

Is Your Identity Proven?

By David Lee Burris

Several years ago my Toys R Us Mastercard was hacked. My credit card billing reflected that many thousands of dollars in unauthorized purchases had occurred. As I attempted to remedy the situation it was soon evident that, along with my card, my identity had been hacked. Even the security information to restore control to the credit account had been altered. The perpetrators had gone so far as to change the answers to questions as to my mother's maiden name. Needless to say – no longer owning my personal information even for a short period of time was a very frustrating experience. It ultimately required the intervention of local law enforcement to help resolve the situation.

This experience caused me to reflect in a spiritual application: "Should I not be equally as alarmed if someone were to question my identity as a Christian?" and "How could I answer such an accusation?"

My memory jolted back to the 1970's Jesus Freak flyer that simply asked: "If you were on trial for being a

Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?”

It's a good question! Let us all ask it of ourselves.

“Can you imagine how we would feel sitting in the dock, having to listen to witnesses give their testimony about us, giving first hand evidence of the way we have, or have not lived our lives as Christians? Imagine a whole host of witnesses ready to take the stand, a spouse, children, parents, colleagues, those who know us best... what kind of evidence would they give? Would we be considered guilty and convicted of being Christians? Or might we be fully exonerated and shamefully set free, because there was not enough evidence? Might the jury give a verdict of reasonable doubt? Wouldn't it be very sad if no one could find any evidence of our faith at all?”
(Pastoral Blogsite)

The beliefnet.com website judiciously examines this hypothetical:

Physical Evidence. “A judge and jury would need to examine the physical evidence that may or may not convict you as being a Christian. Therefore, the prosecuting attorney would spend a lot of time examining your daily activities and habits. Are you

present in church every Sunday? Do you own a Bible and read it often? Do you talk about your faith with friends, family and peers? Do you bless your food before eating, even in public? Do you contribute at church? How do you spend your free time? If someone [a detective] were to follow you around everywhere for a few weeks, would that person believe that you are truly a Christian?"

Witnesses. "In a court of law, the attorneys will call witnesses to the stand to testify against you or on your behalf. Consider the people you interact with every day-- your family, friends, co-workers and those who interact with you on a regular basis. How do they perceive your actions? Do you think of others first or yourself? Are you kind and thoughtful or selfish and angry? Will your witnesses state that you are most certainly a Christian in thought, word and action or are they uncertain?"

Converts. "The jury will certainly view you as a 'dangerous' Christian if you convert others to your faith. Have you invited anyone to attend your church with you and followed through? Do you pray for others? Do they ask you to pray for them? Do people who know you come to you with questions or advice about faith? Do you talk about your faith openly and with conviction? Do your actions match your words? Would anyone call you a hypocrite, or do they speak well of you?"

Innocent or Guilty? “Reflect on the moment that the jury declares that you are innocent or guilty of being a Christian. If you are innocent and set free because of lack of evidence do you feel relief that you escaped persecution or regret that you are not truly living a Christian life? If you are declared guilty of being a Christian and sentenced to death, are you willing to die for your faith? Are you truly convinced that you will have eternal life in heaven?”

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” - Luke 9:23

The Same Category of Evidence Since the First Century

The Romans Proved Christians Testing Them With Idols:

To Separate Out True Belief Phiny Advised The Roman Emperor To Decorate Official Quarters With The Roman Gods & Then Invite Individual Christians To Idol Sacrifice.

“Beginning in December, 249 everyone in the empire had to get a certificate from a government officer verifying that he or she had offered a sacrifice to the gods – an act that most Christians in good conscience could not do.”

– *Getting Certified*

Question: If we were put on trial today for our faith – would the prosecutors find physical evidence and credible witnesses to our idolatrous sacrifices?

*One of the primary laws of human life is that you become like what you worship; what's more, you reflect what you worship not outward to the world around. Those who worship **money** increasingly define themselves in terms of it and increasingly treat other people as creditors, debtors, partners, or customers rather than as human beings. Those who worship **power** define themselves in terms of it and treat other people as either collaborators, competitors, or pawns. These forms of idolatry combine damaging to the image-bearing quality of the people concerned and of those whose lives they touch. – Internet Search*

Our “Defense:” Is our conduct a credit to our Christian family name and added proof of our identity or would the legal brief of our sinful behaviors be a weapon worthless to the prosecution?

The Verdict: Would the court – God forbid - find us innocent on all charges because Satan has stolen our identity?

In conclusion, we need to seriously consider that all will someday answer as accountable for their actions, with offenses be charged, taken before a judge, and hear a verdict of life or of death. Therefore, it is better now to

contemplate our standing before this final court of no appeal – reaping the opportunity to restore lost identity.

Putting Ourselves to the Question: Are we proven in our identity as Christians or instead could someone say that our identities are not even worth stealing?