.”

The excellent things (things that are properly judged – Phil. 1:10) refer to holy things, righteous things, good things, wholesome things, the best things, the superior things! Excellence and superiority should be practiced in our

personal lives and church ministries. Without making proper distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, and the better and the best, we become bogged down in our spiritual lives and churches also become worldly and accept error.

William MacDonald said:

“In all realms of life, some things are good and others are better. The good is often the enemy of the best. For effective service, these distinctions must be made.”

INSIGHT: Many Christians get into trouble by straddling the fence instead of striving for excellence. We should strive for excellence (superiority) in everything that we do for the Lord, including our worship, musical choices, and entertaining habits.

4. Christians allow others to influence them adversely.

Proverbs 29:25

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”

We must remember that the fear of man (what others think about them and pressure them to do) can bring a snare into a person's life, trap them, and keep them from following the Lord's perfect will for their lives. We are not to become a slave to the wrong ideas and spiritual departures or compromises of others (1 Cor. 7:23). Many Christians will conclude that since everyone else is doing it, it must be okay. They reason that the majority must be right. However, none of these conclusions are accurate. The fact that millions of people believe in evolution does not make it right. It's still a bad idea. Also, the majority has always been wrong about spiritual matters. The majority was wrong in Jesus' day (“fear not little flock”). The majority was wrong in Noah's day. The majority was wrong when the twelve spies voted 10 to 2 not to enter the Promised Land and the entire congregation endorsed the wrong decision. The majority crucified the Lord. God has never been impressed with the majority!

Someone said:

“If you have to do wrong to stay on the team, you are on the wrong team.”

Throughout my 30 years as a pastor, I have seen how some people, whether naively or purposely, can adversely affect a committed Christian and have a corrupting influence upon their lives (1 Cor. 15:33). For example, men are pressured to follow their fiancé instead of being a leader in the family. Therefore, they attend a church that compromises God’s holy nature in relation to music and worship.

Instead of men being leaders, they end up in New Evangelical churches to please their wife, or their children, while forgetting that they must please the Lord above all else (John 8:29). 2 Timothy 2:4 says, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” Instead of leading their families in the “paths of righteousness for his name sake” (Ps. 23:3), men capitulate to their wives and children. This is because they have not taught their children the commands and principles of Bible separation, nor are they willing to lead their families upstream and oppose the current of entertaining worship and other carnal diversions to living the Christian life.

INSIGHT: We are called to stand in the gap and make the decision to do what is right. We must come to the conclusion that “for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). Bob Jones Sr. used to say, “Do right!” We might add that we should do right for it’s the right thing to do.

5. Christians are willing to compromise for the sake of meeting a false need in their life.

Genesis 3:6

“And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

2 Corinthians 11:3

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity (devotion) that is in Christ.”

The devil did this to Eve. He created a false need in her heart by convincing her that she needed something outside the parameters of God’s original will and purpose for her life. She came to the realization that she needed the forbidden fruit. Of course, this was a false need created in her mind by Satan. Satan had conned her into thinking that God was in some measure holding out on her by not allowing her to eat this fruit. God was withholding something good from her life which she needed to have in order to enhance and really satisfy her life. Of course, this was not true. And the old saying is still true: “The grass is greener on the other side!” Eve discovered this rather quickly (Gen. 3:5).

Remember that Satan can present a false need before us and then get us to think that we must meet this need, while all along it is not a true need. If the devil can get us to think that we must fulfill a falsely created need, then we are destined to compromise our convictions, step away from the Biblically correct path, and be led astray.

INSIGHT: Don’t be a prisoner of your circumstance or temptation. Rise above it, claim your victory, and follow the Lord.

6. Christians eventually embrace the New Evangelical philosophy that Biblical Fundamentalism is a legalistic, unloving, judgmental, and cultish movement.

Of course, this is simply an excuse that is given to approve one’s lifestyle of compromise and sin. Legalism has been used as an approved cuss word by the modern Christian community. Leonard Ravenhill said, “When there’s something in the Bible that churches don’t like, they call it legalism.” Also, whenever Christians want to do something that they were once instructed was wrong, they call the previous instructions legalism. This is simply a false assessment and judgment upon Biblical Fundamentalism, which takes place in the minds and hearts of Christians who want to comply with worldliness

and carnality, instead of following the Biblical path of Bible separation (Ps. 119:105).

Jesus taught in John 7:24:

“Judge not according to the appearance (surface or superficial judgments which have no significance, truth, or reality attached to them), but judge righteous judgment.”

There is a right and proper judgment that every Christian is responsible to make. Living the Christian life is not a free-for-all, “if-it-feels-good-do-it” and “judge-not-lest-ye-be-judged mentality.” There is a place for proper judgment and discernment that we must maintain, so we do not allow our Christian lives to become worldly and carnal. Generally speaking, “righteous judgment” involves a natural and constant assessment of what is right and wrong in daily living. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 says that we are to “prove all things” or examine and discern everything, so we can approve it as being worthy and acceptable to God.

