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He was doing everything his church had taught him to do. He tithed. He was particular about that. He had to learn after 75 that tithes will not take you to heaven. You cannot bribe God. But you can rob Him. He had always been the preacher's friend. Many a struggling, little congregation, and impoverished parsonage benefited from his generosity. He had heard thousands of sermons. But he never met Christ personally. You can be lost in church. Oh, yes, you can! Ask Colonel Sanders!

He enjoyed giving scholarships. Yet he never sent a boy or girl to college who smoked or drank. All his life the Colonel tried to live by principles of decency, hard work, patriotism, and a high standard of morality. It was not enough. There was a void inside. One question remained unanswered. How could a man know that his sins had really been forgiven?

God will meet the honest inquirer, somewhere, somehow. He had an appointment with the Colonel, right in Louisville. One day, someone had the courage to walk up to Harland Sanders on the street, and with just a friendly word, to invite him to attend special evangelistic services, and to hear the good singing. Pastor Waymon Rogers, minister of Evangel Tabernacle, Louisville, Kentucky, remembers how it happened. "I saw him come in," the pastor says. You couldn't miss him in a crowd, with his white suit and his identifying white beard and full head of hair. I knew God was going to do something special that night. I felt it immediately. Our people had been praying.

"As our evangelist moved into the service," Pastor Rodgers recalls, "I left the platform and sat with the Colonel on the front pew. The invitation began. He raised his hand for prayer. There were tears. "I said, "Colonel, let's get down on our knees and talk to God." He replied, "I don't know what to say." "Let's start with the sinner's prayer," the pastor suggested "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Pastor Rodgers will always remember how the Colonel's problem tumbled out. A stain, stubborn and shameful, had fastened itself to this proud successful man's life. He wanted to be free from cursing, which

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festered his ordinary conversation. He was never free from it. It made him feel as rotten as liquor does a drunkard. It was the one bad thing he had learned to do during his years of railroading. It marked him.

He had tried in vain to break the habit. This was proof enough that he was not saved, no matter how often he attended church. "Suddenly the Colonel lifted his head," Pastor Rodgers relates. "He looked at me and told me that it was the first time he had ever experienced the presence of Christ within his heart. A moment or two later, I suggested that we talk to God together about his problem of cursing. He said, "Pastor Rodgers, we don't need to do that. Christ has done that for me already."

I knew then and there that the Colonel had experienced old-fashioned regeneration. Colonel Sanders will tell you today that there is a big, big difference between being a church member and being saved. He speaks from personal experience. And no one loves the Church, regardless of denomination, better than Colonel Sanders.

Those who know him best know that it is his first love, beyond even the preparation of original food. He tells his associates today, "There is an inner experience, a new birth that brings peace. Morality and good works cannot accomplish it. It is the work of the Holy Spirit."

Colonel Sanders' testimony today is this. "You can join the church. You can serve on committees. You can be baptized and receive communion. You can

become the superintendent of the Sunday school—and not be saved. I know. It happened in my life. There I was. I didn't have enough spiritual power in my life to keep me from cussing. I know there is an experience of salvation. It is my personal experience today. I know I am right with God. I know my sins are pardoned."

He likes to add, "I discovered that no church can save you. I tried a lot of them. Most of them were well-meaning. I tried to fit into different forms of service. Most of the preachers were my friends—but something was always lacking. I needed to know something deep within my soul. And for that I needed more than songs, and prayers, and church suppers. I needed a personal experience with Jesus Christ."

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