

A Tip of the Hat (1Peter 2:11,12; 1John 2:15-17) ZCC 7/14/13

*1 Peter 2: 11 Beloved, I beg you as foreigners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 having good behavior among the nations, so in that of which they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they see, glorify God in the day of visitation.*  
(World English Bible)

*1 John 2: 15 Don't love the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the Father's love isn't in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, isn't the Father's, but is the world's. 17 The world is passing away with its lusts, but he who does God's will remains forever.* (World English Bible)

You know what the word “secular” means, right? It means worldly or temporal. Many of us use the term to describe our lives away from church. Technically, it means the opposite of spiritual. Most of us use the terms, “secular job” or “secular entertainment.” In those terms, I have a secular job (where I am involved with families in extreme crisis—but not from a pastoral care standpoint). For now, I also have a spiritual job (this one—trying to help Zion Christian Church move forward spiritually and offer help to families—but this time from a pastoral standpoint). A couple of months ago, there was a mini-series about the Bible. We might consider that spiritual entertainment. Most of the TV shows we watch would be considered secular.

Now, there is another term I want to talk about—and it is a fitting term for today. What does it mean if I say that Paul or David wears many hats? Does it mean that he has a different hat for every day? That's right—no is the right answer. What does it mean? [Wait for answers.] Right again--it means that he does a lot of different things. He may wear a lawn-mowing hat and a working hat, and a husband hat and a father hat, as well as all the hats he wears at church. Most of us fit in that category. We do a lot of different things day to day and week to week.

Do you see how the idea of secular and religious and the idea of wearing different hats can be put together? One of the problems I see with us modern Christians is that we think we can partition off our lives—and even our hearts. This is absolutely not true—it is not biblical in any fashion. You and I, as Christians, should be the same no matter where we are. I'm going to re-read part of the passage from a while ago.

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(WEB)

We are supposed to live our lives so that God's face is revealed and Jesus is magnified, moment to moment. So, how do we REALLY live?

Let me show you a week in the life. This week is not about you or me specifically—it is about those people we sometimes call worldly Christians or even secularized Christians.

Lets start with Monday morning. Many of us head to work—to our secular jobs. So, we put on our work hat. **[Put on LifeNet Health cap]** Now the days of me actually wearing a cap at work are few and far between—but this is a cap that they gave me for some kind of promotional thing. LifeNet Health is the name of the company I work for. Anyway, when we get to work, sometimes we grumble and complain. Sometimes we cheat our boss by doing less than our best. Maybe we stand around and talk and tell jokes for a while before we do anything.

My friend (and small business owner) Jim Barbee says that standing around and talking is stealing, and I guess he is right. The Bible tells us that we are to do our jobs as if we are working for the Lord. Just a few moments ago, I read that our faithfulness can cause those around us to see God in us and through us—and it can even cause them to want to seek God. If we forget our faith and if we act just like everyone else, then we have failed.

All day long we have been dreading the commute home. I-95 in Richmond is a real pain in the afternoon isn't it? By the time we get to the car, we've been delayed twice. First, the elevator was full and we had to wait—then some dummy that didn't seem to want to go home stopped us and tried to strike up a conversation. By the time we get the car cranked up and pointed north, we've put on our drive-on-95 hat and pulled it down tight. **[Put on cap with “donkey” ears.]** And you KNOW what we act like. Blowing the horn and cutting people off and generally driving like we are the only ones on the road—or at least the only one who wants to get home

So then it is Monday night—traditionally football night. Maybe it is time to go to a ball game. **[Put on hunting/ball cap]** OR maybe it is the beginning of hunting season. No matter what sport we follow or participate in, it matters how we act. Do we put on our spectator cap or even our yell at the umpire hat? If we are a parent, are we the ones that the coach hates to see coming? Do we yell obscenities and generally make an un-godly spectacle of ourselves? Do we trespass while we are hunting—do we harvest too many rabis or squirrels or deer?

