

Christians, Greasecans and Potential Christians

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Some of us who go to church only apply the easy things and the hard stuff we avoid by making excuses or we try to make justifications (the things that we like and don't want to give up). God despises those that have one foot in and one foot out or being luke-warm as it states in the scriptures. Revelations 3: 15-16, says God would rather you hot or cold than luke-warm and that those that are luke-warm and neither hot nor cold, He will spit them out of his mouth. This word specifically speaks to the "Greasecans" that supposedly give their lives to God, and get baptised but **choose to** continue to hold on to the bad habits and sinful pleasures. If you are totally committed to God, then that is great. If you have not accepted Christ yet, then you are the lost sheep that Jesus came for. These are the two categories that God would rather deal with, but whatever you do, do not become a "Greasecan" and be comfortable with that.

To the Christians:

Here are some points to note:

- Luke 12:47-48 - "⁴⁷And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. ⁴⁸But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Essentially, those with more experience and knowledge should know better than those who don't and as such will be more chastised should they disobey or become neglectful of certain duties required of them.

- There are those who claim to uphold all commandments but tweak it to suit themselves. Interestingly, James 2:10 says "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Rom 6:14 "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace", and Rom 14:5 "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Now with these scriptures in mind let us take a walk through before the law, during the law and after the law:

Before the law:

- Man's obedience to God was as it was impressed upon them. There were no specific doctrines or laws but just to obey. He made man and gave him a wife but as time passed man took wives, first recorded was Cain's great great great grandson Lamech who took two wives (Gen 4:19). The same Cain that murdered his brother Abel and God cursed him, but in his compassion allowed him to live.
- Seth was born and essentially took the place of Abel, and was the ancestor of Noah and Abraham and the Israelites (God's chosen people). And we all know the popular story of Noah. In his time human population had increased and according to Genesis 6:2 "the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose."

And verse 5-8 says, "The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD."

- Then moving forward to Joseph who became in charge of Egypt. He reunites with his family due to a terrible famine and is how the Israelites came to be in Egypt. Joseph bought lands for them to settle there, after he died including the rest of his generation, the Israelites were led into slavery, regardless of the fact that they out-numbered the Egyptians. (Exodus 1:8-10).

During the Law:

- Exodus 2:24 says "God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob", which was "⁸And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."⁹And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations." (Genesis 17:8-9)
- God chose Moses to lead the people out of Egypt and He made a covenant with them and the 10 commandments were given unto them, as well as other laws & regulations and the judgments and sacrifices as it relates.
- Hebrews 8 and 9 speaks about the tabernacle that was made that housed the various elements such as the Ark of the Covenant (golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod and the tablets), golden censer, table, candlestick, etc. This tabernacle would be manned by a high priest offering the gifts and sacrifices according to the law. God found fault with this first covenant which was manmade and being run by a human high priest, which now gave rise to the second covenant which is through His Son Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 8)

After the Law:

- Hebrews 8:10 and onward speaks about the new covenant that was made, putting the laws in their mind and writing it on their hearts, has now replaced the old covenant.
- Hebrews 9:11 - 15 says “¹¹ But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹² Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ¹⁴ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

¹⁵ And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”

- You will find that with all of this, controversies have been developed as it regards to the law, particularly the Ten Commandments. Does the new covenant means they are no longer relevant? Or if not, what about the Sabbath? With an open mind and disregarding any loyalties to a denomination take a look at these points:
 - Romans 13:8-10 “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.⁹ For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ¹⁰ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
 - According to an article titled “The Sabbath was Made for Man Meaning”, when Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man, He was saying the Sabbath was made to be a blessing to man and not a set of legalistic rules that the Pharisees had turned it into. How many times did Jesus rebuke them for this? And what about eating a meal on the Sabbath? Is it a blessing if we are to go hungry? What about picking an apple off the tree for lunch on the Sabbath? The point is that it was *lawful* for Jesus to be picking corn for a meal on the Sabbath. Eating is a necessity and the Sabbath would not be a blessing to man if you had to go hungry now would it?
(Source: <http://www.the-ten-commandments.org/the-sabbath-was-made-for-man-meaning.html>)

Regardless of this notion you will still have Sabbath keepers today who, apart from not doing any “work”, they don’t make purchases or any monetary transaction, they don’t watch TV, etc. So if they’re thirsty they won’t purchase a

drink but I asked the question, if they have to take public transport what happens? They don't watch TV but they're on Facebook and BBM, even while in church. What of Northern Caribbean University (NCU) that has a radio station or Andrew's Memorial Hospital, does the staff ever stop working?

