

# *Equipping The Saints*

*"...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service..." ~ Ephesians 4:12*

February 14, 2016

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## **Who Would Refuse The Great Invitation?**

(By Gary Henry)

**"A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses" (Luke 14:16-18).**

WE ARE NEVER MORE FOOLISH THAN WHEN WE SAY NO TO GOD. We act as if God were trying to force us into an unnatural, undesirable way of life, when in reality He is inviting us to experience something very good. He is not trying to hurt us but rather to help us. When we say no to Him, we are refusing to accept the love that He longs to give us. In fact, that is what sin always is: a foolish unwillingness to let ourselves be loved by our God.

We would not ever turn down what God has for us, of course, if we were not deceived. When we choose to do something other than God's will, we've been led to believe that we're acting in our best interests. But we should not be under any delusion as to where that lie comes from. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, **"I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"** (2 Corinthians 11:3). Our adversary, the devil, has had long experience in making absurd foolishness seem like great wisdom.

But we should not let ourselves be fooled so easily. The biblical injunction **“Do not be deceived”** (Gal. 6:7) is a command. It implies that we can make the choice to keep our eyes open, and that is what we should always insist on doing. We know far too much about God to believe that He would invite us to anything other than the greatest of banquets, and when Satan suggests otherwise, we should have enough sense to simply say, “Shut up!”

God is inviting us to enjoy everything that is truly good about life. Jesus said, **“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”** (John 10:10). What we should understand is not only that God offers us life but that He puts His offer in the form of an *invitation*. **“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ . . . Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely”** (Revelation 22:17). Who in his right mind would turn this down? When we make excuses, aren’t we making a tragic mistake?

*“Who would prefer to be poor? Who would choose to be sick? What hungry person could possibly walk away from a banquet table? O Lord, help me to respond warmly to your gracious invitation”* (Bernard Bangley).

## **You Expect Me To Believe That?**

**(By Phil Grear)**

In the beginning there was nothing. And suddenly for no reason nothing exploded and created everything. You expect me to believe that?

At some point, by chance the right chemicals happened to float together at just the right moment to be struck by an electrical

charge and become life. You expect me to believe that?

Somewhere two non-human mothers each gave birth to a human child. They were born at the same time and in the same place, one was male and one was female. These two new “humans” gave birth to the human race. You expect me to believe that?

One of the descendants of these first humans was born with a knowledge of right and wrong. No longer driven by instinct, this person suddenly was making decisions based on a morality for which there is no real explanation. You expect me to believe that?

I'm sorry. I don't have that much blind faith. It's all just too farfetched to be anything more than a fairy tale. I can't believe intelligent people claim it is “science” (cf. 1 Timothy 6:20).

**“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”** (Genesis 1:1). I can believe that without stretching my imagination into the realm of the impossible. The universe was created by an all-powerful, all-knowing God. That I can believe!

*[Note: This weeks bulletin insert is a condensed form of this article. I hope that you are taking and using those inserts as a simple way to introduce lost souls to the gospel of Christ ~ABDow]*

## **9 Ways To Be Evangelistic Without Being The Teacher**

(By Berry Kercheville)

### **7. Can You Care for the Sick, Especially Unbelievers?**

Without a doubt, more Christians are equipped to aid members who are sick than any other work in the church. All we need is to add a dimension that is often neglected. First, our own members

who fall ill often have unbelieving relatives. As you care for a fellow Christian, take the opportunity to connect with and aid the unbelieving relatives who are in a time of stress. Second, be acutely aware of unbelieving co-workers, friends, and neighbors who fall ill. Be the first to provide food, visit them in the hospital, and aid their relatives as they care for their loved one. Keep the connection fresh by inviting them to your home for dinner once your friend has recovered. Include one or two Christian friends in your invitation who are especially equipped in inviting and teaching. This is a great evangelistic work that many Christians are able to do. Just as the other good works we have mentioned, this will take devotion, thoughtfulness, time, and money.

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### **Notes:**

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#### **AM Lesson:**

*Lions In Scripture*

#### **PM Lesson:**

*Spiritual Crossroads*

*"Go therefore and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:19-20)*