

# The Church

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Tim Day - 2022



“Natural gifts are not enough in God's work.” – *AW Tozer*

Our churches are in trouble. Yet, few seem to notice or even care. Many have been compromised by the world and rendered lifeless – devoid of spiritual power.

“I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because **the world has so much influence over the church.**” – *Charles Spurgeon*

It is all too easy to play church. We go to church to check the box. Many seem to subconsciously believe that they are serving God by going to church; some even that they are sacrificing for the cause of Christ in their ritualistic attendance.

Our churches have become more of an entertainment center; a social gathering at best. Programs and activities have replaced the Holy Spirit as the true leader of the church. His absence is rarely even recognized above the din of church tradition and commotion.

“Many people are dying a slow spiritual death because their hope lies in the **traditions of the church** only, and not in Jesus!” – *Charles Sims*

## Old Church Tradition

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**Church Traditions** are the hard pathways, well worn over the centuries from the religious traveler in their quest for God. Sadly, most seem to travel these paths to know about, rather than to know God personally. Christian trekkers eagerly navigate these byways as if laid down by the hand of God himself.

Respected elders point out their familiar lanes for the younger to follow. Centuries of navigation have made the ground along the way hard and unreceptive to truth.

Luke 8:5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

Millennia of cherished custom have trampled God's word under the tradition of man. Along these hard pathways, God's seed struggles to germinate. It is an unyielding ground. Old church-tradition tramples the seed as soon as it is disbursed. Birds eat it before it can take root. Much needed rain will not penetrate the hardened surface.

The soil must be made fallow. It must be harrowed to receive the seed and rain, and allow the word to take root and grow. Tradition stands as the venerable guardian, preventing God's word from being received in full – in power, in Truth.

“Signs and wonders will follow believers as opposed to believers who wonder where's the signage. ... While everything in the Kingdom happens from prayer, at some point Christians have to get off their knees and put their boots on. ... While there is a season for **relying upon the blazes of those who have gone before us**, there is also a time for us take up solid food, a paint can and brush, and venture out into the great unknown where the the Spirit promises to always meet us. This is such a season.” -  
*Keith Guinta*

These **old traditions** are the counterfeit beliefs robbing the Church of God's intended power. Many emerge like trails to God's fullness, appearing scriptural, until examined carefully in the light of God's word. Many people are dying a slow spiritual death because their hope lies in the **old traditions** of the church only, and not in Jesus Christ.

The Hellenistic and classical Greeks actually had a word for such a thing: *nomizo*. The term described a type of faith held only because it was passed down by custom and tradition.

“Beware of bartering the Word of God for a more suitable conception of your own”. – *Oswald Chambers*

“There’s something about tradition that makes us feel secure, connected, and grounded. But, there is a dark side to our traditions, even good traditions of our faith, a dark side so powerful that it can destroy the very thing it meant to preserve. Satan’s agenda is to separate truth from the tradition so deceptively that even sincere people would hold to a form of godliness and deny its power.”

– *Chip Ingram*

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*“One of these days somebody is going to come along and pick up a Bible and believe it – and put the rest of us to shame”.*

– *Rolfe Barnard, 20th Century American Evangelist, 1940-1950s*

## Stand Fast

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There is a **good tradition** – the tradition passed down by God, and there is a bad tradition – an **old tradition** of man watering down Scripture that robs us of God's intended power. The good tradition is that of which Paul speaks when he instructs us:

2 Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, **stand fast, and hold the traditions** which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

“A **commitment to preserving the truth and practice** of the church is what separates ... This is my conviction, long held and deeply confirmed by a knowledge of the fact that modern gospel churches, almost without exception, have decided to modify the truth and practice a little in order to have more adherents and get along better.” – *AW Tozer*

We are to “*stand fast, and hold*” the good “*traditions*” – the word of God that we “*have been taught*”. Herein is the crux of the matter. We are to “*prove (test) all thing; hold fast to that which is good*” (I Thes 5:21); “*hold fast the form of sound words*” (II Tim 1:13); “*Take fast hold of instruction*” (Prov 4:13); “*Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught*” (Titus 1:9); and so on.

“The **ecclesiastical straightjacket** is the hardest fetter of them all.” – *AB Simpson*

“If we obey what God says according to our sincere belief, God will break us from those traditions that misrepresent Him.” – *Oswald Chambers*

To hold on to the good, the Truth, we must let go of the bad, the compromised version of God's word. It is the bad tradition of which I write to lay bare. This document is an exposé on many **Old Traditions** robbing the church of power. It is the false doctrine and the beliefs of man that do not square with God's clear word. Sadly, it permeates all – yes all, myself included – of our thinking. Much of it is subtle and hard to separate from the pure, unadulterated Word.

“The new theologian has **lost the unique infinite-personal God of biblical revelation and of the Reformation**. Liberal theology of the current thinking has **only god words as a substitute** ... [becoming] **semantic mysticism**” – *Francis Schaeffer*

For 15 centuries following Christ's atonement, the Tradition of Man obscured the Truth of God's plan of salvation. An apostate church stepped in to fill the dark void with Traditions, mostly self-serving Traditions and false doctrine. It was not without much sacrifice and bloodshed that the stranglehold of Tradition was broken in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries as Reformers sought again "*the old paths*."

Jeremiah 6:16 Thus saith the Lord, **Stand ye in the ways**, and see, and **ask for the old paths**, where is **the good way**, and **walk therein**, and ye shall find rest for your souls ...

*Tyndale, Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Saddler, Calvin* and others rediscovered the simplicity of the Gospel and personal relationship with God available to us all. This Truth we take for granted today, cost these and others dearly. Sadly, since the reformation and revivals following these reformers, much false beliefs and traditions have crept back into the church.

"Our danger is to water down God's word to suit ourselves. God never fits His word to suit me; **He fits me to suit His word.**" – *Oswald Chambers*

We must strive to "*stand fast*" in the good "*traditions*" of the Word of God. We must seek the **Truth** and the **Power** of God. To turn away from either results in a lifeless church – religion at best.

## **The Present Church**

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Sadly, the average church today is a show of religion – a form of religion; the Church is merely playing church – going through the motions. The Church lacks power, and in fact, denies the power; yet, we do not "*turn away*," we continue playing church.

"There is today no lack of Bible teachers to set forth correctly the principles of the doctrines of Christ, **but too many of these seem satisfied to teach the fundamentals of the faith year after year**, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry no manifest Presence, nor anything unusual in their personal lives." – *AW Tozer*

There is indeed an **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power.

The Church has compromised with the world, and as a result, has become anemic – powerless. The younger generations seem to see the innate hypocrisy, though they remain lost. Offering them more *religion* is a fool's errand. Jesus did not die for our sin that we would merely go to heaven one day; He died that we might have a personal relationship with the living God now and forever more.

As churches spiral downward in attendance, far too many offer more entertainment, more programs, and more activities to stem the tide. It is a Band-Aid solution at best. The Church was born in Pentecost. And to Pentecost we must return.

“The Church would be better off if we would call a moratorium on activity for about six weeks and **just wait on God to see what He is waiting to do** for us.” – *AW Tozer*

Our churches are powerless, because its congregants lack power. Congregates lack power because so many pastors lack God’s power. We fail to teach relationship with God – the source of power. More pastors than not, operate their churches like a business, leaving little to no place for the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit showed up at many of these churches, folks would be running for the door.

"If the Holy Ghost came to some churches, there would be a stampede to the door." - *Leonard Ravenhill*

We need God to shake us from our comfortable pews and onto our knees. We need to repent of playing church and seek God, once again, in earnest. I believe that we are soon going to witness God ‘*removing many a lamp stand.*’ Those who are seeking to walk with God in power, in Truth, in holiness, in right relationship, in earnest will be raised up as beacons of light in an ever darkening day.

I am convinced that it will be those willing to relinquish the reigns of leadership back to the Holy Spirit. It will be those who refuse to compromise God’s word. It will be those with the boldness to speak the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth – so help them God. It will be those who offer “*multiple exposures to the Gospel.*” It will be those who openly share God’s plan of salvation and equip the saints to do the same, to “*seek and save the lost.*” It will be those who seek the power of God, not another form of religion.

“We have actually seen a major shift in the beliefs and practices of the evangelical wing of the church so radical as to amount to a complete sellout; and all this behind the cloak of fervent orthodoxy.” – *AW Tozer*

The true church that emerges in the tumultuous Last Days will be decidedly different than the traditional, lifeless, powerless, pretend church-incorporated of our day.

## **Slumbering Church**

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Many of our churches have become religious, steeped in **Old Tradition**. We go through the motions of church attendance and activities, but we expect, and therefore experience, so far less than God promised.

