

# Is Christianity a Crutch for the Weak?

by Sebastian R Fama

A few years back I was interviewed by a Yale student who was doing a research paper. He wanted to know my basic life history as well as my motivations for becoming who I am. When I brought up my devotion to the Catholic faith, he wanted to know why I was so devout. Part of my answer involved a particularly traumatic experience that I had when I was a young man. Upon hearing this he smiled and said in a smug manner: "So, it was weakness that brought you to God?" The implication was that it was emotional weakness and not anything intellectual that caused me to embrace the Catholic faith. I explained to him that the Church had a very deep intellectual foundation and I gave him some examples.

But to his point on weakness, it is true that a tragic experience can cause someone with little or no faith to reach out to God in desperation. So yes, weakness can bring you to God. But weakness will not keep you there. And that is because Christianity is always calling you to a higher standard. With the aid of God's grace, we are called to abandon sin. And of course, that would include our favorite sins whatever they might be. You see there is actual reality, and there is what we want reality to be. Weakness causes us to choose the latter. Bottom line, it takes more courage to better yourself, than it does to embrace your moral failings. Fear may have brought me to my knees, but it was grace that kept me there.

Scripture tells us to: "Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24). I imagine that could be scary stuff for a college student who is into excessive drinking and one-night stands. But there is hope. No one is called to walk the Christian walk unaided. Paul assures us of that when he says: "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). In other words, God is there to help us when we cannot do it alone.

On a similar note, it was Karl Marx who said: "Religion is the opiate of the masses." By opiate he means something to numb reality. And it was his atheistic alternative that caused so much death and destruction wherever it was adopted. On the other hand, wherever true Christianity was practiced, societies became more humane and charitable. And as the saying goes: "You judge a tree by its fruit. Good fruit, good tree." Bad fruit, bad tree.

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