

Essays & Ideas

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#106, An Essay

The Big Three

No, I'm not talking about the former "Big Three" automakers which are a thing of the past. I am talking about the three **biggest** things you can do to help yourself spiritually in this present evil world.

I count myself greatly blessed to preach in the churches I preach in. I say that because I believe they're the best churches on the planet. Now **don't say I'm proud or overconfident**. That is the same thing anyone else would say about their church. The Pentecostals think their churches are the best. Those in the Church of Christ think the same. So do the Mormons. It isn't false pride to say you think your church is the "most correct." Would you go there if you thought it was error-filled? "Yes, we attend this church because we think they're wrong in all the important points of doctrine."

We spend two years in weekly meetings east of the Mississippi and two years west of the Mississippi. Although there are a few meetings I do every year, overall we are in a different church every week thus, I see more churches in that time period than most do. Therefore, I know if a problem a church is having is unique to it or something that is affecting churches across the nation. I am horribly grieved by what I see in these "very best churches on the planet."

A "thirty-something" young man asked me what the difference is between Christianity in the 1970s and today. The answer was simple: "In the '70s Christians **knew** they should be serving the Lord and if they weren't they **knew** they had to get right with God. Today if a Christian isn't serving the Lord they'll look you in the eye and say, 'I don't care if I'm not right with God.'" That truly is the best analysis I can give of the two time periods.

There is another comparison I can make to these two generations. In the '70s the people in the World thought they were here to enjoy life, the Christians thought they were here to serve the Lord. Today, the people in the World think they're here to enjoy life, the Christians **think they are too!** And Christians think they have a "leg up" on the World because they think God exists solely to see to it that they enjoy life. So basically everyone in this country wants to go to a party: the lost world wants a "booze, drugs, sex" party but the Christians are satisfied just to have a "tailgate" party: grill some burgers, drink a few cokes and talk Bible. Nothing sinful in that. But then the pastor comes by and says, "Let's go door knocking" and his church-member-party-goers cry, "Preacher, we're having a party! We're talking about **the Bible**. We're not doing anything wrong!"

The Bible says in 2 Tim. 4:3, *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

In these last days people are being bombarded by video of some kind constantly. If it isn't your television it's the movies or the Internet in some form. Even God's people are being spiritually overwhelmed by the sheer volume of video that floods their every waking moment. This is what has turned us all into a

“party” generation. This is what has even caused Christians to think their reason for being here is to enjoy life rather than serve the Lord. This is what has caused many seemingly good Christian young people to be as preoccupied with sex as their worldly compatriots.

Everywhere you look a screen of some sort is guiding your thinking. (Is it any wonder many loser churches have surrendered to the age and filled their sanctuaries with screens and videos in hopes of keeping their video-addicted **audience**? And it is an “audience,” not a congregation.) The amount of spiritual poison being broadcast directly into the brains of Americans has finally overwhelmed their ability to think or make rational decisions. Even folks in good churches are having their minds constantly attacked by the broadcast evil of this world.

So, what can a Christ-loving Christian, who struggles against the brain-washing of “media” do to help them resist this powerful foe? The Bible gives three, and only three, things that can add **heaven-sourced input** to a human being. It isn’t music or video or meditation or magical experiences for Christ. They are three **Bible commanded** sources of input that Christians have been taking too lightly for too long and America is paying the price for. Remarkably, our God hasn’t hidden these things from us or even spread them around within the Bible to require a diligent search. In His great kindness He has placed all three in one simple verse. 1 Tim. 4:13, *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

1. Reading: I don’t think I have to explain that He isn’t talking about “the Classics” or devotional books or **anything** that I or any other author has penned. He’s talking about the **Bible. Every book you read**, other than the Bible, has been generated from within this sin-cursed world. **Only the Bible** comes to us from Heaven rather than earth. Do you need **another** reason to read it? When you read the Bible you access the mind of God and the input helps you **grow** spiritually.

2. Exhortation: That’s preaching. No, not your home church or some theater that is called a church. It is coming into a church on Sunday (twice), sitting down and letting some preacher **rip your face off!** Even in our churches people are whining: “That’s too offensive.”, “The message was too long.”, “He’s too critical.” Just like many lost people they go to church to fulfill some religious obligation, not to let the Word of God change them. Preaching will strengthen you against **sin**.

3. Doctrine: Heb. 5 says, **12** *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

13 *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

Here in Hebrews we see that people who once knew their doctrines have allowed them to stagnate and need to have them retaught. That basically describes about every Christian in the country.

Doctrine is our spiritual anchor. It keeps us from being either swept away by the rising tide of worldiness or slowing drifting away in apathy in our mindless, thoughtless television-guided lives. It is more than just being able to recite the basic church doctrines you were taught so many years ago in Sunday school.

You may say, “But Preacher, I’ve got my basic Bible doctrines down. I don’t need them taught to me again.”

What about spanking your children, living a separated life or eating meat? (Better read 1 Tim. 4:1-6).

Are you working as hard incorporating these three sources of spiritual input into your life as you are some vain, worthless pursuit your screen directed you to?