

## Bystander Christianity

## WHIRLWIND

## KEY SCRIPTURE &amp; SERMON POINTS:

*“Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” 1 John 3:7-10 ESV*

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*<sup>17</sup> You already know these things, dear friends. So be on guard; then you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. <sup>18</sup> Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:17-18*

*“This is how God’s children and the devil’s children become obvious. Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother or sister.” 1 John 3:10 CSB*

*<sup>14</sup> Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 NLT*

*Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer<sup>[a]</sup> is overcome by some sin, you who are godly<sup>[b]</sup> should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Galatians 6:1 NLT*

*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8b ESV*

*<sup>18</sup> Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’),<sup>[a]</sup> and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell<sup>[b]</sup> will not conquer it. Matthew 16:18 NLT*

*Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near. Hebrews 10:25 NLT*

## SERMON FOLLOW ALONG POINTS:

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS  
IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE: A DISTORTION OF CHRISTIAN IDENTITY  
A DISTORTED VERSION: BYSTANDER CHRISTIANITY

## THREE TRAITS OF BYSTANDER CHRISTIANITY

LOW MOTIVATION FOR PERSONAL GROWTH  
LOW PATIENCE FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS  
LOW OWNERSHIP OF LOCAL CHURCH  
WE ARE NOT BYSTANDER CHRISTIANS!

## OUR SOLUTION:

WE ARE GROWING CHRISTIANS!  
WE WILL REACH THE WORLD AND PATIENTLY HELP OTHERS GROW IN THEIR FAITH!  
WE LOVE GOD’S PLAN FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH AND ARE WHOLEHEARTEDLY COMMITTED TO ITS HEALTH AND GROWTH!

## DISCUSSION GUIDE:

**Start Thinking.** Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Frame the conversation. Pastor Jeff began the main portion of the sermon by saying, “let this convict you but not crush you.” Why is that an important part of discussing this type of Bible content?
- Read 1 John 3:7-10. Then build historical context to the best of your ability. This is a passage where the main messages from it are most useful in our current context with past historical context behind it. Hint 1: grab a study bible and look at the main reason for writing 1 John in the book intro. Hint 2: false teaching was causing a divide in the church.
- Continue diving into the passage. What are the key points John is making in this passage? How do those key points lead us back to the Gospel?
- While the sermon was about “Bystander Christianity,” this passage is not. How do we appropriately use this passage to build a bridge between John’s thought and Bystander Christianity?

**Start Sharing.** Choose a question to create openness.

- How does the concept of Bystander Christianity relate to spiritual warfare?
- Why do some people have low motivation for personal [spiritual] growth? And why do you think others are hyper-motivated? On a spectrum of very motivated and completely unmotivated, where would you rate yourself?
- “Low patience for growing Christians” was the second trait listed. Try to differentiate between these three ways of interacting with someone: 1) Being patient, 2) enabling bad behavior, 3) and being an inactive bystander of their life. Where are your strengths and struggles with this?
- Explore the third trait: “Low ownership of the local church.” Your presence at this Gospel Community is an example of your greater level of ownership for what we’re doing as a church. Share some other ways you are modeling a higher level of ownership.
- Was there something we did not talk about that was your biggest takeaway from this message?

**Start Praying.** Pray this prayer in your own words with your group.

*God, Our Father in Heaven, we praise you and thank you for inspiring messages in Your Word that speak difficult truths into our lives. Thank you for loving us enough to challenge us to grow, for convicting us, and even rebuking us at times. We ask that you turn every conviction into a transformation that replaces conviction with encouragement! In Jesus’ name, amen!*

**Start Doing.** Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Confess one area that you’ve been guilty of being part of “Bystander Christianity” and repent of it. BUT ALSO, acknowledge one area that you are doing a good job and thank Jesus for it! Celebrate with your group!