“The **horror of the Same Old Thing** is one of the most valuable passions we (devils) have produced in the human heart—an endless source of heresies in religion.” - *The Screwtape Letters*, CS Lewis

“Christianity, if it is not a supernatural miracle, is a sham.” – *Oswald Chambers*

It need not be so. Christ desires to be manifest in power even in our slumbering churches.

“Christ is manifested in the place where devils are, the place where religious devils are, the place where false religion and unbelief are, the place where formal religion has taken the place of holiness and righteousness.” – *Smith Wigglesworth*

It is time we sought *relief from our unbelief*. It is time we *dared to believe*. It is time our churches sought the power of God again without compromise.

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Hebrews 2:4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

“Such words as these in the second chapter of Hebrews stand as a rebuke to the unbelieving Christians of our day ... A cold Church is forced to ‘interpret’ such language. She cannot enter into it, so she explains it away. ... Such **defensive exegesis** is but a refuge for unbelieving orthodoxy, a hiding place for a Church too weak to stand.” – *AW Tozer*

## **The Downgrade**

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**Charles Spurgeon** spoke much about the compromising of doctrine in his later days, which he called “*The Downgrade*”, by the inclusion of worldly liberal thinking – the philosophies of man. It troubled him deeply, even affecting his health.

“There would come a time when man would **remove all content from faith**” - *TH Huxley, 1890*

Spurgeon knew that it was a slippery slope that would lead compromise throughout God’s word, even to the essentials of the faith. Since his day it has only grown worse.

“Many have gone back because they are afraid of looking at things from God’s stand-point. The great crisis comes spiritually when a man has to emerge a bit farther on than the creed he has accepted.” – *Oswald Chambers*

The Church today is ripe for a revival of Truth – and the Power of God – that has been forfeited for the sake of **Old Tradition** and *watered-down theology*.

“A discrepancy between Scripture and experience is an invitation to draw closer to God, not a theological problem to explain. ... If any promises of Scripture are unfulfilled in your life, **don’t explain them away. Go after them with all your heart.**” - *Chris Tiegreen*

## The Truth

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Does anyone care about the Truth? It would seem not. As within the world, there is a **Mass Formation Psychosis** at work in the Church. People find comfort in the consensus beliefs of their peers, those around them. They live in an echo-chamber of the consent beliefs of those with whom they associate. Few think outside the box.

Few “*test all things.*” Fewer still “*search the scriptures ... to see if these things are so.*” If they did, they would soon learn that so much of what they believe, simply isn’t so. It does not stand up to the Word of God. Why does no one seem to care?

Most simply ‘*believe what they want to believe, because they want to believe what they believe,*’ and for no other reason. They accept the consensus beliefs of those with whom they associate. It is easier to ‘*go along to get along,*’ then to challenge the beliefs of the Church, of their peers.

I am Reformed, I am Wesleyan, I am Armenian, I am Covenant, I am Systematic, I am Charismatic, or I am Dispensational. Why? These are all as the result of the doctrine of men. None of their founders were infallible. Each divided God’s word to suite their preferences, at least to a degree. Each has embraced Biblical error, in some measure.

Yet, we send wannabe pastors off to seminary to indoctrinate them, not to the Truth, but rather a particular theology - a doctrine of men. It is little afield of brainwashing. They form a church to indoctrinate their flock to their particular belief system. As I have written much about, *paradigm drives conclusion*.

It develops into a **Mass Formation Psychosis** that prevents anyone from stepping out of line, as it were. No one is allowed to challenge status quo. Those who do are labeled trouble makers, naysayers; they are ostracized, and even escorted from the church.

Why cannot we be Christians in the ilk of the Berean church? Why can we not “*reason together?*” Why are so many Christians so determined to cling to the doctrine of men over the Word of God?



“Within the fold of conservative Christianity there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself. They are eager for spiritual realities and will not be put off with words, nor will they be content with correct "interpretations" of truth. They are athirst for God, and they will not be satisfied till they have drunk deep at the Fountain of Living Water. This is the only real harbinger of revival ...” – AW Tozer

Most are too lazy to search the scriptures. Few have never ever tested anything they hear in church; fewer still have ever searched the Scriptures, much less daily. Those who do are shouted down to maintain the psychosis status quo. This is another **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of Truth, and as a result, of power. I suggest we seek the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

## Drain the Swamp

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In addition to our rogue government, there is another swamp that needs draining. This, the other nasty swamp, is in the Church of America. Religious elite have made it their mission to “*deny the power*” of God. They work subversively to create a “*form of religion*” to suit their own tastes.

“Satan is not fighting churches; he is joining them. He does more harm by sowing tares than by pulling up wheat. He accomplishes more by imitation than by outright opposition.”

They hold at arm’s-length all those who seek God in earnest; those who want the power and more that God promised. Sadly, the leading of the Holy Spirit has been replaced with programs and activities.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Emphasis is placed on “*outward appearance*”; although, God looks at the “*heart*”.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the **outward appearance**, but the **Lord looketh on the heart**.

**Praise and worship** have become entertainment, where the attention is drawn to the band and singers instead of being directed toward God. Don’t get me wrong, they portend (maybe, rather pretend) to worship God, but their song selection is usually something they wrote last week – their next hit single – or the latest top-of-the-charts

ditty. Unfortunately, much of this contemporary music is *about* God, but not **worship directed to God**.

The key and tempo are carefully choreographed to highlight their voices, and rarely suitable for congregational singing. The congregation is supposed to somehow sing backup as these performers show off their talents. The new young worship leaders are mostly about making CDs and furthering their own careers.

The staff at most of these swampy churches seems to see it as their role to hold at arm's-length anyone who would rock the boat; upset status quo. They run interference for the religious shenanigans so prevalent in today's popular churches. Anyone wanting the real power of God on display in the church is viewed with contempt.

"Those who are hungry for a move of God are the best thing that ever happened to your church ... They yearn for the miracle that will stop America's slide toward oblivion—they wish for an act of the Holy Spirit so real and widespread that it impacts, crime, injustice, addiction, and despair." – *Mario Murillo*

False doctrine and watered-down teaching has become the norm. Teaching is intentionally kept shallow and superficial. Services are intentionally geared to the **least common denominator** – the least, or the modestly, spiritually mature – the "*lukewarm*". Prayers, when offered, are generally Pharisaical in nature speaking in glowing terms about how much better their church is than the others.

Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

It is time to **drain this swamp**. I pray God raises-up a man to turn the dead and lifeless church on its ear. This is the embodiment of the **Old Tradition** robbing the church of power.

"There is a dark side to our traditions, even good traditions of our faith, a dark side so powerful that it can destroy the very thing it meant to preserve. **Satan's agenda is to separate truth from the tradition** so deceptively that even sincere people would hold to a form of godliness and deny its power." – *Chip Ingram*

This is the sum-total of my writings. Each piece exposes some specific area. This, however, is the essence of an elite-stranglehold on the Church that promotes and perpetuates the **Old Tradition** of which I write. It is time to drain the Church swamp.

## Leaven

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The disciples were confused as Jesus spoke of leaven. After two bread and fishes miracles they had missed the point; that point being faith. They thought He was speaking of needing more bread.

Matthew 16: 6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the **leaven** of the *Pharisees* and of the *Sadducees*. ... 8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, **O ye of little faith**, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? ... 11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the **leaven** of the *Pharisees* and of the *Sadducees*? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Jesus was warning of doctrine, specifically false doctrine. The doctrine of the *Pharisees* would be that of endless rules, legalism and works-based righteousness. It is rooted in self-righteousness.

In Mark's parallel passage it includes a warning of the "*leaven of Herod*." The doctrine here would refer to the Herodians, a Jewish sect associated with the Pharisees in opposition to Jesus, and assumed to be supporters of Herod. Their doctrine was worldly in nature; bringing worldly watered-down philosophy into the Church.

In the letter to the Galatians, we are told that "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*." (Galatians 5:9) In other words, it spreads and permeates; it also puffs up. It does so rapidly. False doctrine, likewise, spreads rapidly and permeates. It is best rooted out immediately. For, once leaven spreads, as it does quickly in bread, it is impossible to remove. The damage has been done.

Sadly, our churches are filled with centuries of false doctrine and Old Traditions. Few are Berean enough to test these doctrines against God's word. This is the gist my writings regarding **Old Traditions** robbing the Church of power. I suggest we zealously "*test all things*" and "*hold fast that which is true*."

Thessalonians 5:21 Prove (test) all things; hold fast that which is good (true).

Few do. In fact, most do not want to hear that which they believe may not be true. Most cling to their cherished doctrine, holding it even above the Word of God. It is a form of **Mass Formation Psychosis** in our churches. They find comfort in the consensus beliefs of their peers. Most would rather be wrong with the crowd than to stand alone against the crowd of common belief.

## Trans-Christian

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Sadly, 'woke' trans-nonsense has spread to the church. Oh, not exactly in the way you would think. What we have today is a "**trans-religious**" culture. We have allowed **non-Christians** who are **self-identifying** as **Christians** into church leadership. They want to redefine the criteria God laid down.