**[Put on “gangster hat”]** Do you remember what the federal government charged most of those old gangsters with? Tax evasion. When they couldn't prove all the other charges, the G-men were able to get them for failing to pay proper taxes on their illicit incomes. Let's pretend that it is Tuesday and it is tax-day—so, do we need to put on our gangster hat? I'm not talking about taking proper deductions and making our tax bill as low as possible. I'm talking about lying and cheating—again stealing, in a sense, from the government.

**[Put LifeNet cap back on]** On Wednesday, we go back to work again and probably do the same things as before. Later in the evening, some of us get together and come here to eat and to pray for our families and friends and our church—and do a bit of study—but I'm afraid that for a lot of Christians, that makes no difference in our lives, even if we come and pray—that conversation with God doesn't seem to have a lasting effect on our lives. Most of us are guilty of asking God to give us power and grace and give us opportunities and direction—and then ignoring him when he responds in a way we didn't expect or want.

Thursday and Friday may also be work days—and in spite of our prayer and fellowship on Wednesday, we may still fall into the trap of being just like the rest of the workers—discouraged and tired and grumbly and generally un-God-like.

**[Put on Kawasaki cap]** Friday night and Saturday, we want to re-create, don't we. This is my motorcycle cap—it is used to cover up the awful hairstyle a helmet can give you. You get off the bike, you take off the helmet, and you put on the cap. Recreation and fun are good things—but we Christians need to be aware that people are watching us and that God desires us to live our whole lives in his service and his will. If we run out and take part in everything that the world has to offer, then we will have been wearing the wrong hat. Our witness will be hurt and our opportunities to influence our world will be diminished.

**[Take off Kawasaki cap]**

So, we have had quite a week.

**[Put on LifeNet cap]** We have grumbled about work and cheated our employer directly or indirectly and we have generally been a bad example for our coworkers.

**[Put on “donkey” hat]** Then we had that horrible drive home—or at least we made it horrible for everyone else.

**[Put on hunting/ball cap]** We have participated in some sport—hunted or fished with no regard for the rules or maybe we've gone to the ball game and yelled questionable things and been a stand-out- nuisance.

**[Put on Gangster hat]** We have calculated and recalculated and signed and sealed and delivered our taxes—and we've broken the laws of the land. We have cheated on our taxes and we have generally ignored what is right and wrong in our dealings with our government—both local and national.

**[Put on Kawasaki cap]** Our recreation—whether it be fishing or motorcycle riding or going to the movies or whatever—is sometimes questionable and sometimes there is no question, we oughten to be there and we oughten to be doing that. “That” can include many different things—think of your own “pet” sin.

So then, Sunday morning rolls around and we are aware of our responsibility before God and we put on our Christian hat **[put on halo now—wait for reaction to die down]**. We come and pretend that we are holy and righteous and that we listen to God in all we do and say. It even reflects in our prayers.

*Luke 18:10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this: ‘God, I thank you, that I am not like the rest of men, extortionists, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn’t even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (WEB)*

Our original passages told us that we are to live to the glory of God, no matter where we are, and no matter what our situation. When we do that, we will be serving God and planting seeds of the Gospel. We will be missionaries.

The great commission says Go unto all the world—making disciples. Many of us don't ever even go to another country—but the passage also means “as you go” —

**[Put on Red “missionary” cap]** When we spend every moment aware of God and his presence, we will be missionaries. Twenty something years ago, I was able to go on a mission trip to Guatemala. It wasn't an evangelistic trip at all—we were going to build dormitories for missionaries to come and live in as they ministered to the people of Guatemala City. I couldn't even do that—I had been injured on the job and was not able to lift the blocks, mix the mortar, or pour the concrete. I actually cooked three meals a day for the entire crew. Anyway, the people we were going to help knew that landing in a foreign country could be difficult—especially since none of us spoke the language. They had arranged to get us through customs as a group—and the way they identified us to the officials was these caps. We all put on our missionary caps and everyone knew what group we were with and they knew that we were there to do good work.

As we go through this week—I encourage each of us to remember that for a Christian—if we are mindful of Scripture and if we are mindful of our relationship with God, there really is only one hat for us to put on each and every day—our missionary hat.