

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** attend church fairly regularly. It is what is expected of them, what they believe “good Christians” do, so they go.

“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me rules taught by men’” (Isaiah 29:13).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** give money to charity and to the church ... as long as it doesn't impinge on their standard of living. If they have a little extra and it is easy and safe to give, they do so. After all, God loves a cheerful giver, right?

“As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ‘I tell you the truth,’ he said, ‘this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on’” (Luke 21:1-4).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** tend to choose what is popular over what is right when they are in conflict. They desire to fit in both at church and outside of church; they care more about what people think of their actions (like church attendance and giving) than what God thinks of their hearts and lives.

“Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets” (Luke 6:26).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** don't really want to be saved from their sin; they want only to be saved from the penalty of their sin. They don't genuinely hate sin and aren't truly sorry for it; they're merely sorry because God is going to punish them. Lukewarm people don't really believe that this new life Jesus offers is better than the old sinful one.

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (Romans 6:1—2).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** are moved by stories about people who do radical things for Christ, yet they do not act. They assume such action is for “extreme” Christians, not average ones. Lukewarm people call “radical” what Jesus expected of all His followers.

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

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** rarely share their faith with their neighbors, coworkers, or friends. They do not want to be rejected, nor do they want to make people uncomfortable by talking about private issues like religion.

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** gauge their morality or “goodness” by comparing themselves to the secular world. They feel satisfied that while they aren't as hard-core for Jesus as so-and-so, they are nowhere as horrible as the guy down the street.

“The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’” (Luke 18:11-12).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** say they love Jesus, and He is, indeed, a part of their lives. But only a part. They give Him a section of their time, their money, and their thoughts, but He isn't allowed to control their lives.

“As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’ Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.’ He said to another man, ‘Follow me.’ But the man replied, ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’ Still another said, ‘I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.’ Jesus replied, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:57-62).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** love God, but they do not love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength. They would be quick to assure you that they try to love God that much, but that sort of total devotion isn't really possible for the average person; it's only for pastors and missionaries and radicals.

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment” (Matthew 22:37—38).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** love others but do not seek to love others as much as they love themselves. Their love of others is typically focused on those who love them in return, like family, friends, and other people they know and connect with. There is little love left over for those who cannot love them back, much less for those who intentionally slight *them*, whose kids are better athletes than theirs, or with whom conversations are awkward or uncomfortable. Their love is highly conditional and very selective, and generally comes with strings attached.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?” (Matt. 5:43-47).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** will serve God and others, but there are limits to how far they will go or how much time, money, and energy they are willing to give.

“‘All these [commandments] I have kept since I was a boy,’ he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God’” (Luke 18:21-25).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** do whatever is necessary to keep themselves from feeling too guilty. They want to do the bare minimum, to be “good enough” without it requiring too much of them.

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand” (1 Chronicles 29:14).

**LUKEWARM** people think about life on earth much more often than eternity in heaven. Daily life is mostly focused on today's to-do list, this week's schedule, and next month's vacation. Rarely, if ever, do they intently consider the life to come. Regarding this, C. S. Lewis wrote, "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next." It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** are thankful for their luxuries and comforts, and rarely consider trying to give as much as possible to the poor. They are quick to point out, "Jesus never said money is the root of all evil, only that the love of money is." Untold numbers of lukewarm people feel "called" to minister to the rich; very few feel "called" to minister to the poor.

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?" (Isaiah 58:6-7).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** are continually concerned with playing it safe; they are slaves to the god of control. This focus on safe living keeps them from sacrificing and risking for God.

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share" (1 Timothy 6:17—18).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** feel secure because they attend church, made a profession of faith at age twelve, were baptized, come from a Christian family, vote Republican, or live in America. Just as the prophets in the Old Testament warned Israel that they were not safe just because they lived in the land of Israel, so we are not safe just because we wear the label Christian or because some people persist in calling us a "Christian nation."

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** do not live by faith; their lives are structured so they never have to. They don't have to trust God if something unexpected happens—they have their savings account. They don't need God to help them—they have their retirement plan in place. They don't genuinely seek out what life God would have them live—they have life figured and mapped out. They don't depend on God on a daily basis—their refrigerators are full and, for the most part, they are in good health. The truth is, their lives wouldn't look much different if they suddenly stopped believing in God.

"And he told them this parable: The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16—21).

**LUKEWARM PEOPLE** probably drink and swear less than average, but besides that, they really aren't very different from your typical unbeliever. They equate their partially sanitized lives with holiness, but they couldn't be more wrong.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (Matt. 23:25—28).

## LUKEWARM PEOPLE & THE SCRIPTURE

(From Crazy Love. By Francis Chan)



*"I know you inside and out, and find little to my liking. You're not cold, you're not hot—far better to be either cold or hot! You're stale. You're stagnant. You make me want to vomit." - Revelation 3:15-16 (The Message)*