**"Empty boats float high**, but heavily laden vessels are low in the water; mere professors can boast, but true children of God cry for mercy upon their unprofitableness. ... As sin intrudes into our holiest things, the blood of Jesus is needed to purify them from defilement." – *Charles Spurgeon*

Much like a woman who self-identifies as a male or vice versa, they do not meet the obvious requirements, yet insist that they are accepted as Christian. They want to change, not themselves, but the definition of Christianity. If your definition of Christian is anything other than faith in Jesus Christ, and Jesus crucified, your definition is wrong!

Matthew 7:15 **Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.** 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. ...

These **wolves in sheep's clothing** are infiltrating the church. We see the confusion manifest in many ways within the Church. Take the trend of effeminate men music leaders. They are girlish, have long hair and dress in women's skinny jeans. These are effeminate behaviors that God clearly condemned in men. Yet, we now embrace them as acceptable and even normal. They are "*girly men*" self-identifying as culturally normal in a "*trans-religious*" culture.

1 Corinthians 6:9 - Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: ...nor effeminate ...

Deuteronomy 22:5 - ... neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so [are] abomination unto the Lord thy God.

1 Corinthians 11:14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

This phenomenon is expressed in the church in many other ways. Often these folks take leadership positions from which they subtly change God's Truth into a lie.

Romans 1:25 Who **changed the truth of God into a lie**, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

As with the "*transgender*" bewilderment, the "**trans-Christian**" is, above all, self-deceived. Sadly, this self-deception has more serious eternal consequences, not merely

the heartbreaking temporal consequences among gender confusion. These “**trans-Christians**” are **playing church on the road to hell**.

Unfortunately, real Christians are afraid to state the obvious. The “*Emperor has no clothes*”; yet, we pretend that we do not notice. It is not ‘woke’ to notice – or at least not to say anything, for it is doubtful anyone doesn’t notice. As a result, the essence of Christianity is being eroded and compromised.

Honestly, this “*religious-neurosis*” may not be new. In fact, it may actually predate today’s trendy “*trans-disorders*” by decades, if not centuries. It is yet another **Old Tradition** robbing the church of power.

In fact, it could be that the disease actually started within our compromised churches and spread beyond the walls. It is now becoming a full-blown epidemic of a host of “*trans- psychotic*” disorders, as it goes full-circle bringing even more “*trans-nonsense*” back to the Church.

“The difference between the progressive “Christians” and the atheists is one of degree. The atheists toss everything overboard. The progressive “Christians” maintain a form of godliness while denying its power.” – *Dr Youssef, Saving Christianity?*

I suggest we get back to the clear definition of a Christian as laid down by our Savior Himself. If trans-Christians are allowed in leadership, the church will be quickly destroyed from within. There is only one way to Heaven and that is through Jesus Christ and His atonement for our sin.

## **Proper Balance**

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Is there balance left in the Christian community? It would seem not. As I have said many times before, there is a **ditch on both side of the road of God’s Truth**. Many a Christian institution – church, school, university, club, or organization – begins with the greatest of intentions. Only to, in time, become something far less than intended.

It seems that the devil will plant influential people in the midst of such organizations who seek positions of power and influence. As such, they often slowly steer the organization away from its roots. Each small compromise adds to the previous, so as to imperceptibly move the organization off its moorings.

“All the water outside the ship can’t sink it. It is the water inside that perils the ship’s safety” - *Charles Spurgeon*

In the church world, we have many extremes. (See: *Ditches*) However, an all encompassing, overriding pair of extremes is the: “*wind and cloud without rain*” extreme versus the “*form of religion, but denying the power*” extreme. They are both in ditches,

albeit in opposite ditches. Most of our contemporary churches fall into one of these camps. The Truth lies between the extremes.

Proverbs 25:14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like **clouds and wind without rain**.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a **form of godliness**, but **denying the power** thereof: from such turn away.

Satan will always introduce two counterfeits – either, *adding to God's word*, or *taking away from God's word*. They constitute the ditches on either side of every element of God's Truth. Either extreme will rob the Church of power.

The “*wind and clouds*” crowd is more often found in charismatic circles. These folks are so seeking the power of God, that they are often willing to even fake it. They seek constantly the experiential. Every service must have an emotional experience that exceeds the previous. It leads to insane excesses. They are euphemistically known as *crazy-matics*. With all their common extremes, it is a nickname they have truly earned.

“The time is ... for a rethinking ... **spiritual gifts** within the church of Christ. The subject has fallen into the hands of people for the most part extreme and irresponsible and has become associated with fanaticism in its various forms. ... Prejudices ... make the consideration of this subject extremely difficult, but its **neglect is costing us more than we should be willing to pay**. A revival of true New Testament Christianity must surely bring with it a manifestation of spiritual gifts.” – *AW Tozer*

At the opposite extreme we find the church who has so pulled away from the excesses of the charismatic's, that they “*deny the power*” in all they do. They hold to a “*form of religion*,” albeit dead and lifeless – devoid of life changing power. It is often ‘**high church**’ filled with form, show, and ritual. These churches are often dead; they play church. The Holy Spirit has little influence in these circles. Regardless of what they might say, the church is so often filled with programs and committees that it runs without the Holy Spirit's leading. It becomes a secular organization practicing **things about God that are not of God**.

“Many people are **trying to give leadership in Christian churches** today **without ever having yielded to the** wise and effective leading of the **Holy Spirit**. ... We are leaning too heavily upon human talents and educated abilities. We forget that the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God is a necessity. ... **We need the Holy Spirit more and more, and we need human helps less and less**.” – *AW Tozer*

As a side note, it is interesting that both extremes of churches tend to leverage music to create a faux ‘*spiritual experience*.’ Satan was an angel who appears to have been designed to worship God in music.

Ezekiel 28:13 Thou hast ... the workmanship **of thy tabrets and of thy pipes** was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. ... 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness ... 18 Thou hast **defiled thy sanctuaries** by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick

In his rebellious fallen state, who better than he to use music to counterfeit true “*worship in spirit and truth?*” Rhythm, repetition, and especially, deep bass, create a hypnotic experience that those without discernment believe to be the move of the Holy Spirit. We find the same in occult circles. Some add fog machines and skinny jeans, and fancy nightclub-like lighting, to round out their entertainment – the hyped-up emotional experience. But, don’t call it worship.

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall **worship the Father in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Both desperately need to be pulled toward the center of God’s word. Is there a balanced church somewhere? If so, I have not found it. Nearly every church leans one way or the other. So can there be balance? Can there be a Christian organization that lives in the middle of God’s road of Truth embracing the Word and the Power of God without excesses and charlatan extremes? Not without the Holy Spirit’s direction.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will **guide you into all truth** ...

1 John 4:6 We are of God ... know we the **spirit of truth**, and the **spirit of error**.

Surely, it could happen. But, it would take unusually strong, Word-grounded, spiritually mature leadership able to listen to, and follow, the Holy Spirit’s leading. They would have to be vigilant; constantly on guard to avoid drifting one way or the other. It would take Holy Spirit induced discernment to detect subtle deception from the enemy. It would require much time in prayer. God says the “*hour cometh.*” Surely, now is the time to seek the Truth.

John 4:23 But the **hour cometh**, and now is, when the **true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

This is amongst the chief of **Old Traditions** robbing the church of power. We should be on our knees seeking God’s direction to create and hold onto this proper balance.

## God Hath Set

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Why is it that we expect the pastor to be called of God? Appointed by God? Anointed by God – selected by the Holy Spirit? Yet, we do not expect any other office to be the same. Why do we let people teach who are not called, anointed, appointed by God?

It may explain the dead and lifeless nature of our churches. It may explain the Biblical illiteracy and spiritual immaturity that plagues the average church. Sadly, I am convinced there is many a pastor who was not called to be a pastor. But, moreover, our churches are filled with folks '*teaching*' that have no business teaching. As a result, they teach 'skim milk' at best.

Ephesians 4:11 And **he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers**; 12 For the **perfecting of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, *for the edifying of the body of Christ*: 13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And **God hath set some in the church**, first apostles, secondarily **prophets**, thirdly **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Case in point is the Sunday School Classes who rotate teaching to a different person in the class every week. There is nothing Biblical about it. Clearly, they have no God-appointed teacher. I would suggest they either disband, or spend their time praying that God would raise-up a teacher. Otherwise, they are playing church; toying with the Word of God. Now, to be sure, there can be more than one person in a class who are each called to teach, and who share the responsibility.

