



Recently, we've been going through some of the criticisms of Christianity. Last time, we looked at the issue of doubt in response to some things that popular Christian musician Marty Sampson had expressed and some challenged he was struggling with. Now that we have examined the deeper issue of doubt, I wanted to address his questions specifically in case anyone else is struggling with the same issues.

When Leaders Fall

If you grew up in the 80s and 90s like I did, you were witness to the heyday of televangelists. They would get on stage in front of an audience of millions, make emotional appeals for us to give our lives over to Christ, and ask us to send them money to help with their ministry. Most of the larger ministries ended the same way - the leaders fell. Some to infidelity, some to money problems, some to both.

In the past couple of decades, the Catholic Church has been rocked repeatedly with report after report of priests molesting children. And recently, megachurch pastor and purity culture proponent [Joshua Harris announced he was leaving Christianity](#).

When we see people whom we think should know the most about something suddenly reject it, or behave in ways they previously told us were wrong, it shakes us a little. Pastors and priests are supposed to be more educated in what Christianity teaches than we are. So, when they say they are walking away, it can cause many of their followers to question what they believe as well.

The Logical Problem with “Many Leaders Fall”

First and foremost, there is a logical error being committed when one uses the actions of a worldview's followers as a way to say that worldview is false.

William Lane Craig put it this way in a forum titled [Is the Prevalence of Religious Violence an Argument for Atheism?](#)

You cannot invalidate a worldview based upon the failure of adherents of that worldview to live consistently with the teachings of that worldview. [Jesus] wouldn't have led the crusades or the inquisition. He wouldn't conduct jihad. The fact that religious zealots of all different stripes engage in these sorts of activities does absolutely nothing to impugn the truth of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. ... It just does not do anything to show that God does not exist, that he



has not raised Jesus from the dead, and that salvation and eternal life is not available through faith in Christ. These abuses of religion don't do anything to undercut those truths.

Let's say someone decides to start a new diet to lose 50 lbs. And the new diet says you have to eat a pound of bacon 3 times a day. Well, if someone says "I was on the Bacon Diet and it didn't work", but they didn't eat any bacon - or they only ate bacon twice a day, or they ate lots of other stuff along with the bacon - we can't declare the Bacon Diet false. The person didn't follow the bacon diet correctly, so we can't know if it really works or not. We have to study what the Bacon Diet teaches in its doctrines to know if it is true or false.

(Heavenly Father, PLEASE make it so I can eat bacon all day and lose weight)

The same goes for a worldview. I cannot say that a worldview is right or wrong based on how its followers behave. Just because a terrorist blows up a building in the name of Allah does not make Islam false. Just because a pastor cheats on his wife when he preaches about faithful marriage does not make Christianity false.

One of the things that makes the case for Christianity so powerful is that it is based on historical events. Jesus of Nazareth was executed, he was buried, his tomb was found empty, his followers claimed to have seen him shortly after he was executed, and their lives changed so dramatically they were willing to die for the things they were proclaiming. People who misbehave or stop believing does nothing to change any of that.

Fallen Leaders Are To be Expected

Later on in the forum, Dr. Craig has this to say about why people fall:

In fact, on a Christian view of the fallenness of man, we ought rather to expect such abuses of religion because it's symptomatic of the fallenness of humanity; that it would take the best and most beautiful things and twist them into ugly, misshapen forms.

In other words, we should not expect perfection in Christian leaders. They are no less fallen than the rest of us. As a [favorite pastor](#) of mine often reminds his congregation, he's "just a dirty, rotten, stinkin' sinner like everybody else".



I am not saying that we should *overlook* issues of sin in our leadership. On the contrary; we should expect our leaders to live exemplary lives that inspire those who follow them. This is true in all arenas of leadership, by the way - sports, business, politics - not just in the religious community. And, should they be found to have committed sins like abuse, or infidelity, or stealing from the church, we should definitely ask them to step down. [It's our job to be sheepdogs and protect the flock from the wolves](#). My point, though, is it should not surprise us when some leaders fall off of the pedestal we have put them on. It's in the nature of man to be imperfect, to stumble and fall every once in a while.

In the end, a pastor's infidelity, greed, egotism, or sudden announcement that he no longer believes what Christianity teaches does nothing to change the facts - Jesus claimed to be God, predicted his death, predicted he would come back from the dead, was crucified, buried, his tomb found empty, was reported being seen by his followers after his death, and they all had dramatic change in their lives. Problems with Christian's behaving badly does nothing to refute these facts. Instead, it promotes the message of the Gospel; that no one is righteous, no not one. And we all need someone to save us from the mess we make in our lives on a daily basis.

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