As we go through life, we will, out of necessity, make assessments of what is right and pleasing to the Lord (Eph. 5:10 - “Proving what is acceptable to the Lord”). This kind of judgment pertains to areas such as doctrine and what is acceptable worship and the kind of music that honors God. It is a proper form of sound judgment (1 Cor. 2:15) that is able to detect forms of pagan and worldly compromise in relation to one’s life, corporate worship, and musical expressions.

I have been in the Fundamentalist movement all of my life and have found out that most of the saints can take a militant and uncompromising Biblical stand on the doctrine of separation (2 Cor. 6:14-17), while at the same time possessing a spirit of love, humility, and kindness toward all people, even those that they might disagree with.

INSIGHT: Do not follow the modern-day conclusions of progressive Christianity that convey Fundamentalism and conservative Christians as legalists, spiritual bigots, and unloving people. This is fake news!

7. Christians look at flawed people instead of Biblical axioms which results in throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

3 John 1:9

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.”

Some Christians will look at some specific figure in fundamentalism, perhaps a Diotrephes type personality, who possesses a flawed character trait and conclude that the whole movement is unbiblical. We might ask, “Is there any flawed characters or bad apples in New Evangelicalism or the modern Christian movement of today?” The fact that there are some unkind and unruly people in Fundamentalism does not mean the Biblical teaching and principles of the Fundamentalist movement are wrong. We don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater. Or as we often say today, “We don’t throw it under the bus.” Again, we must “prove all things” (1 Thess. 5:22) by the standard of Scripture and not assess an entire movement through a skewed personality figure. Truth is our measuring stick – not people, personalities, or even personal experiences (1 John 4:6; Rom. 4:3).

Of course, it goes without saying, that sin and unrighteousness cannot be exposed without controversy. Error cannot be corrected without controversy (Eph. 5:11). Ask Paul. Ask Luther. Ask Bunyan. D.M. Panton said: "To identify oneself with the truth is to place one's self in the heart of a storm from which there is no escape for your life."

INSIGHT: Character flaws and imperfect Christians are everywhere. We must judge what a movement says or does on the basis of the unchanging Word of God. The old cliché should be remembered: “Don’t judge a book by its cover.”

8. Christians jettison the right and proper things which they have learned (2 Tim. 3:14).

In other words, instead of following the Biblical path which Christians were originally taught, the pressures of the world choke out the word (Mark 4:19) and they set aside their Biblical moorings. They take up their anchor and

begin to drift into the uncharted waters of compromised Christianity which results in spiritual confusion and disorder. It's as simple as this. Instead of choosing the right path, Christians can choose the wrong path.

R. B. Ouellette said:

“When you have a choice between doing right and doing wrong, the only good time to do right is right away. It gets harder the longer you wait.”

The longer we look at the other side of compromise and sin with a sense of openness and acceptability, the easier it becomes to approve it. Beware of gradual compromises with worldliness and the enemy (Psalm 1:1). The Bible teaches that “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9). Eventually, compromise will catch up with you and overtake you. You cannot dabble in worldliness without it impacting your life in a greater way. When you come to a fork in the road, you must choose the right road or else you will keep moving in a different direction and end up at a different destination.

INSIGHT: When we have learned the truth and applied it to our life in order to produce sanctification (John 15:3), then we need to stick with it. We must continue to make the application of separated commands to our daily living (2 Cor. 6:14-17) or else we will fall victim to compromising positions and practices. Proverbs 23:23 says, “Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” Don't sell out the truth and Fundamentalism for the world of New Evangelical compromise!

9. Christians allow themselves to become desensitized to the truth of Biblical separation (2 Pet. 1:9; Rev. 3:17).

Christian ignorance is not bliss (1 Cor. 14:38). A Christian can choose to walk in darkness and eventually become numb to his own unholy pathway. In fact, they can call evil good and good evil (Isa. 5:20). Remember that almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it. Participation with New Evangelicalism (compromised Christianity) softens the heart toward error and worldliness (1 Cor. 5:6). This is one reason why we need to practice Bible separation and refuse to touch the unclean thing (2 Cor. 6:17) and make a distinction between the holy and unholy (Lev. 10:10).

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia (2 Timothy 4:10). Have you been drifting into compromised Christianity, which embraces various forms of heathen worship, unhealthy doctrine, and condones certain actions of carnality? Beware of shifting and drifting. Reassess the direction you are heading and remember that the grass is not greener on the other side. Don’t follow false needs, don’t fool yourself, and remember the Biblical foundations which that you have been taught. Don’t allow the world to squeeze you into its mold (Rom. 12:2). Don’t abandon ship!

INSIGHT: The most dangerous deviation is the one closest to the Biblical position. However, when a Christian begins to make small compromises, it opens up the door for greater compromise. And remember this: “Almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it.”

10. Christians often place their personal likes and dislikes above God’s glory.

Here is something to think about. Life is not about what you like but what God likes! Sometimes Christians will leave a fundamentalist and separatist church because they put their personal taste above God’s character and name. For instance, they will tell you that they like Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) over the hymns or the more conservative music and worship that is presented in the fundamentalist church. They will make the case that worship and music is all a matter of personal taste. Actually, music and worship does not revolve around personal taste but God’s glory (1 Cor. 10:31). God has never said that we can worship any way we please (Lev. 10:1-2) since our worship is always to be considered “holy convocations” or assemblies (Lev. 23:2, 4; 23:37) which are reverent and reflect God’s unchanging nature of holiness and righteousness.