"There are Christians who grow up and have no relish for anything spiritually advanced. They're preoccupied with their first lessons. The **average church is a school with only one grade** and that is the first one." – *AW Tozer*

Small Groups are another good example. They are generally led by a '*facilitator*.' Again, rarely a Holy-Spirit selected teacher. The facilitator leads discussions. In discussions, every opinion is treated as equally valid. Again, there is nothing Biblical about this. These are social gatherings at best. They degenerate into "*every wind of doctrine*."

Do these self-appointed teachers not know that they will be held to '*a higher standard*'?

James 3:1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. (judged more strictly – NIV)



At God's leading, I spent three months touring Sunday School Classes in a local church. I was appalled at what I found – at what I heard. And, more appalled at what I did not hear. There was no “*meat*,” only “*skim milk*.”

Hebrews 5:12 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.

It was stunning at how they could clip rapidly through a spiritually rich passage of scripture only to have nothing of value to say – nothing more than superficial, shallow comments. The teacher had no spiritual insight, thus he could share no spiritual insight. There was no ‘*anointing*’ on their teaching. This should not be so!

In a similar grain, we must remain careful not to bring the world into the church, or to hand the church over to the world. Pastors and workplace believers are both in full-time Christian ministry. It is not either-or, rather it is both together. In both settings it is to be the Holy Spirit that directs our ministry.

**“Pastors have been guilty of viewing their workplace believers as dollar signs.** They sometimes see them for what they can contribute to their ministries instead of equipping them to use their gifts and talents to impact the workplace believer's mission field-their workplace. ...

**Workplace believers have tried to get pastors to operate their churches like businesses,** and have used their worldly ways for spiritual purposes. They often view the pastor as the primary ministry worker instead of taking on the responsibility themselves to do the work of the ministry.” – *Os Hillman*

This is yet another **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power. I suggest that we carefully and prayerfully select within the church teachers and leaders from among those who believed they are truly “*called*.” Likewise, every other position in the church should be prayerfully filled.

## Relationship

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Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Most of our churches teach about God. Most parishioners come to learn about God. Certainly nothing wrong with that. But, there is more; far more. Few, it seems, come to

know God. In fact, most churches do not teach how to grow in a real relationship with the Lord.

“If angels can weep, they must weep salty tears upon seeing a proselyte who has never really met the Lord making another proselyte who will also never meet the Lord.” - *AW Tozer*

To know God, to have a relationship with Him, requires the ability to hear God. At our salvation, the Holy Spirit came into us to commune with our spirit. He is God within us. As such, we should learn to hear Him speak. It is the key to learning to “*walk in the Spirit.*”

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Our relationship with God is the key to our walk with the Lord. Yet, how many Christians have any idea how to hear God? It would seem that few do – really do. In fact, it may be the exception. If I mention that ‘*God told me,*’ most look at me like a deer in the headlights. This is disturbing. Actually, it is frightening.

“[God] is always whispering to us, only we do not hear, because of the noise, hurry, and distraction which life causes as it rushes on.” - F. W. Faber

If you cannot hear God, the Holy Spirit within you, there are two possible reasons. First, and most importantly, you do not have the Holy Spirit within you. If that is the case, you are not saved. First, “*workout your salvation with fear and trembling.*”

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

Secondly, you have never learned to listen to the inner small voice of the Holy Spirit. It is by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit that we know we are saved. It is He who speaks to our spirit. If you cannot hear Him speak, you have quenched His spirit within you to the point that He may no longer be speaking. Give Him opportunity again to speak, and He will.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were **sealed with that holy Spirit** of promise, 14 Which is the **earnest of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:22 Who hath also **sealed us**, and given the **earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.**

1 Thessalonians 5:19 **Quench not the Spirit.**

Ephesians 4:30 And **grieve not the holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The Holy Spirit comes into us at salvation and takes up residence to commune with our spirit. Thus, His voice to us will be as if it comes up from within us. It is a still small voice. Some say they hear His voice within their “*knower*.” Strange to be sure, but it somehow captures the essence of learning the hear God. His voice rises from deep within.

“My soul, it is God, even thy God, God that cannot lie, who speaks to thee.” – *Charles Spurgeon*

Conversely, it is important to learn to “*take captive*” random thoughts that appear in our mind. This is where spiritual war, more often than not, takes place. In Golgotha - the place of the skull. Random thoughts that pop into our mind are never from God. They are more likely from the devil – rather, his minions. Too many amongst us believe the random thoughts to be of God. These are ripe for deception.

Much like the difference between *condemnation and conviction*, condemnation is never from God – the Holy Spirit. The devil condemns us with random thoughts he brings into our mind. His purpose is to drive us away from God. Whereas, is the Holy Spirit who convicts us. Conviction comes from deep within our spirit-man, to draw us closer to God. There is a huge difference.

An odd thing often occurs in Bible Studies that illustrates this exactly. Often, the Holy Spirit moves me to make a comment that takes the discussion deeper. It is always in grain with the teaching. Yet, many times, as soon as I speak under the unction of the Holy Spirit, those around me take the occasion to talk about whatever the devil has placed in their minds.

The ensuing comments will be off in right and left field. It takes to conversation away from the truth the Holy Spirit wanted shared. These comments are generally a random, out of the blue, self-aggrandizing misdirection. It never seems to cross these folk’s minds that their comments trample Truth and lead the discussion away from the topic.

These are sure signs that it is the devil at work. He and his demons fill our minds with random thoughts – those that just pop into our heads, out of nowhere. He will always give you a sense of urgency to speak, without thinking – without testing the spirits.

We need to learn to recognize the source; test the source. I generally wait for an overwhelming confirmation that rises up from deep within me before I speak. In fact, I do the same in prayer meetings. As a result, many are amazed at the prayers that come out of my mouth. I wait for the Holy Spirit to so overwhelm me that it is His words I speak. I attempt to yield my tongue to Him.

Just because the thought pops into your head does not mean you have to entertain it, consider it, or speak it. Although, this is what the devil would have you do. Test it. Take random thoughts captive.

Lack of understanding and teaching on how to hear God, is yet another **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power. Far too many in our churches have no idea how to hear God or to test the spirits. Is there any wonder our churches are deceived, dead, lifeless, and devoid of power?

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:  
from such turn away.

Consider for a second, if your church was filled with Christians who knew how to hear God, were actively seeking a closer relationship with God, were growing spiritually in the Lord, and were seeking the promised power of God. My guess is that that would be a unified church where the power of God moved in *salvations, healing, signs, wonders and consistent answers to prayer.*

Too many churches expect the pastor and staff to be doing the heavy lifting. Such churches dry up at the roots. The leadership can only do so much. The pastor and teachers are to be "*equipping the saints.*"

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 **For the perfecting (equipping) of the saints, for the work of the ministry,** for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Many hands make for a light load. Leverage is the key. That is, the pastor and teachers achieve leverage by "*equipping the Saints*" to do the work of the Lord. It is a multiplication effect at work.

## **The Teacher**

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Teaching is a calling of God. Yet, far too many teachers are not called. Most are driven to teach out of a self-serving need for relevance and position, recognition and importance. Our churches are filled with teachers who have no business teaching. We seem to forget that it is God who, as with Pastors, appoints and raises-up teachers.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And **God hath set** some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

All who are not called of God, '*set by the Holy Spirit,*' and anointed of God, who teach or preach, are **false teachers**. Not just those who overtly teach false doctrine. The Holy Spirit selects teachers. Without the Holy Spirit's anointing, it is teaching from the flesh.

"Few categories of people are so summarily denounced in Scripture as false teachers, those who teach error from within. Nearly every biblical writer echoes God's hatred of them and their work." – *ICR, JDM*

Sadly, too many are **self-appointed teachers**. I suspect there are equally as many self-appointed pastors. Their walk with God is often shallow and superficial; as a result, their teaching is shallow and superficial. They repeat false and shallow teaching that brings about no spiritual growth. They promote **Old Traditions** and doctrines of men with no spiritual depth.

"We are suffering from a rash of amateurism in Christian circles." – *AW Tozer*

It is a dangerous thing to teach without God's anointing. Yet, too few heed James warning:

James 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that **we who teach will be judged more strictly**.

Couple this with the warning at the close of the Canon of Scripture, and a teacher should stand in fear and trembling before God. For, how many a teacher has '*added to*' or '*taken away*' from God's word as they taught false doctrine?

Revelation 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall **add unto these things**, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall **take away from the words** of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

**First** of all, the goal of a teacher is to **be sure he is called** of God to teach. Then they should seek to walk closely and uprightly with God; to seek God, study His Word, abide in Christ, that the Holy Spirit might lead him to the *Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth*. In fact, that should be a teacher's constant prayer.

**Secondly**, a teacher must **submit to God's refining fire**. He must allow the Holy Spirit to have His way and His timing in his life. God cannot work through a man, unless He can first work in that man. He must have a "*right spirit,*" be made a fit "*vessel,*" and have sanctified motives. If the motive is position, the motive is of "*the flesh,*" at best.

