

Caped Crusaders

By Becky Grove
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Batman is one of the most famous and loved superheroes, and he doesn't even have any super powers. You can understand the appeal, as he is someone you can relate to. Anyone could be Batman, with enough money and the right tailor. Gotham city is reminiscent of New York or Los Angeles (which the majority of you are probably familiar with). He has the coolest nemeses, snazzy vehicles, and fights crime: who doesn't love Batman (except those crazy Superman purists)? However, too many people try to BE Batman. No, you may not see a bunch of people running around in masks or the bat signal in the sky, but an alarmingly large number of Christians attempt to live two lives.

Many people call themselves a Christian and don't act like it. Or maybe they do, but only when around other Christians. Chances are, you are or have been guilty of this at some point; I know I have. At church, you shine, you talk about the Bible, you say "Praise God" often, and no one ever doubts your salvation. Then you go to work, and you blend in with your coworkers so well that they would never guess you walk with the Lord. Even if you *say* you're Christian, they just assume you mean a casual churchgoer, because that's how you've been raised or to give yourself happy feelings. They don't see the (true) love, they don't see the fear. All they see is someone who is just like them, and to whom claiming allegiance to a certain religion is like having a favorite ice cream flavor.

This is what we call hypocrisy, ladies and gentlemen. We have to be true to ourselves. If you are two different people depending on who you are around, the day of the week, or whatever factors affect your actions, then one of those people are not the real you, and you must decide which one it is. If you are going to be something, you have to really be it, or stop calling yourself that. When someone decides to stop moonlighting as a Christian, his fellow congregation members are shocked, because they mistook the apostate's "Christian cape" for the armor of God. It really shouldn't be shocking; there are always signs, and those with perception see it coming and sometimes try to intercept, out of love for the person. Apostasy can be avoidable (from our perspective, as only God knows the outcome) so if you think your friend is wearing a mask, rebuke him for pretending it is the helmet of salvation, and encourage him to trade in his "carnarangs" for the Sword of the Spirit. If you are claiming to be a Christian, LIVE it, don't just act like it.

What most people don't realize is that we can't live two lives because we are only given one life to live, and that life is not even our own! Yes, the majority of society has figured out they have just one life and they better

make the best of it (there is even a soap opera and blog under that name). However, what they don't understand is what "the best" means. Your life is from God, but He did NOT give it to you to do whatever you please with it. As question one of the Westminster Shorter Catechism states, "man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. THIS is the meaning of life, the only point of our existence: to glorify God (worship Him in ALL of life) and enjoy Him (be satisfied in Him, and not just His gifts) forever (hurray for Heaven!). Not only were you given life by God, your life is sustained by God, and your life is for God (Romans 11:36), but also, if you are a believer, a high price was paid on your life to keep you from eternal death (1 Corinthians 6:20).

If you have realized this Truth, then live for Christ. I am saying this to the choir (and me - a sinner saved by grace, praise YHWH!) as well, because it is a commonly forgotten fact among not-yet-glorified saints. It is easy to forget and to start living for yourself, even if it's not in blatant sin. Living for anyone/thing other than God is idolatry. Remember, "whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for [Jesus'] sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25) If you only live for yourself, you will come to the end of your life to find it was nothing, empty, wasted. If you live for Jesus, you are not throwing it away, but finding the true value that you have been made for! Everything you do for the Kingdom, which is eternal, makes a difference and you will be rewarded for it.

The earthly things you like now will pass, as will your interest in them. One has to give up living for himself and focus his attention on serving and glorifying God in all he does (1 Corinthians 10:31). It's tough, but completely doable (Philippians 4:13). It's important to remember that it's God that the world hates, and only us, indirectly, as His servants (John 15:18). It's human nature to want people to like you, but one must be cautious if too many people like you (John 15:19). That is not to say it is automatically bad if you gain popularity, but you must analyze the situation. Are you being true to yourself and, more importantly, to God? Batman is unbelievably cool, but he doesn't have to worry about answering to God, as he isn't real and has no soul. So I hope you don't let him be your role model, at least not in the respect of his lifestyle. However, I would also advise caution in wearing a cape in public.

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