

Costume Christianity

AMANDA BEGGS | YOUR KINGDOM COME WEEK 9

Changing how we look on the outside will never change who we are on the inside.

“Costume Christianity”— the belief that if I look like a follower of Jesus, I am a follower of Jesus. If I do the right things, I will have the right heart.

Leads to:

- **Self-righteousness:** We start to believe we’re doing pretty well and must be right before God due to our actions. Finds hope in how good we are.
- **Despair:** We see our continued failures and our hopelessness. Finds hopelessness in that we will never be good enough.

The gospel: a changed heart leads to > changed actions > leads to a changed world.

Where does your external behavior not align with who you are on the inside?

Prayer: How we approach prayer reveals how we approach following Jesus.

MATTHEW 6:5

Tests to find where we have a “costume” on in our Christianity:

Motivation Test: Where do I love to stand and pray? Where you pray says a lot about why you pray.

- Do I pray to be noticed by others or by God?
- Do I only pray publicly and never privately?
- Is prayer a path to knowing God or showing that I do?

Motivation Test: Do I think there’s something I can do to make God hear me? Is prayer a transaction or a conversation?

- Do I bargain with God?
- Do I think praying from a certain place is more effective?
- Do I believe God hears me when I’ve been good?

(Both of these lead to self-righteousness)

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

MATTHEW 6:9-13, ESV

- The first half of the Lord's prayer focuses on **God's glory** – His name, His Kingdom, and His will. Remember first that God is our **Father**.
- The second half of the Lord's prayer focuses on **our good** – our need for provision, pardon, and protection.
 - “Prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him.”
– Tim Keller

Prayer moves us from costume Christianity to communion with Christ.

In prayer, we trust that God is big enough for our present. Who do you turn to to meet that need? (Matthew 6:11)

Costume Christianity: self-sufficient heart

Communing Christianity: dependent heart

MATTHEW 18:2-4

God will meet our need for:

- Wisdom (James 1:5)
- Grace (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- Life and Godliness (2 Peter 1:3)

What does a dependent heart produce in us?

- Gratitude instead of entitlement
- Daily rhythm of turning to God

In prayer, we trust that God is big enough for our past.

A forgiven person is a forgiving person. Forgiving is not forgetting.

Costume Christianity: hard heart

Communing Christianity: healed heart

In prayer, we trust that God is big enough for our future.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” Matthew 6:13 (testing, enticement to sin, Satan uses moment of testing and turns them into temptation, James 1:13-15)

Costume Christianity: fickle heart

Communing Christianity: steadfast heart

What does a steadfast heart produce in us?

- Strength and character
- Surrender

MATTHEW 6:9-13, ESV

Pray then like this:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