Psalm 89:7

“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.”

Hebrews 12:28

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

The point is this; for the most part, we don't get to choose our style of worship. This is because the type of modern and contemporary worship being promoted today in many churches is borrowed from the realm of paganism and reflects a worldly system that is against God and truth. The Bible strictly forbids the mixing of pagan worship with certain aspects of righteousness, since the two are incompatible realms of existence (2 Cor. 6:14-17), and since corrupt worship does not glorify God. All of our worship and music is to be reverent (Ps. 89:7), orderly (1 Cor. 14:40), and godly (Titus 2:12) in nature for it is to be a reflection of God's glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

When God is glorified, it's because His holy and righteous nature is properly represented. Giving God glory does not mean to say “Amen” at the end of a song that sounds like the old world of paganism. Giving God glory means that our worship, songs, and music reflect God's eternal nature. Many Christians and churches of today are more concerned about what they like (which may be carnal in nature) than what God likes and they are more interested in pleasing an audience than portraying who God is before lost sinners and saints. We are to follow “the paths of righteousness for his name's sake” (Ps. 23:3) which means to properly represent who God is by reflecting His nature of holiness and purity.

Colossians 3:17

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

INSIGHT: Worship is not about you. It's about God and His glory. To truly give God the glory and properly represent His name (who God is), you must learn to discern what is of the old life and refuse to conform to the world (Rom. 12:2). God will not share His glory with anyone else or anything else – including contemporary music (Isa. 42:8). God is glorified when His people refuse to promote a type of heathen worship and sound which reflects the

old life. He is glorified when His people properly represent His righteous character (glorifying God) by only promoting worship and music that is unreflective of paganism and the world of sex, drugs, and rebellion against God.

11. Christians can become church hitchhikers.

Those who run from church to church are often called “ecclesiastical hitchhikers.” This means that some Christians are constantly on the move, always looking for a different church to attend. They are church hoppers always moving on to another church. Instead of committing themselves to one specific ministry, supporting it faithfully (1 Cor. 16:2), and serving in it, they move about trying to find some new thing, the next spiritual high, and somehow think that visiting many different churches will result in their betterment.

This type of person is usually unsettled in his convictions, or lacks conviction, puts his finger to the wind, and normally follows “every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14). This is the type of person who never wants to make a total commitment to the local church ministry. The “mentality of movement” overtakes some Christians and for the most part they become ineffective in supporting the Lord’s work and committing themselves wholly to God’s work (1 Cor. 15:58). In fact, they were known in the early church as going “from house to house” (from church to church) as “busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (1 Tim. 5:13). Many times this is the case.

INSIGHT: God does not want you to be constantly walking through the revolving door of churches. The answer is not running away from a fundamental church but becoming rooted in a strong, Bible teaching and separated church that can assist you in your spiritual growth or process.

12. Christians can lose focus on eternity and eternal reward.

Many Christians live their lives like there is no tomorrow or day of reckoning coming. They live without realizing that a time of inspection and reward is fast approaching when Jesus Christ will examine our lives and approve only those things which we have done for His honor and glory. James 5:9 states: “Grudge not one against another, brethren, let ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.” Colossians 2:18 gives this warning: “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” 2 John 1:8 adds a similar warning: “Look

to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”

Apparently we can lose reward, which we otherwise could have obtained, if we were beguiled or fooled into following the wrong person, path and direction. We can by our compromises and corrupt ways lose reward that God wanted to give us at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). This reminds us that we can live in a “fool’s paradise” and miss out on some of the future reward that God wants to bestow upon our lives.

1 Corinthians 3:15

“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

In other words, Christians will pass through a final examine, not to determine their eternal destiny, but to determine how much eternal reward that they will receive based upon their commitment to the Lord, their uncompromising ways with the world, and their desire to honor God with their personal lives.

Roy Laurin said:

“We are to measure our lives by the broad sweep of eternity.”

We must live with eternities values in view. Our future reward should motivate us to stay on the right track, press on in our sanctification, and not succumb to

INSIGHT: Remember that we are preparing today the person that we will be for eternity! No sin or compromises will be rewarded when we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. Only what is done for Christ and His glory will last. Reflect on this before you leave a Biblical position or conservative movement.

“Every man on earth is given just one life.
Every life on earth is but a vapor.
It appears, then it's gone
With a record of what's done,
Then we stand alone at the judgment seat of Christ
God's Holy Son.

Every deed I've done and every thought I've known
Every choice I've made tried by fire.
Will it burn or remain, will it bow my head in shame?
Will I hear God say, 'Welcome home my child, well done, My faithful one?'

We must all bow down at the judgment seat of Christ
We must give account for the things we've done with our lives.
I will live my life for Jesus Christ,
So that in eternity my life will be,
Gold and silver and precious stones."