

## We Can't Leave You Alone

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by Bill Crews

*PEOPLE ARE FUNNY (And I don't mean "ha ha" funny): There are so many people who have no interest in the Bible or their own souls who just want Christians to leave them alone while they leave God out of their lives. But these same people will one day wonder why Christians didn't do more to keep them from being eternally lost in hell. Remember, you cannot help people who do not want to be helped, and you cannot teach people who do not want to be taught. But you must try!*

Did you hear the story about the preacher who was criticized because he wore such a solemn expression while he was preaching? Thereafter he began to smile until he was criticized for wearing that "silly grin" upon his face during his sermons! And this story reminds me of something more serious.

Every congregation has its share of negligent members. Just leave them alone, never phone them, never go by to see them, and some of them will surely complain that nobody cares about them or has any interest in them. But show a real concern for them, contact them every time they miss a service, try to get them to become faithful, and most of them will make it painfully clear that they wish you would just forget about them and leave them alone. In the light of such passages as Galatians 6:1ff and James 5:19-20 faithful Christians cannot leave such brethren alone or forget them.

Whenever a Christian becomes a member of a local congregation, he needs to accept and shoulder his congregational responsibilities, and that congregation and its members need to discharge its and their responsibilities toward that member. It is not right for a member to shirk his or her duties in assembling, worshiping, giving, edifying and working. And it is not right for a congregation and its members to neglect the spiritual needs of any weak or wavering member. Yes, there will be members who lose interest in spiritual things, who allow other interests to interfere with or destroy their life in Christ (Luke 8: 14 ), and who begin to drift away (Hebrew 2:1-3). While this is going on, they may want to be left alone, but the love of God will not allow the faithful to leave them alone. There must be loving, sincere efforts made to restore them, and if they will not repent, solemn measures of corrective discipline must be taken – even then in hopes of saving their immortal souls (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Thess. 3:14-15).

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