A true teacher must have submitted to, and graduated from, God's process of *sanctification*. No man should preach or teach without first being sanctified and filled

with the Spirit; baptized in the Holy Spirit. (See: *Sanctification, Affliction, Purpose & Power*)

**Thirdly**, a teacher must have developed the invariable habit to **test all things**, to **be Berean** by searching the scripture to see that what they believe is true, and to be willing to seek Truth in spite of doctrine – in spite of Old Tradition. They must so submit to and so allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten their understanding that they teach as men of authority, anointed by God to teach. They should be so studied that they are able to expound on deep truths, and explain the “*dark sayings*” of God. They must strive to teach “*meat*,” rather than “*milk*.”

They must rightly divide God’s Word, that the hearer will be drawn closer to God, and seek His face in a real personal relationship with the living God. A teacher is to break up fallow ground, that the hearer might be driven deeper into God’s Word.

“No man has any right to speak to men about God who has not first spoken to God about men. And the prophet of God should spend more time in the secret place praying than he spends in the public place preaching.” – *AW Tozer*

**Lastly**, they must **lead in power** so as to impart power of God into the lives of others. If a teacher is merely talking about God’s power, but not experiencing God’s power, they are not ready to teach. If they water-down and are “*denying the power*,” we are to “*turn away*.”

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Their teaching should be such as to set the captive free from false and shallow and enslaving doctrines of men – rather, more often, doctrines of demons.

The goal is to so teach as to pull down the strongholds of darkness, the strongholds of **Old Traditions**, the strongholds of false teaching, and strongholds of false and shallow doctrine.

“If we are going to be ready for Jesus Christ, we have to stop being **religious** (that is, **using religion as a higher kind of culture**) and **be spiritually real**. ... Trust no one, not even the finest saint who ever walked this earth, ignore him, if he hinders your sight of Jesus Christ.” – *Oswald Chambers*

## **Why Teach**

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Why would anyone want to teach? Those whom God calls and anoints to teach go through hell on earth each time they agree to teach for God. Few realize this.

Remember that the only true teachers are those '*set by the Holy Spirit,*' all others are false teachers. This message applies to the former, and definitely not the later. I seriously doubt that the devil attacks false teachers.

As Dr. Youssef once said, "*I have to rehearse my sermon each week with the devil.*" No truer words have ever been uttered. For when you set out to teach for God, the devil will attack in the area of your teaching - every time. He will attempt to rob you of your testimony, and cause you to fail in the area you are to teach. Teachers wind up in a spiritual war every time they speak for God.

In the days leading up to a teaching, one with real spiritual truth, the teacher will pay a heavy price. If the adversary can't rob you of your testimony, he will make you feel unworthy to teach. Either way, it is a sacrifice to teach. But, it does not end there.

Much time is spent in rehearsing the teaching so as to be prepared to give a concise and specific message that hammers home spiritual truth in a finite amount of time. The crescendo of emotions rises to the day of the lesson. Good teachers have learned to peak, as it were, on the day the teaching is to be given. They give it their all just before they collapse in a heap of emotional turmoil and exhaustion.

The devil returns to bring words of despair. His follow-up message is always along the lines of how you failed – you didn't say it right, no one got the message, you missed this point, you said this incorrectly, and so on. He will replay what he portends are points of failure in your mind unrelentingly, over and over.

As this battle is being fought in the mind, depression often ensues. You can wind up feeling like a failure even if it was the best lesson you ever delivered. You long for an encouraging word from anyone. Yet, more often, the devil will encourage someone to tell you where you failed, usually under the guise of '*constructive criticism.*' It is a painful experience.

Why would anyone want to go through this? Why would anyone want to teach? Teaching had better be under the unction of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, it is a waste of everyone's time. Our churches are filled with teachers who want to teach for ulterior motives – to be in front of the group, to be a leader, to use it as a platform to promote themselves, and so on.

As a result, the teaching is in the flesh and not of the Spirit. It leads to a lifeless church where the congregation is starved for Spiritual Truth. Our churches should prayerfully seek those whom God has called and anointed, encourage them to teach, and support them when they do. Accepting anyone who just wants to be a teacher is a recipe for failure.

## Instruction

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Why do so **few pastors and teachers sit under the teaching of others**? Many will not sit under the teaching of even ordained fellow pastors; much less, the teaching of an anointed layman. Why? This is a huge red flag that something is amiss in their walk with God.

Do they think really they know it all? That no one can teach them? Shockingly, I had a pastor tell me that very thing. I was blown away with the lack of self-awareness of his arrogance and pride. And, frankly, his ignorance of how much he does not know. There is no way we will ever know it all this side of heaven.

Do they not know that it is the Holy Spirit that appoints pastors and teachers? They can only teach or preach for God in “*spirit and truth*” with His selection and His anointing. Fleshly teaching is, at best, teaching *about* God; it does not lead one to *know* God.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers ...

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Otherwise, they are doing it in the flesh. It is not some governing body, not a denomination, not a presbytery, who selects pastors and teachers; rather, it is the Holy Spirit. He and He alone raises-up anointed pastors and teachers called to this office.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ...

Is it pride? Do they think they are better than other men? Would it be too degrading, too humbling, too undignified, to submit to the instruction of other men? Is it fear that they would lose standing in the eyes of other men, if they were seen submitting to the lessons of another man; especially, a layman, or even a pastor from another denomination? Gasp!

Are they afraid to be seen in another man's teaching because it would be seen as a tacit endorsement of another's ministry? Or more to the point, that such could elevate their “*perceived competition*” in the eyes of others? Beats me!

However, I am convinced that a pastor, or teacher, who will not regularly sit und the teaching of other pastors and teachers, should not be in leadership, much less teaching or preaching. At the very least, they lack Godly humility.



For some, I am sure that they are **professional loafers**. They have not the discipline to go to another's Bible Study. Most pastors and staff are accountable to no one. They show up on Sunday, and maybe Wednesday evening, and then they disappear for the remainder of the week. No one knows what they do with their time.

I know tons of pastors and teachers. It is interesting that almost **none of these men sit under the teaching of others**. I suspect that more than a few were not actually called of God to preach or teach; thus, they lack the anointing required. If they were I believe that the Holy Spirit would lead them to learn from others as He teaches through others.

Proverbs 23:12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

Maybe it should be no surprise that their teaching is generally limited, shallow, and one-sided; it is often devoid of real spiritual insight. It certainly tends to lack power. They live in an echo chamber of their own thinking. They will not submit to the expository teaching of others.

This is exceedingly sad. I have said before, that I can often learn more under bad teaching if I will let the Holy Spirit lead me to the Truth. Maybe, these men have not learned to **learn from the Holy Spirit**.

Allowing teachers and preachers who are too proud to submit to the teaching of others to continue is but another **Old Tradition** robbing our churches of power. A pastor, who will not submit to the teaching of other pastors, or even the laymen in his flock, should be removed. Humility before God is what God looks for in the characteristics for His leadership.

*"All I ever cared about was being right before God." – The late Pastor Charles Sineath; A man 'after God's own heart.'*

The late **Charles Sineath** was a gifted pastor who regularly sat under the teaching of far lesser men. He learned to learn from the Holy Spirit. Only those willing to submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit can truly instruct others in the deeper spiritual things of God. Only these can lead their flocks into a right relationship with God. Only those who can hear God can teach others to hear God for themselves.

## Skim Milk

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*"Where's the beef?"* That line, said by an older grandmother-aged woman in a 1984 Wendy's commercial, went viral, as they say. This granny had just the right way of saying it. It somehow struck a chord with every American. It became a National catchphrase repeated over and over again in virtually every setting. It meant, *'where's the substance?'*

I feel like repeating it in various contemporary Bible studies. It is frankly appalling how many Sunday-School classes, Small Groups, and Bible Studies teach shallow, superficial particulars pertaining to the Word of God. So many studies are merely rote, trivia, and fact-based teachings.

“There are Christians who grow up and have no relish for anything spiritually advanced. They're preoccupied with their first lessons. **The average church is a school with only one grade** and that is the first one. These Christians never expect to get beyond that and they don't want to hear a man very long who wants to take them beyond that.” – *AW Tozer*

Too many of our churches are comfortable with laying down first principles, over and over, year after year. If your church only teaches the fundamentals of the faith ad infinitum, there will be no spiritual growth. If we desire to see a church emerge in power, it is time to stop teaching only *about* God, and teach *relationship* with God.

I sit in these meetings stunned as the teacher skips over verse after verse pregnant with deep spiritual truth; or treat a passage in the most superficial way. It makes me want to stand up to scream ‘*are you blind? Can't you see the spiritual significance?*’

Psalm 119:99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

I believe that it boils down to the fact that so many who teach, should simply not be teaching God's word. Too many teach out of their worldly wisdom. Yet, only the one filled with the Holy Spirit, and able to hear the Holy Spirit, should teach or preach. Without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the words are hollow, lifeless, and devoid of life-changing power.

