

Ten Reasons People Don't Wash

➔ Good Morning, Welcome. Thank you to the elders for providing this opportunity. It is a unique way to spend my Birthday today.

A few weeks ago, Jay, Jason, our sons Shane and Adam and I completed a five day, 350-mile bike ride. It was the culmination of several months of planning. I can remember back in March asking Adam if he would like to join us on our ride from Pittsburgh to Warshington. He said there is no "R" in *Warshington*. Never mind the distance, there is no "R" in *Warshington*. Well, it turns out that my time spent growing up in Southeastern Pennsylvania was still with me in the form an idiomatic accent.

"warsh" is the predominant characteristic of what linguists call America's midland accent. The accent can be found in the swath of the country that extends west from Washington, taking in Maryland; southern Pennsylvania; West Virginia; and further south and west.

This slight mispronunciation forms the basis of an analogy for this morning's lesson –
➔ Ten Reasons People Don't Wash.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a weekly Saturday night bath had become common custom for most of the population. A half day's work on Saturday for factory workers allowed them some leisure to prepare for the Sunday day of **church** and rest. The half day off allowed time for the considerable labor of drawing, carrying, and heating water, filling the bath and then afterward emptying it.

To economize, bath water was shared by all family members. Indoor plumbing became more common in the 20th century and commercial advertising campaigns pushing new bath products began to influence public ideas about cleanliness and promoting the idea of a daily shower or bath. A certain percentage of the population did not participate in these washing practices and **I've gathered 10 reasons that people don't wash:**

➔ Ten Reasons People Don't Wash

1. **I was forced to as a child.**
2. **I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.**
3. **None of my friend's wash.**
4. **People who wash are hypocrites – they think they are cleaner than everybody else.**
5. **There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which is best.**
6. **➔ I wash only on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.**
7. **I can't spare the time.**
8. **The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer.**
9. **People who make soap are only after your money.**
10. **I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.**

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If these excuses sound familiar it's because if we change the wording a small degree (change Wash to Church), the excuse is what we hear people say when talking about their beliefs or perhaps why they don't go to church anymore.

1. →I was forced to wash (go to Church) as a child

An informal survey shows 80% (debate.org) of people would not force children to attend church. Reasons include brain washing, children may not believe, or too impressionable. Reasons in support of bringing your children to church would include that they are not old enough to make their own decisions, they are dependents (my house, my rules). Scriptures make it clear that as parents we are to teach our children Proverbs 2:8-9 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

Rather than complain about being forced to go to church, be thankful for parents and grandparents that loved you enough to wash you every Saturday night and bring you to church on Sunday. Let's do some word-smithing on the second point:

2. →I used to Wash/go to church, but I got bored and stopped

After a period of **NOT** washing, body odor would signal to others that there is non-compliance in the hygiene department, but when a person stops going to church, it may not be so apparent. When it comes to Church, these people may feel that they "just want to do other things," or "They think it's boring." This may explain the popularity of entertainment churches.

These answers, however, are really symptomatic of a person's underlying beliefs about God and his/her relationship to God. I would break underlying beliefs into two categories: 1) They don't believe in God or 2) They believe in God but don't think church is important.

For the child, who is more interested in staying home to play video games, what they need most is to have *conversations with you about God*. They need to know it's OK to doubt, and that *you are willing to talk to them about those doubts*. It might be intimidating to be the one who has to present the case for God's existence, but if you are not going to be that person in your child's life, who will?

3. →None of my friends go to church

friends may come and go — but God never does. His love for us is unchanging, and so is **His promise** to be with us and bring us to Himself, once this life is over, if we know Christ. Don't let the pressures of the crowd keep you from Him. After all, fifty years from now, which will be more important: a few fleeting friendships now, or the eternal

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friendship of Christ? The Bible says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

4. → **People who go to church are hypocrites – they think they are cleaner than everybody else**

Is that the goal in some people's life, to be the cleanest person?!? Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites. They were the religious know-it-alls of Jerusalem. The fact that these men took issue with Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, reveals the kind of people they really were.

So what does it mean to be a hypocrite? It's a superficial attitude of holiness or right living. The hypocrite pretends to be someone he's not and tells others, either with words or actions, "I am better than you and you are lower than me."

One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why don't the disciples wash their hands before the meal as it is customary to do?" In other words - "If they do not wash their hands before they eat then they are not worthy to be called God's people as we are."

Jesus responded with, "You white-washed tombs!" The very thing they thought made them holy was really just a covering for the wickedness in their hearts. They lived a life of outward holiness that had no effect on their inward man. Let's reverse the scene for a moment.

