



WHAT QUESTIONS WOULD YOU ASK GOD?

FAMILY NIGHT SESSIONS
WEDNESDAYS AT 7PM

DINNER IS SERVED!

6 PM | EVERY 1ST WEDNESDAY



9043 CHAPEL HILL RD, CARY

Are You Abiding in Him?

How do you deal with carnal Christians who do not want to change?

Christopher Butler

The Question

*How do you deal with carnal Christians
who do not want to change?*

The Question

*How do you define a carnal
Christian?*

The Origin of Carnal Christian

This term is drawn primarily from 1 Corinthians 3:1–3, where Paul refers to believers as "carnal" (or "worldly" in some translations) because they are acting in immature, fleshly ways.

The Meaning of Carnal Christian

A carnal Christian is a believer who is saved but still lives according to the flesh (sinful nature), not by the Spirit. They may have faith in Christ but continue to struggle with sin, selfishness, or spiritual immaturity.

Examples of a Carnal Christian

- **Living According to the Flesh:**

A carnal Christian might still struggle with sinful habits or behaviors, like anger, lust, or selfishness, even though they profess faith in Christ. Their life doesn't reflect the transformation that should come with following Jesus. For example, someone may go to church and say they love God but regularly indulge in addictive behaviors or be overtly selfish.

- **Immaturity in Faith:**

A carnal Christian may remain spiritually immature, constantly relying on others for guidance instead of growing in their own relationship with God. They might have a lot of head knowledge but lack heart transformation. For example, they might attend church regularly but not engage in personal Bible study or prayer. men?"

Examples of a Carnal Christian

- **Worldly Priorities:**

Their priorities might be more aligned with worldly pursuits like wealth, status, or pleasure rather than kingdom values like love, service, and humility. A person may work tirelessly to advance their career or gain possessions, putting little effort into serving others or living out Christian values in daily life.

- **Divisions and Strife in the Church:**

A carnal Christian can be a source of division and quarrels within a church. They might engage in gossip, create factions, or become envious of others. In 1 Corinthians 3:3, Paul addresses this issue, saying, "For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?"

Examples of a Carnal Christian

- **Lack of Repentance:**

Despite knowing the gospel, a carnal Christian may have little desire to repent of their sins or change their behavior. They might excuse their sins, not recognizing the need for continuous transformation and sanctification through the Holy Spirit.

- **Inconsistent Behavior:**

There may be inconsistency in their faith. On Sundays, they may appear spiritually vibrant and committed, but during the week, their actions, language, and lifestyle don't align with their professed beliefs. It's like a "Sunday-only" faith, where they compartmentalize their Christian life to church activities but live like the world outside of that.

Examples of a Carnal Christian

- **Self-Centeredness:**

A carnal Christian can often be more focused on their own desires and preferences than on others. They may act selfishly in relationships, struggle to forgive, or put their needs above those of others.

It's important to note that being "carnal" in this sense doesn't mean someone isn't saved, but it does mean they are not fully living out the reality of their salvation. The concept of being a carnal Christian calls attention to the tension between the old self and the new self in Christ, encouraging growth and maturity in faith. The goal is always to move from spiritual infancy toward spiritual maturity, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform one's life.

How close to home is this?

Know any carnal Christians?

Key Traits of Carnal Christians

- *Saved, but not spiritually mature*
- *Struggles with sin or worldly desires*
- *Not living out their faith consistently*
- *May be growing, but slowly or inconsistently*

1. Examine Yourself First

Before confronting anyone, Scripture calls for self-examination.

- Mat. 7:3-5 – Remove the plank from your own eye first.
- Gal. 6:1 – “You who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.”

Ask: *Am I being humble, patient, and Spirit-led in my concern?*

Discussion

Self-Examination

(Looking inward before focusing outward)

- “Why do you think it’s easier to notice someone else’s flaws before our own?”
- “What are some ways we can regularly ‘examine ourselves’ without falling into shame or legalism?”
- “Can you share a time when self-reflection changed the way you approached someone else’s sin?”

2. Pray Consistently

Change is ultimately a work of the Holy Spirit. If someone is resistant to growth or correction, it may be a spiritual stronghold that requires ongoing intercession.

- Ephesians 6:12 – The battle is spiritual.
- James 5:16 – The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Pray: **For conviction, softening of heart
and God's timing.**

Discussion

The Power of Prayer

(The 1st response to conflict or frustration)

- “What would change if we prayed for people who frustrate us instead of complaining about them?”
- “Have you ever seen God work in someone’s life after you committed to praying for them?”
- “How do we pray for someone who doesn’t want to change—without becoming resentful or giving up?”

