

## 5. Dividing our lives into "secular" and "sacred" compartments:

It is so easy to compartmentalize God to "Christian activities" around church, praying, reading the Bible, attending a small group. Yet it is so easy to not think about God when we are spending money, working, studying for exams, playing sports.

Ron Sider summarizes it well: "Whether the issue is marriage or money.... The data suggest that in many crucial areas evangelicals are not living any differently from their unbelieving neighbors."

## 6. Doing for God instead of being with God:

Being productive and getting things done are high priorities in our Western culture. Within minutes of being introduced to someone, we will ask, "What do you do?" Our identity is in our DOING. The problem is that our identity as Christians is in His love for us, not our doing. Our activity for God can only properly flow from a life with God. We cannot give what we do not possess. When our doing, our work for God, is not nourished by a deep interior life with God, we end up off center. Our sense of worth and validation gradually shifts from God's unconditional love for us in Christ to our works and performance. The joy of Christ gradually disappears. And we become "human doings" not "human beings."

## 7. Spiritualizing away conflict:

Nobody likes conflict. Yet conflict is everywhere — from law courts to workplaces to classrooms to neighborhoods to marriages to parenting, to close friendships. We smooth them over, "we sweep them under the rug," we pray they go away. Yet Jesus was in regular conflict with the religious leaders, the crowds, the disciples — even His own family. Out of a desire to bring true peace, Jesus disrupted the false peace all around Him. He refused to "spiritualize away" conflict. Instead, He actually engaged it a way that brought life and His kingdom.

## 8. Covering over brokenness, weakness and failure:

The pressure to present an image of ourselves as strong and spiritually "together" hovers over most of us. We feel guilty for not measuring up, for not making the grade. Yet the Bible does not spin the flaws and weaknesses of its heroes. Abraham lied. Hosea's wife was a prostitute. Peter rebuked God! Noah got drunk. Jonah was a racist. Jacob lied. John Mark deserted Paul. Elijah burned out. Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal. Thomas doubted. All these people send the same message: that every human being on earth, regardless of their gifts and strengths, is also vulnerable and dependent on God and others.

## 9. Living without limits:

A core spiritual issue here relates to our limits and our humanity. We are not God. We cannot serve everyone in need. We are human beings. When we cross over limits given to us by God, we end up in trouble. Jesus modeled limits for us as a human being — fully God yet fully human. He did not heal every sick person in Palestine. He did not raise every dead person. He did not feed all the hungry beggars. A life without limits forgets that God is God. We are not.

## 10. Judging other people's spiritual journey:

I was taught it was my responsibility to correct people in error or in sin and to always counsel people who were mixed up spiritually or weren't in a place with God that I thought they should be in. I felt guilty if I saw something questionable and did nothing to point it out. Most of us have no trouble at all dispensing advice or pointing out wrongdoing. Like Jesus said, unless I first take the log out of my own eye, knowing that I have huge blind spots, I am dangerous. I must see the extensive damage sin has done to every part of who I am — emotion, intellect, body, will and spirit — before I can attempt to remove the speck from my brother's eye.