Now, I have been going to church since as long as I can remember, Catholic, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, and various Non-denominational churches. I have been a Christian for almost nine years now and from my experience most of these churches, especially the denominational ones, it's like they each have their own template and they try to fit God into that template and whatever cannot fit they dismiss it or avoid it and they pass down this template from generation to generation and only the ones that conform to this template are held in high esteem. If God wants them to divert or refocus there is no getting through to them. It is supposed to be about doing the will of God but the template doesn't allow much room.

Going to church or observing the Sabbath is just a routine for most. They go, read the bible, sing, listen to a message, pay their tithes, and go home and yet their hearts are far from God...still living in the flesh and not the spirit, going through the motions. We need to set example for potential Christians and the lost souls, to make valuable spiritual contributions in their lives and not to just get them to be baptised and increase the congregation.

1Corinthians 1:10-15 says ¹⁰Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. ¹²Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. ¹³Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; ¹⁵Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. (Read also 1Corinthians 3).

John 10:16 says, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." So even though there are so many denominations Jesus says they shall become one.

- As stated previously, Rom 14:5 "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." If a person therefore chooses to attend a church on Sunday should you be condemning them? And for those who say that church on Sunday was on the basis of paganism, where as it may be true that persons have worshipped false

gods, I have been to churches on both Saturday and Sunday and guess what? They are both using the same bible and worshipping the same almighty God.

- Part of the message to the church of Laodicea, according to Colossians 2:16-17 ¹⁶Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: ¹⁷Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
- James 1:27 states that “Pure religion and undefiled before God is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

To the "Greasecans":

This category refers to those going through the motions. They accepted Christ, got baptised but has refused to let go off their old life or things and company that stand in the way of their relationship with God. They do not take their commitment to God seriously and in essence is still more focused carnally than spiritually. They have somehow made themselves comfortable living a sinful life, while God is on the backburner.

They will say things like, “I can’t do that and God can’t really expect me to do that...it’s not possible for me”. Especially if it is a bad habit or addiction or something exposed to as a child growing up and was made to feel ok.

No matter what sins are explicitly stated in the bible, if a person doesn’t want to let go of something that is being said is a sin, they will go high and low to justify it as not being a sin, and will go to the extent of quoting scriptures and grasping at straws, whether it be homosexuality, murder, adultery, etc. If you have a sense that God may be displeased about something, it is better to avoid doing it until you are certain, than to keep doing it.

Once there is a struggle within you then that is good, because it means there is an opportunity for change or for a revelation from God, but if you’re doing something wrong and you feel nothing or have somehow convinced yourself it is ok, then you have a serious problem.

Galatians 5:16-24 - [This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

It is not that you cannot have fun or get what you desire but if some of the things are detestable to God or deters your relationship with Him you will have to decide what is more important. If you are serious about living a life pleasing God:

- Stop finding excuses and put your flesh under subjection. God may have a particular blessing for you but because of stubbornness, pride or reluctance, it will take a longer

time for you to get it or you may miss it totally. Like the Israelites who were to inherit the Promised Land of Canaan and a journey that should have taken a few days took over 40 years. They constantly grumbled and complain against God. It is a part of our carnal nature as humans to fuss if we feel discomfort or get frustrated when things are not going our way. It is **difficult** but we need to be mindful of the weaknesses of the flesh and be in control of our emotions that we do not disgrace ourselves and upset God.

Isaiah 1:19-20 says “¹⁹ If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: ²⁰ But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” And 1Samuel 15:22, “²² And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

- Avoid companions that are holding or pulling you back. You cannot grow spiritually if the persons around you are involving you in activities or situations that go against your relationship with God. If they are the type of persons that once you identify your stance will respect it and not pressure you or lead you astray, you may not necessarily have to avoid them but be an example for them to follow. (Romans 12:2)
- Renew your commitment to God and by that I mean being repentant and strive to change or remove the things and habits you know you are not supposed to have or be doing. Acknowledge that it is wrong or not good and make the step to change.

Not sure if a particular thing is wrong? Here are some ways to tell:

1. If you feel guilty
2. If you keep getting a nagging feeling about it or feel upset when somebody points it out.
3. If Jesus was to visit you in the very moment you would be ashamed.
4. Does it run contrary to the word of God?