Jeremiah 9:23 Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in **his wisdom** ... 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he **understandeth and knoweth me** ...

I suspect that many of these teachers are not even truly saved. Rather, as within so many in our churches, they are merely religious. Many can acquire a noteworthy head-knowledge of God's word, without the personal relationship with the living God; a relationship enabled only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Many of these folks merely recite what is little more than a book report, or repeat a canned lesson.

No one should teach that God, himself, did not call to teach.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And **God hath set some in the church**, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Ephesians 4:11 And **he gave some**, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, **pastors and teachers**;

I am convinced it is the devil that drives the lost and the carnal Christian to come play church. Once in the church they seem to be likewise driven to seek positions of leadership. Untold churches and Christian schools have been destroyed this way. It is sobering, for these self-appointed teachers, teachers will be held to a stricter standard.

James 3:1 **Not many of you should become teachers**, my fellow believers, because you know that **we who teach will be judged more strictly**.

Matthew 6:1 Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others **to be seen by them**. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Pitifully, so many participants in these classes and meetings are comfortable with hearing superficial teaching week after week. Most classes merely lay down the fundamentals of the faith, at best, year after year. So few, it seems, are seeking depth; so few are looking for life-changing expository teaching. It would seem that so few seek the power of God. Like their teachers, many are merely playing church.

1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of **power**:

1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in **power**.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in **power**, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

It can get even worse. Aside from merely regurgitating shallow trivia, many teachers teach false doctrine. Their students appear to prefer it that way; they often like it better than Truth. As such, we have the '*blind leading the blind*.'

2 Timothy 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;

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Ultimately, if God did not "*plant*" them as teachers, they will be "*rooted up*," removed from teaching.

Matthew 15:13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father **hath not planted, shall be rooted up.** 14 Let them alone: they be **blind leaders of the blind.** And if the blind lead the blind, **both shall fall into the ditch.**

There is no power apart from the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit teaches through a willing teacher, the word comes with power. It cannot be faked. Yet, too many teach out of the flesh with “*enticing words of man's wisdom;*” (1 Corinthians 2:4) they share erudite head-knowledge, at best, as “*a teacher of babes.*” We should seek teachers who “*put no confidence in the flesh*” (Philippians 3:3), and know that they “*must decrease.*” (John 3:30)

Romans 2:20 An instructor of the foolish, a **teacher of babes**, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

As students, *hearers*, we should be seeking depth, real spiritual insight, the “**meat**” of the Word. We should be asking “*where's the beef?*” Unfortunately, many of these classes exclude the “meat”; most teach far less than even whole “*milk.*” Maybe, 2% milk; or worse *skim milk.* It is not satisfying. It leaves the hearer spiritually hungry.

Hebrews 5:12 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.

1 Corinthians 3:2 I have fed you with **milk**, and not with **meat:** for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

This is but one more **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power. I suggest that we vet our teachers more fully. We should seek only those grounded in God's Word and filled with the Holy Spirit to teach. Only these can bring the “*meat*” to the table. Only these know where the ‘*beef*’ is. It should be only those who “**God hath set.**”

## Status Quo

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What is it about new startup churches that want to become merely a virtual carbon copy of the one they broke away from? Oh, to be sure, they have some small aspects of their form and function that are different from the others. It is usually immaterial in the supernatural spiritual scheme of things. Oddly, it often revolves around music.

Form of music is largely about taste. We all have differing tastes. To satisfy everyone in style of music is, it seems, impossible. Some are old hymns-only people, others are

contemporary music lovers, and then there are the blended-version folks with a touch of both contemporary and hymns. Big whoop!

There are real issues with so much of today's praise and worship, to be sure. See "*Drain the Swamp*" and other pieces I have written about the issues in our wayward juvenile music leadership that seriously needs adult supervision. But, I contend that devil has us focused too often on minor differences in taste to distract us from the meatier matters of what a church should be about.

Sadly, in most of these variations on the same general theme, the emphasis is *horizontal*. Few churches seek the **vertical worship** that I believe God so desires. I would contend that best praise and worship model is one where the selection of songs is such that it facilitates **singing to the Lord** ... rather than *about* Him. It matters little the musical style, it is a matter of the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the **outward appearance**, but the **Lord looketh on the heart**.

I have to admit that those who are enamored with old hymns bewilder me. I have nothing against hymns; in fact, many are wonderful and timeless. I believe that they should be included in worship regularly. However, most old hymns are simply terrible. Yes, I said it out loud. They are too out of step with our culture for anyone to be able to entered true praise and worship directed to God. Many, when sung are more of a self-righteous torture session where everyone mouths along as they quietly yearn for it to be over.

Some seem so captivated with old hymns that they would appear to believe that Jesus and the disciples surely must have sung them around the campfire. As a result they reject all contemporary praise and worship music. And, yes, much contemporary music should be rejected for its unbiblical lyrics. Although, many are theologically sound.

Most of our hymns sung today were written from the 18<sup>th</sup> century forward. They were set in a musical tempo and style of the culture at the time. Thus, they were contemporary for the age in which they were written – an age centuries after Jesus and the disciples ministered. Yet, many folks throw out all contemporary praise songs as if they are of the devil simply because they are contemporary. It is rather odd, to say the least.

To differentiate one's church from another solely on music selection is strongly missing the mark. I watch in amazement at the little things churches split over. I am equally amazed at the things so many build a new church around. They all seem to miss the mark, yet feel smugly superior to other churches who they believe are not as enlightened as them.

So what is the mark? The mark is the **Power of God**. Without God's power operating in and directing the church, it is merely another status quo church. It is mere religion. It is another church playing church. I am quite confident we do not need another status quo church.

The Church was born at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came with power, and to Pentecost we should return. Mind you, I am not discounting the Gospel; it is the central theme of any sound church. But, there is more. In fact, it was the more that God used to empower the Apostles to spread the Gospel.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:  
from such turn away.

What we need is a church seeking the Power of God. We need a church where the Holy Spirit is allowed to direct and lead. We need a church where the congregants are taught to hear God for themselves. We need a group of parishioners to come together to seek the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. "*Come let us reason together,*" would make a good motto.

We need a church where the pastor can truly hear God for himself, as he teaches and encourages everyone else to do the same. We need a church that encourages its member to grow spiritually in Christ; a church that teaches real relationship with God. So many churches merely teach *about* God; few teach how to have a vibrant personal relationship *with* God. It is unimaginable what a church of this nature could do and accomplish for God.

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and **greater works than these shall he do**; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

## Brain Basket

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I am convinced that most Christians turn their brains off at the door of the church. They simply do not think. They seem to have no true interest in learning about God. As a result, they fall for "*every wind of doctrine.*" They have little to no spiritual foundation. Moreover, they do not grow spiritually.

We could just as well have an usher at the door holding a basket for folks to place their brain in as they enter. They can pick their brains up after the service.

It should not be this way. We are to "*test all things*" and "*hold fast to that which is true;*" only that which is true. To do so requires thinking. It would seem that few do. If we

would learn to, the Holy Spirit would “*lead [us] into all truth.*” But, we have to think. We have to learn to listen to the Holy Spirit.

**AW Tozer** said over one hundred years ago, that ‘our churches are first grade, and first grade only.’ I would contend that over the past one hundred years they have become kindergarten and kindergarten only – maybe even, preschool, and preschool only. It is sad.

In a large Sunday School Class that I taught for a decade, a couple dropped out. The husband was a good friend. When I ran into him, I asked where they had been. He said that his wife did not want to go to church to feel like she was in school; so she did not want to attend any more. I told him it was called *Sunday “School”* for a reason.

In another church, one that held me at arm’s length from teaching, they changed the name to “Communities” from the traditional “Sunday School.” Apparently, some were put off by the name, like the woman above. They might as well have changed the name. The best I could tell, there was no substantive teaching going on in any of the “Communities.” It was all shallow, superficial skim milk at best.

It seems that many simply want to come to church to hear superficial, shallow platitudes. All one has to do is to make a few emphatic and emotionally-charged statements that everyone will agree with and the lack of content and substance, along with absence of logical flow, is completely overlooked.

I am coming to believe that most do not want to learn, they do not want to be taught, they prefer blissful ignorance! They merely want the ‘teacher’ to say mindless things that they already know and agree with. Then they join the Amen chorus with their brains turned off - maybe, unplugged.

It is time we pulled our brains out of the basket and used them. God never called us to not think about spiritual truths. This is but another **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power.

## **Study**

Do you read the Bible? Research shows that very few Christians actually read the Bible; at least outside of church. Fewer still have read the Bible; read it cover to cover. This is a sad indictment on the average self-proclaimed Christian.

