

# CONSUMER CHRISTIAN OR KINGDOM CITIZEN

BISHOP RC BLAKES, JR.

You are carrying a massive load. I know exactly who I am speaking to today. You are highly capable. You run departments, you manage households, you organize everyone else's chaos, and you keep the pieces of your life together. Yet, so many of you are quietly sitting in these seats battling absolute exhaustion.

You have faced compounded losses over the last few years. You are dealing with debilitating disappointments that nobody else sees.

And because you are so tired, it is incredibly tempting to walk through the doors of a church and slip into the most dangerous mindset in American Christianity: consumerism.

When your emotional life is running on fumes, you want to sit in the back row, fold your arms, and say, "Feed me. Fix me. Make me feel better." You start grading the music. You evaluate the sermon. You treat the house of God like a drive-thru designed to dispense a quick emotional fix before Monday morning.

But this is not a new problem. Jesus confronted the very first consumer crowd in John chapter 6. After He miraculously fed the five thousand, the masses tracked Him down to the other side of the lake. But Jesus did not flatter them for their attendance. He immediately called out their motive:

## **JOHN 6:26 NIV**

**Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.**

They were following Him for the fish and the loaves. They wanted a caterer, not a King. They wanted the temporary benefits of His hands without the

permanent transformation of His Kingdom.

When we bring that same consumer spirit into the church today, it creates an empty, man-made religion. It is a trap. It might momentarily feed your ego, but it will absolutely starve your spirit, and it is the reason you still feel so painfully stagnant.

Jesus did not shed His blood to establish a religious country club. He died to build a Body. He called us to a Kingdom culture. Kingdom citizens understand that true healing, true self-worth, and true spiritual growth are never found by just sitting and consuming. They are found in an inspired relationship with Christ that overflows into authentic community.

We have to ask ourselves a hard question today: Am I functioning as a consumer Christian, or as a Kingdom citizen in community? What is actually required of a citizen who builds the Christian community of the local church?

But consumer Christianity is a trap. It takes the raw, life-changing power of the Gospel and reduces it to a transaction. It feeds your ego but starves your spirit. It is an empty, man-made religion, and it is the reason you still feel so painfully stagnant.

Here are the three most evidentiary signs.

## **#1 YOU BRING YOUR SUPPLY RATHER THAN DEMANDING A PRODUCT**

A consumer walks into a building asking, "What is in this for me? Did this meet my preferences?" A Kingdom citizen walks into the room asking, "What has God given me to pour out?" We have a generation of believers who think church membership means paying your dues in the offering bucket and expecting a certain level of service.

That is man-made religion, and it will leave you spiritually depressed. Kingdom culture recognizes that you are a vital, necessary organ in the Body of Christ. Your true value is not found in how well you sit and listen, but in how freely you give what the Holy Spirit has deposited inside you. When you shift from watching to serving, something breaks open in your emotional

life.

You stop fixating on your own lack and start experiencing the joy of divine purpose.

**Quote: "Church is not a place to go to; it is a people to belong to. And belonging means bringing your life to the table." - Eugene Peterson**

### **1 PETER 4:10 NIV**

**Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.**

Self-Assessment:

- Do I evaluate a church service based on what it did for me, or do I look for opportunities to be a blessing to someone else?
  - What specific gift, talent, or piece of wisdom has the Holy Spirit given me that I am currently withholding from my church community?

## **#2 YOU COMMIT TO AUTHENTIC PARTNERSHIP INSTEAD OF CONVENIENT ATTENDANCE**

Consumerism loves convenience. If the relationships get messy, if someone offends us, or if the season gets difficult, the consumer simply unplugs and goes down the street to the next church. But a Kingdom citizen chooses covenant over convenience.

We need authentic partnership. When you are hit with a sudden wave of grief, or when your marriage is under severe attack, you cannot survive in isolation. You need the Body of Christ for co-regulation. You need brothers and sisters who will stand in the gap, hold your arms up, and remind you of the promises of God when you have forgotten how to believe them. Building community requires us to establish healthy relationship rhythms. We show up for each other. We do not just consume a sermon; we bear one another's burdens.

**Quote: "The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

**GALATIANS 6:2 NIV**

**Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.**

Self-Assessment:

- When conflict or disappointment happens in my church relationships, is my first instinct to pull away and isolate?
  - Who is one person in this local body that I am actively helping to carry a burden right now?

### **#3 YOU SURRENDER YOUR INNER WOUNDS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE SAKE OF THE BODY**

This might be the most difficult sign of all. A consumer will sit in church for twenty years, harboring bitterness, jealousy, and deep inner wounds, expecting the organization to make them feel better. But unhealed people eventually bleed on the community.

A Kingdom citizen takes personal responsibility for their emotional life by surrendering it to the Holy Spirit. They allow the Holy Spirit to act as their therapist. You cannot build a healthy community if you refuse to let God heal your hidden trauma. When we submit our disappointments to Him, He regulates our emotions. He strips away the need to perform. When you are secure in your personal relationship with Him, you do not need the church to validate your self-esteem. You become a life-giving force rather than a draining one, because you are leading from a place of wholeness, not a place of injury.

**Quote: "It is impossible to be spiritually mature while**

## remaining emotionally immature." - Peter Scazzero

### EPHESIANS 4:31-32 NIV

**Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

Self-Assessment:

- Am I expecting my pastor, my friends, or my church to heal an emotional wound that only the Holy Spirit can cure?
  - What specific bitterness or disappointment do I need to release to God today so I stop projecting it onto the people around me?

### CLOSING

You are entirely too valuable to the Kingdom of God to live the rest of your life as a spectator. The enemy wants to keep you exhausted. He wants you isolated. He wants you trapped in the cycle of grading church services while your soul slowly dries up. But the Holy Spirit is calling you out of the stands and onto the field. He is asking you to drop the consumer scorecard and step into authentic partnership.

Stop waiting for the perfect church environment to suddenly cure your depression. Bring your supply. Let the Holy Spirit heal those compounded losses you have been trying to manage on your own. Submit your grief to Him, let Him regulate your heart, and then turn around and pour that healing into the woman sitting next to you. That is how the Body of Christ actually works. That is the power of Kingdom culture. You are not a spiritual customer. You are a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is time to take your place.