As humans we are carnal, which is defined as relating to body or flesh, the appetites of the passions of the body, worldly or earthly and is where ‘carnival’ is derived. Anything meant to entertain, pleasure or make us feel good we welcome it, right? Ain't nothing wrong with feeling good, but not everything that makes us feel good is good for us or more importantly is pleasing to God. As humans whenever we have a habit that deep down we know we need to change but when we realise the energy and the effort it is going to take, we draw the ‘rights’ card. The right to freedom of expression, right to do this and that, when the only right that needs to be exercised is for you to shut up and do what is right and stop behaving as children who throw tantrums because they can't do what they want.

God hates homosexuality, Leviticus 18:22 “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.”

Romans 1:26-27: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men,

leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

1 Corinthian 6:9: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind."

Lust leads to sexual immorality, Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Homosexuality is just one of the many sexual immoral behaviours but sexual immorality in any shape or form is detestable to God.

Persons will say sin is sin and none is above the other but if you read the bible you will see that sexual immoral sins are deemed more detestable than any other type and it was most tempting or attractive to us as carnal beings and the devil knows this and what better way to score against God than to play against human fleshly desires, our weakness, to make sexual immoral behaviour acceptable and to make those who partake feel no shame or guilt in doing it.

1Corinthians 6:18 says, "¹⁸Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." Fornication speaks to sexual immorality, other scriptures in regards to this include:

- **Exodus 20:14** - Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- **Deuteronomy 23:17-18** - There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.
- **Jude 1:7** - Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
- **1 Corinthians 7:2** - Nevertheless, [to avoid] fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.
- **1 Corinthians 6:13-20** - Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body [is] not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.
- **Revelation 21:8** - But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

To the Potential Christians:

As an individual with interest of building a relationship with God, the first thing is to have that desire to know God. Aspire to develop a personal relationship with God and not based on the instruction of another human being.

Fellowship with others for spiritual support as spiritual growth is not attained by just reading the word but learning from other's experiences especially if you are just starting out. It takes time but you must be patient, you cannot rush God...His time is the best time.

Go to church...it's about you and God not the pastor and the congregation. God can send messages through people regardless of who they are, even those not up to standard. (1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Romans 11:29).

According to 1 Peter 2:1-3, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, ² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: ³ If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

Do not expect to understand or get everything at once. Isaiah 28:10-11 says, "¹⁰ For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: ¹¹ For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people." Verse 11 refers to what we call tongues, which at times may make persons, even some Christians who do not understand its meaning or its place in the church and may feel uncomfortable or disturbed by it.

Tongues, often triggered by the presence of the Holy Spirit have two uses:

- The individual conversing with the Holy Spirit for edification or to be given revelation. (personal encounter)
- The delivery of a prophetic word from God which would then be interpreted so as to be understood by whom the message was meant for. (Isaiah 28:9-11, Isaiah 33:19. Acts 2:2-3, 10:44-46, 1 Cor 12:8-10)

Controversial Issues

-Tattoo: Leviticus 19:28, "²⁸ Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD."

-Abortion: If you decide to eliminate the existence of a human being, are you not playing God? According to an article, "What does God say about abortion?", God speaks very clearly in the Bible on the value of unborn children. God's Word says that He personally made each one of us, and has a plan for each life:

(Source: <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-comfort/abortion-bible.html>)

- "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee..." – Jeremiah 1:5
- "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." – Psalms 127:3
- "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)" – Romans 9:11
- "Thou shalt not kill" – Exodus 20:13

Conclusion

If we invite an important guest to our home, it is expected that we would want to put the place in order and looking good and that once they are there, to maintain order. But there are those who will have the guest come over and the place is filthy with little or no concern that the guest maybe uncomfortable or what it says about them as a person, however if pointed out they will feel ashamed or bothered by it. Then there are those who don't care to make preparations for the guest or how they are perceived, possibly because the importance of the guest was not understood or accepted as such.

Jesus is of Great importance, is he not? Real Christians know his importance and what significant role he is to play in their lives and will make the effort to maintain order in their way of living to please him. Greasecans want Jesus in their lives but are reluctant to maintain order or will just tidy certain areas and seal off the other areas, as if he will not be aware of it and hence not be bothered by it. Potential Christians are yet to understand his importance and significance and as such, may not have a desire to put things in order as they should.

All should aspire to have a personal relationship with God, to put Him first and not let the things of the world be a deterrent.