

Equipping The Saints

“...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service...” ~ Ephesians 4:12

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Closed Minds

(By Danny Dow)

Have you ever changed your life when you saw it needed changing? Suppose you had a bad habit that was ruining your health, wouldn't you reverse your eating, smoking or drinking habits to save your life? This change is called “*conversion.*” It is a changing of your thinking and living.

While a conversion of our lives is good, in order to save our physical life, the most important change you can make concerns your spiritual life. Jesus taught a group of people who needed to convert spiritually in Matthew 13:15. These people had closed their eyes, ears, and hearts to the Word of God. They were set in their religious traditions and refused to change or be converted. They were comfortable. The results? They lost their soul.

Dear friend, what about you? Are you comfortable in the knowledge you have of God's truth? When you hear truth taught from God's word that you have not previously known or practiced, are you willing to change? If not, you are numbered among those to whom Jesus spoke. Never quit studying, learning, and changing when you see you are wrong. Be converted to the truth by diligent study.

“For this people's heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them” (Matthew 13:15, ASV).

When Church Is Boring

(By Frank Himmel)

What do you do when you find that church is boring? It's time for a change! Now the question is, change what? Many folks think the answer is to change the church. I just read an article about a new church created for men only, men who find church boring. Discarding more traditional environments, they meet in a gymnasium one Saturday evening a month. A rock band provides entertainment. The preacher speaks in front of the scoreboard, with the clock running. He guarantees to have them out in one hour! This sort of innovation is not unusual. Many religious leaders hail it as a positive development, a way to reach out to those who otherwise would have no interest in church. Some might not go that far, yet they still insist on change. Contemporary music, drama, and short sermons that are little more than pep talks are the order of the day. Clapping and cheering have replaced old fashioned amens. Celebration and praise are the buzzwords, with the world's calendar dictating the subject celebrated.

Malachi lived at a time when people found "*church*" boring. Speaking of Israel's worship, God said through the prophet, "**You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it**" (Malachi 1:13). God proposed two changes to these who turned up their noses at His worship. One was to just stay home. "**Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you**" (v. 10). The better solution, the change He preferred, was to repent. "**If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name,**' says the Lord

of hosts, ‘then I will send the curse upon you’” (2:2). Notice what God did not approve: changing the structure or activities of worship to accommodate individual tastes.

The preacher can work to make his sermons more interesting, the song leader can try to select more meaningful hymns, and the one who leads in prayer can give more thought to what he says. However, when worship as God directed is boring, the main change that is needed is in the heart of the worshiper.

Blank Bibles (By Colton McDaniel)

What would you do if your Bible were blank? No footnotes. No chapters. No words at all. Just 1500 pages of absolutely nothing. How would you know what God wants for you? How would you know about sin? About the church? About Jesus?? You wouldn't! Without the Scriptures we have no ability to objectively understand God's design and pattern for us.

Unfortunately, many people live like the Bible is just a blank book. The Bible does not say a word about social drinking, gambling, or pornography, so all of these things must be okay, right? This could not be any further from the truth. When the Bible says nothing about a subject we cannot make up our own rules on it. No authority can come from no communication. Consider Hebrews 7:11-14. When we ask, “*What's wrong with it?*” we are asking the wrong question. What we must ask instead is, “*Where is the authority for it?*”

God has not been silent about anything concerning our lives. While the terms ‘*social drinking,*’ ‘*gambling,*’ and ‘*pornography*’ were not in existence in the first century, God has revealed