Of the few who read the Bible regularly, very few actually study the Bible. There is a big difference in reading the Bible, and studying the Bible. Most do not even read it, much less study it. They wait for a teacher, or pastor, to spoon-feed them bits and bites of God’s Word. This is pitiful.

No wonder there is such a staggering ignorance of God’s Word. No wonder so many a Christian falls for “*every wind of doctrine.*” They are ripe for every deception.

I suggest we not only read the Bible, but study it too. Be Berean. Remember that they “*searched the scriptures daily.*” Now that is studying God’s word. We are to “*test all things.*” We cannot do that without true study.



## Wise Guys

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Where have all the fathers gone? Not fathers in the sense of the fathers of children, but the wise, older ones – venerable elders in the faith. It is interesting that the last prophecy, before the 400 year intertestamental silence of God, dealt with sharing wisdom.

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6 And *he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Granted, this seems like an odd way to end the Old Testament. Certainly the relationship of fathers to children, and vice versa is important. Much can be said about fathers being proper leaders, the priests and heads of their households, and societal damage of broken fatherless homes, and so forth. But, really! Is it that important in the scheme of spiritual things? What a strange way to begin 400 years of silence.

But, as is often the case in God's Word there is something way more being said here. "*The heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*" deals with heartfelt concern of the older and wiser to share the God's Truth with the younger, and a desire of the younger to hear and accept the Truth shared by the venerable older Christian leaders.

In fact, "*father*" in scripture is often a metaphor for wise men of God, whereas "*children*" are often those who refuse the Truth and go astray, especially those who rebel and are disobedient.

Interestingly, Dr. Luke quotes this prophecy in his announcement of John the Baptist coming in the spirit of Elijah; however, he renders the second phrase as "*the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*". Children are equated to the "*disobedient*"; fathers equates to the "*just*," moreover, "*to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*"

Luke 1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

As is so often the case in God's Word, Malachi's prophecy, I believe, has a both near and far term implications. The near term implication is, the Spirit of Elijah returning through John the Baptist; the long term, with Elijah himself physically returning before the Day of the Lord.

However, the Spirit of Elijah should be still active – if we would seek it. Elijah walked so closely with God that he was translated into heaven without tasting death. If ever disobedient children need the wisdom of fathers rightly related to God, it is now. Yet we have grown callous to the children – the merely religious, the rebels, the scoffers, the mockers, the disrespectful, and the flagrant disrespect of God's word. It is easier to live in our religious bubble, then to share with the disobedient. Moreover, many of our would-be elders, lack the true wisdom of Elijah.

Apparently, this was true in Malachi's day. He was warning Israel to repent and turn back to God. It was the "*fathers*" who had allowed Israel to drift from God as they failed to seek Him with their whole heart. These were leaders who were not properly leading. As a result, they had nothing of spiritual value to share. We see this same scenario in America today.

The world defines wisdom as '*the experienced application of knowledge.*' The Bible defines wisdom as '*Jesus Christ.*' It is in Jesus and Him alone, that we find wisdom and life. Proverbs 8 makes this abundantly clear as it describes "*wisdom*" in terms of a preincarnate Jesus Christ. Take Ecclesiastes for example, substitute '*Jesus*' for '*wisdom*' and see if it becomes clear:

Ecclesiastes 7:12 For wisdom is a defence ... but the excellency of knowledge is, that **wisdom** [Jesus] *giveth life* to them that have it.

Then, as now, part of the problem is that we lack wise men, especially, wise older men. What a sad statement. But, it is empirically true. I am astounded with the ignorance of God and absence of wisdom in so many older men. Children are rebelling from silly older men who proclaim false truth or merely promote a form of religion. They are looking for Power and Truth – the real thing.

The older are to still to "*flourish in the courts of our God,*" "*bring forth fruit in old age,*" and be "*sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith.*"

Psalm 92:14 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still **bring forth fruit in old age** ...

Titus 2:2-3 **Aged men** [should] be sober, grave, temperate, **sound in faith**, in charity, in patience. ...

Psalm 71:9 Cast me not off in the **time of old age**; forsake me not when my strength faileth ...

Psalm 37:25 I have been young, and **now am old**; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread

Sadly, few of our aged men can offer this – many have only confused **doctrine**, a form of **religion**, and thinly veiled excuses for the absence of God in their lives to share. Far too many have wasted their lives not seeking God in earnest and failing to test all things to His word.

Scripturally, the **elders**, the older men, were to be the ones filled with God's wisdom after a life of walking closely with God. Where were they then? Where are they now?

Proverbs 19:20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be **wise in thy latter end**.

Psalm 92:12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They shall still **bring forth fruit in old age**; they shall be fat and flourishing;

Psalm 71:17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. 18 Now also when **I am old** and greyheaded, O God, **forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation**, and thy power to every one that is to come.

Joshua 13:1 Now Joshua was **old and stricken in years**; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and **there remaineth yet very much** land to be possessed.

This is not meant to be a blanket indictment. Certainly, there are many older men who have grown in the Lord into wise, venerable counselors - elders. However, far too many of our matured men and women are nothing more than "*clouds and wind without rain*".

They have played church for decades, rather the seeking God in "*Spirit and Truth*". Now they reach the later days of their lives, a season when they should be filled with Godly wisdom, with only a vague semblance of God's power in their lives. How utterly sad! This is clearly more **Old Tradition** robbing the church of power.

I have said many times, we should be seeking God for why we lack the Power He clearly promised. It is time to stop making excuses. We should **be asking God to pull us up to the experience of His Word**, rather than pulling the Word down to our pathetic level of experience.

If I had a word of advice regarding a worthy purpose for your life, it is this. Seek to walk with the Lord in such a way that by the end of your life you have wisdom to share – true wisdom; that found only in Jesus Christ. If you do, you will have Jesus to share. By your

later days you should be so close to Jesus that you are a channel of Him and His wisdom for others to follow. Be a wise guy!

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

## Supernatural Spiritual Gifts

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1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came *not unto you in **word** only, but also in **power***, and in the *Holy Ghost*, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Many of our churches are “Word” only; focused intently on the Word of God, doctrine and theology. There is nothing wrong with that, to be sure. But, they tend to deny the power of God – especially, the supernatural power of God. They especially seem to accept the absence of the Supernatural Gifts of the Spirit:

1 Corinthians 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the **word of wisdom**; to another the **word of knowledge** by the same Spirit; 9 To another **faith** by the same Spirit; to another the **gifts of healing** by the same Spirit; 10 To another the **working of miracles**; to another **prophecy**; to another **discerning of spirits**; to another **divers kinds of tongues**; to another the **interpretation of tongues**:

Moreover, they ignore, or far worse, redefine the nine supernatural Gifts of the Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but **denying the power** thereof: from such turn away.

### **Unwrap It** - Gifts of the Spirit

To be sure, I was bracing myself for today. I knew that this pastor was speaking on I Corinthians 12 – you know the chapter on Spiritual Gifts. I could have told you what he was going to say before he said it. In a nutshell, his message was: we all have spiritual gifts; we just need to “*unwrap*” the gift already given to each and every person at salvation.

Where do these folks get this belief? Aside from a complete lack of scriptural support, save only: the “*Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will*” (I Cor. 12:11b). There is an obvious lack of empirical evidence, as well. Likewise, I would contend that this verse is also being stretched far beyond what it plainly means – especially, when taken in light of other scripture.

To my surprise, the music leader opened with something along the lines that ‘*many wonder why we don’t see the Spiritual Gifts more in operation ... our pastor will explain that this morning in his sermon*’. Little did he realize that he was being prophetic. (I guess he has “*unwrapped*” his gift). He followed his comment with a sad song about the church not exercising her gifts.

Well, it would seem the Four Tops nailed this sermon with yet another song: “*It’s the same old song, But with a different meaning, Since you been gone*”. I have heard this morning’s sermon-song, as it were, far too many times before. The message was about how we are all given at least one Spiritual Gift at our salvation. ‘*We all have them*’, he kept saying. He thanked God that his church was different. They use their spiritual gifts, it seems – or so it seems that both he and the congregation think they do.

It is strikingly, odd! I cannot think of a single person in this church that demonstrates the spiritual gift of ‘*miracles*’, or the gift ‘*tongues*’, or ‘*Interpretation of tongues*’, or ‘*healing*’ or ‘*discerning of spirits*’, or ‘*word of knowledge*’, or ‘*faith*’ (supernatural faith, that is) ... or any of the nine supernatural spiritual gifts in the text this morning. But, they have them all, he was sure. And, they all have them; so, we were told again today. All the rest of us need to do is “*unwrap*” them, he implored.

Yet, Paul said that he *longed* to see the Roman church to ‘*impart*’ spiritual gifts unto them. Why would that be necessary if they all had them as a result of being saved? They must have been ignorant failures. At least according to this sermon, they were. They did not know how to “*unwrap*” their gifts. Or, as other false preachers say, they did not know how to “*energize*” their gift. The answer is that they didn’t get a supernatural Gift of the Spirit at salvation ... and neither did we. Is it not pragmatically obvious?

