

Senior Pastor

By Brandon Lemons, Senior Pastor

Ending Consumer Christianity

“Are you a fan of Jesus or a follower of Jesus?” This the question we’re addressing in the *Not a Fan* series. It’s so alluring to simply be a fan of Jesus, because fans of Jesus get to experience many benefits of being associated with Him without the cost of surrendering everything to Him.



One of the greatest barriers to following Christ is “consumerism.” We often hear about consumerism in terms of the desire to have more and better “stuff.” While the love of “stuff” is a definite barrier to prioritizing Christ (Matthew 6:19-24), there is another, more insidious, side-effect of consumerism: the prioritization of self-centeredness. You see, consumerism (and capitalism) is built on the premise that customers demand, companies meet those demands, and everybody wins. This is the culture we live in, and this consumer-centered way of life trains us to want things “your way, right away” (a la Burger King). We often see this same dynamic in churches, where churches seek to offer a product (programs and services) that people want in order to attract people to their church.

Now, this all sounds nice (we like to have things our way, don’t we?), except that prioritizing our preferences doesn’t work when trying to follow Christ wholeheartedly. Rather than prioritizing our own desires and preferences, Jesus calls us to “deny [yourself] and take up [your] cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Whether we like it or not, the call to follow Jesus is the exact opposite of the call of our consumer-centered culture. Jesus says “deny yourself.” Our culture says “your way, right away.”

So what does this mean? The bottom line is that if we want to be completely committed followers of Christ, we must identify our self-centered, consumeristic tendencies so we can put them aside. For example, this may mean doing something more with our money than just spending it on making ourselves and our family happy. It may mean helping more around the house, or spending more time with our children, rather than just doing what we want to do with our time. There are countless other ways it could apply, too.

You see, when we follow Christ, “me, myself, and I” is no longer the priority. We’re called to “look not only to [our] own interests, but also to the interests of others” because this was Christ’s attitude (Philippians 2:4-5). May we be like John the Baptist, who declared that his goal in life was that “[Christ] must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30). May we each be growing as followers of Christ and experience the life that only comes through following Him.