3. Model Christlike Behavior

Sometimes people resist truth because of how it's presented. Live in a way that reflects transformation and grace—your witness might be more powerful than words.

- 1 Peter 2:12 – Live such good lives that others may glorify God.
- Titus 2:7-8 – Show integrity, seriousness, and sound speech.

Discussion

Living as an Example

(Reinforce the power of witness through lifestyle.)

- “Why do you think it’s easier to notice someone else’s flaws before our own?”
- “What are some ways we can regularly ‘examine ourselves’ without falling into shame or legalism?”
- “Can you share a time when self-reflection changed the way you approached someone else’s sin?”

4. Speak the Truth in Love *(when appropriate)*

If God opens the door, gently confront sin or immaturity—not to condemn, but to restore.

- Ephesians 4:15 – Speak the truth in love.
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26 – Don't be quarrelsome, but kind, able to teach, patiently enduring evil.

Avoid: 1. **Being harsh or self-righteous**

2. **Making it about you or your preferences**

Discussion

Speaking the Truth in Love (Having hard conversations in grace.)

- “Why is it hard to speak truth in love? What fears hold us back?”
- “What’s the difference between judging someone and lovingly confronting them?”
- “What are some phrases or approaches that help make a hard conversation more gracious?”

5. Establish Boundaries if Needed

If the person's behavior is toxic, disruptive, or unrepentantly sinful, boundaries may be necessary.

- 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 – Do not associate with someone who calls themselves a believer but lives in unrepentant sin.
- Romans 16:17 – Watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way.

Balance: *This doesn't mean cutting them off with hostility, but guarding your spiritual health and that of the church community.*

Discussion

Setting Boundaries

(Discuss when and how to set healthy limits in Christian relationships.)

- “What’s the difference between setting boundaries and being unloving?”
- “Have you ever had to set a boundary with someone claiming to be a believer? What did you learn?”
- “When might it be appropriate to distance yourself from someone who refuses to grow?”

6. Leave Room for God to Work

You can't change hearts—only God can. Don't try to be the Holy Spirit in someone's life. Trust God's timing, even if it takes years.

- Philippians 1:6 – He who began a good work will carry it on to completion.
- 2 Peter 3:9 – God is patient, not wanting any to perish.

Discussion

Trusting God with the Process

(Cultivating long-term trust in God's transforming power.)

- “Why is it hard to wait on God to change someone?”
- “How do we stay hopeful when we don't see any signs of spiritual growth in a friend or loved one?”
- “Can you share a time when someone changed spiritually—maybe long after you thought they would?”

Our ownership in “dealing” with the carnal Christian.

- Stay prayerful.
- Be gracious and truthful.
- Set boundaries wisely.
- Trust God with the outcome.

Matthew 6:32-33 (NASB)

³²For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.

“A friend in your church group is living in obvious sin and doesn’t want to hear correction.”

- *What’s your first reaction?*
- *What step(s) from today’s discussion would you take?*
- *What would you pray for?*

Questions?

The Origin of Lukewarm Christians

This comes from Revelation 3:15–16, in Jesus' letter to the church in Laodicea, where He says:

“I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm... I will spit you out of my mouth.”

The Meaning of Lukewarm Christians

A lukewarm Christian is someone who is apathetic or indifferent in their faith. They may profess belief in Christ but lack genuine passion, commitment, or fruit.

How close to home is this?

Know any Lukewarm Christians?

Key Traits of Lukewarm Christians

- *Spiritually indifferent or complacent*
- *Not passionate about God or obedience*
- *May be self-deceived about their standing before God*
- *Risk of being rejected or judged by Christ (depending on interpretation)*

The Meaning of Lukewarm Christians

A lukewarm Christian is someone who is apathetic or indifferent in their faith. They may profess belief in Christ but lack genuine passion, commitment, or fruit.

The difference in a nutshell..

Carnal Christians are often viewed as genuine believers who need to grow.

Lukewarm Christians are sometimes interpreted as not truly saved, though interpretations vary among denominations.

The difference in a nutshell..

Key Differences

Aspect	Carnal Christian	Lukewarm Christian
Biblical source	1 Corinthians 3	Revelation 3
Spiritual state	Immature, struggling believer	Apathetic, possibly self-deceived
Relationship to Christ	Believer, but flesh-dominated life	Possibly <u>believer</u> , but uncommitted
Main issue	Sinful behavior or immaturity	Indifference or half-heartedness
Tone of warning	Corrective (Paul encourages growth)	Severe (Jesus threatens rejection)