Jesus hates hypocrisy, and as seen in the Scriptures, He's not afraid to address it. He knew that Church buildings all over the world would be filled with imperfect people of all kinds, but His purpose is that in the process, real heart change would take place by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What if the stay-at-home-Christian thinks that his stay-at-home status is more holy because he is removed from organized religion? In the meantime, and totally unaware, he has created his own religion where everyone on the outside is less than him. He has become the Pharisee he was trying to avoid.

5. → **There are so many different kinds of Churches, I can't decide which is best.**

A lot of soaps boast in their advertising that theirs is better because it lathers more or makes you cleaner. Really, all you need is a bar of ivory soap to *warsh*. Jesus kept things simple, so your church needs to be simple, one source of truth, singing, praying, taking the Lord's supper together.

Anything beyond that is just extra perfume to help make you smell better on the outside, but it's the inside that needs attention. Obeying God's commands, are what will make you cleaner on the inside.

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6. I go to Church only on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter

A person like this may be thinking they need to spend time with the family, each weekend. God wouldn't want you to neglect your times together as a family; after all, He created the family. But God doesn't want you to neglect something even more important—and that is your time with Him and his Christian followers. God not only created you, but He also loves you, and more than anything else He wants you to love Him in return.

7. I can't spare the time to go to Church

→ In Luke 14:15-20 we read about The Parable of the Great Banquet

15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." 16 Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' 18 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' 19 "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' 20 "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

Making excuses is not a good way to go thru life. When we make our Christian family a priority then we will make the time to have fellowship with them on a regular basis.

The next two excuses reveal a negative outlook on life. The negative or pessimistic person will overrate the bad, they are discouraging and they are generally negative. They will take a gloomy view of circumstances and they look on the dark side of life.

→ What are some underlying causes of Pessimism?

- a) Fear, worry, no hope
- b) Little faith, disappointment of past
- c) Discouragements of the past, guilt

The next two items from our list sound as though they were from a pessimistic washer:

8. → **The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer.**

9. **People who make soap are only after your money.**

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→How do we overcome Pessimism?

- Romans 8:31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
- Psalms 37:40 The Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him
- Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

10. →I'll start going to church or become a Christian when I get older and dirtier.

What does the bible say about that type of attitude? God is far more patient with us than we deserve, and certainly far more patient with us than we are with each other. The Bible says, "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

But the Bible also warns us not to presume upon God's patience, or assume we can take advantage of it after a lifetime of deliberately turning our backs on Him. In the Old Testament, God's people refused to renounce their sinful ways, in spite of repeated warnings from the prophets — and eventually they were conquered and enslaved. The Bible warns, "If they did not escape when they refused him... how much less will we, if we turn away?" (Hebrews 12:25).

The real problem, however, isn't with God but with us. For one thing, the more we sin the more calloused and hardened our hearts become — and the less likely we are to hear His voice calling us.

In addition, we never know when our lives will end; death may overtake us before we have an opportunity to repent and open our hearts to Christ.

The Bible warns us to repent now, without waiting another moment. John the Baptist warned, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Jesus had the identical message concerning the need for immediate repentance, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17).

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➔ Why did you decide to worship here this morning? Chances are it was not because of the type of soap we offered, but rather,

1. You enjoy worshiping God.
2. You feel compelled to encourage and serve your church family.
3. You want to hear teaching that convicts and inspires you.
4. To have fellowship with the believers.

➔ Jesus teaches us that we need to hear his word, believe and repent and be baptized to wash away our sins. When the Bible speaks of our sins being washed away, it means we are forgiven. Our sins, which had defiled us, are gone. By the grace of God through Christ, we are no longer spiritually corrupt; we stand justified before God. Ananias told Paul to “be baptized and wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16). God had demonstrated through the Law that we cannot purify ourselves; only He can. So when Ananias instructed Paul to be baptized to wash away his sins, Paul understood that, despite his exalted status as a Pharisee, he was a sinner; Not just a sinner but the worst of sinners. According to 1 Timothy 1:15–16.

Titus 2:14; 3:5: When we, through faith and Baptism, apply the blood of Jesus to our unclean souls, God pronounces us clean.

Colossians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21: In our Baptism, He washes our sins away, as it were; He places our sin debt upon His own Son and declares us righteous in His sight.

Psalms 103:12: God chooses to forget our sin and removes it far from Him.

You have a chance this morning to wash away your sins in baptism, OR if you have other needs to bring to the elders, then please make it known to them, in the back, while we stand and sing our invitation song.