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may **impart** unto you some spiritual gift

Timothy was implored not once, but twice by Paul to “*neglect not*” and “*stir up*” the gift **imparted by** the “*laying on of the hands*”. Was Timothy a failure too? He did not know how to “*unwrap*” it, to “*energize*” it. The fact is, young Timothy did not just have a Gift as a result of salvation. They were intentionally imparted to him by a spirit-filled believer – in this case, Paul and the presbytery.

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, **which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands** of the presbytery.

2 Timothy 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou *stir up the gift* of God, **which is in thee by the putting on of my hands**.

Yes, as you would expect, this church uses the ‘**Spiritual Gifts Assessment Instrument**’ that I have written much about. This thing, from the pit of hell, grossly

confuses the *God-given natural giftedness* and uniqueness of each individual with true supernatural Spiritual Gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit.

With this twisted instrument, even an *unsaved person*, or a person *without the Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, will come out of the test with a supposed 'spiritual gift'. Furthermore, the supernatural gifts that cannot be imitated so easily – such as, miracles, healing, tongues, etc – are generally conveniently absent in these manmade tests. Other forms of the tests redefine these Gifts to align with natural giftedness – i.e. *Healing* falls on the doctors and nurses, *Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues* to those who speak other languages, *Prophecy* as merely teaching God's Word, and so on. That alone should give you pause for concern.

This Instrument is manmade. Find it in Scripture. Find in the Bible where the Apostles handed out tests. You won't in either case. It is simply manmade hooey! The bottom line is, "*Ye have not, because ye ask not*". We ask not, because we are told we already have. I contend that the Church who employees these tests will never find and experience the real Supernatural *Spiritual Gifts* because they are not seeking them. Why would they? They are told they already have the gifts. They are comfortable and complacent with what they have, believing that there is nothing more to be had.

These churches are pouring the "*Oil*" out on the ground. (See: *Midnight Cry*) They are cutting the Holy Spirit off at the knees. This is His ministry. He anoints and empowers Spirit filled believers with supernatural Spiritual Gifts as He sees fit. He is the power source. It is the same with offices: *apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists*. The Holy Spirit selects and empowers. (See: *God Hath Set*)

This sermon simply encouraged more of the same thinking. The music leader, no doubt, does not, even now, realize how 'prophetic' his comment was today. For this sermon, and those like it, is *itself* the reason why we see so little of the Spiritual Gifts truly in operation. The Gifts Assessment Instrument merely reinforces this *we-already-have-them* mindset. Can you see the devil's deception? It is to cut off the church from the power source – the Holy Spirit!

This is more **Old Tradition** robbing the church of power. It is more nonsense to justify our spiritually anemic walk with God. Our experience is less than God described. So, we recast our experience as if it were what He depicted. It is a downward spiral. We expect less, so we receive less. We receive less, because we expect less. And downward it goes, generation after generation.

Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

But, we must ask, seek, and knock. I contend we should be seeking God to pull us up to His Word, not to pull His Word down to our level of experience. Let us "*unwrap*" the Truth. May, we stop acting as though we have that which we do not. Then, and only then, will we "*seek*" it – when we do, we "*shall find*" it.

## Be Ignorant

The saga continues – week by week, this pastor is “unwrapping” more of his dismal misunderstanding about Spiritual Gifts. He is not unique. He may represent the vast majority of evangelical pastors today. They embark on a flight of the imagination when they attempt to preach on that which they have never experienced.

It is becoming abundantly clear to me that we have not the real “*Spiritual Gifts*” because we ask not. Furthermore, we ask not because we are deceived – deceived by teaching like this series of troubling sermons. We believe we have that which we do not. Therefore, we do not ask – we do not seek. This is sad, indeed, because in the very chapter we were studying today, 1 Corinthians 14, Paul implores us to “*seek*”, “*covet*”, and “*desire*” the “*Gifts of the Spirit*”.

So, this high-profile pastor lamented from the pulpit this morning, that he was sad that so many Christians lacked discernment. They are unable to discern false and counterfeit gifts, he mourned. The obvious implication is that he can; he knows the real ones from the false ones. *As a side note*, where he gets this extra-Biblical revelation that the Corinthians real problem was their embrace of false gifts, is beyond me. I do not see this in the text. I see the abuse of the Gift of Tongues, yes; false tongues, no.

Anyway, this is the same man who recently declared that we all, each and every Christian, have spiritual gifts; we just need to ‘*unwrap them*.’ It is bazaar that he cannot see his own lack of discernment. For this church, lacks the Spiritual Gifts as much as any these days. (See: *Unwrap It*) He and his followers are deceived into believing that have that which they do not.

By way of example, he even commented that anytime we instruct using the Word if God, we are prophesying. Really?! Are you kidding me? The prophets of old would certainly beg to disagree. They carried a word from the Lord, generally foretelling the future if those to whom they spoke did not change course and repent. They carried a warning directly from God.

So now this pastor is redefining the obvious definition of the gifts. I suppose, it makes it easier to claim everyone has Spiritual Gifts if they are redefined into something anyone could have – with or without the Holy Spirit. This is exceedingly sad!

I found it interesting that in this chapter Paul declares; let the “*ignorant*” remain “*ignorant*”. Well, this we are certainly practicing. For no one is going to be truly enlightened by this sermon series. At the very least, everyone will remain “*ignorant*” – sadly, many will likewise become “*ignorant*” through this disturbing teaching.

1 Corinthians 14:38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.



At least on this subject, I would contend this man of God is ignorant. (*And he is, indeed a man of God. Like all of us, he occasionally gets off into teaching that which he is not equipped to teach.*) It would appear that he is planning to heed Paul's admonition to "remain ignorant". Ironically, he said:

"We will not see revival while God's children live in a Halfway House"

How true! How telling! This is more **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power. For, how can the Church find the power of the Holy Spirit – Spiritual Gifts – if they are not seeking it? I suggest we stop redefining the Spiritual Gifts, and accept that we have not what Paul describes so that we will begin seeking it.

"Until you get to the point of asking you won't receive from God" – *Oswald Chambers*

When we do the power will come in earnest.

## The Assessment

Almost on cue, this revered teacher promoted the Spiritual Gift's Assessment Instrument. I have to admit that I loathe this manmade thing. I find that I detest this instrument mostly because the majority of the versions out there leave out half of the honest to goodness real spiritual gifts (*tongues, interpretation of tongues, healing and miracles*) and redefines the rest. Actually, it waters-down the other five supernatural spiritual gifts into something that anyone could fake – or anyone could have without the Power of God working through them. That's kind of like so many of our program-driven churches today – no power, but who would notice with all the hype and activity.

Like so many today, the teacher claimed we all have gifts. The instrument is offered as proof ... circular reasoning, without a doubt. You can't take this test without coming out with at least one. It's essentially rigged. We all have natural gifts, maybe; giftedness, no doubt. But, Supernatural Spiritual Gifts, I do not believe this for a second. Many of the supposed 'gifts' in this instrument are merely fruit of the spirit and characteristics that all Christians and responsible humans should share.

It strikes me that a non-saved person could take this assessment and would, without a doubt, be assigned a 'spiritual gift'. That, in and of itself, should be cause for concern to any discerning Christian that believe in the supernatural power of God. How is it that we all just have these spiritual gifts? Yet, we see no supernatural empirical evidence.

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit grants spiritual gifts according to His will, according to how He has chosen to use the believer to minister to others. People tend to see themselves differently than others see them, which can mean a false outcome in the assessment of one's supposed spiritual gifts ... many times is motivated by vain thoughts of one's own importance.

Timothy received his Spiritual Gift(s) by the laying on of hands. Yet, as is typical today, this teacher is convinced we all have them by virtue of our salvation ... or maybe, by virtue of merely breathing. You see, it makes no difference in the supposed Spiritual Gift's Assessment if you are saved or not – you will come out with a gift, and that gift will be labeled a Spiritual Gift. No power in that. No truth in that, in my *assessment*.

The other issue at stake here is that God rarely, if ever, uses our natural giftedness for His supernatural purposes. Chambers sums it up best:

“If we are to be disciples of Jesus, we must be made disciples supernaturally. ... He does not build on any natural capacity at all. God does not ask us to do the things that are easy to us naturally; He only asks us to do the things we are perfectly fitted to do by His grace, and the cross will come along that line always.” – *Oswald Chambers*

So in addition to reinforcing the false notion that everyone has Spiritual Gifts, the Gifts Assessment Instrument encourages folks to believe they are using the natural giftedness for God, when that may not be true. **Os Hillman** often says that in order to be truly used by God we have to ‘*put aside our natural giftedness*’. Otherwise, we run the risk of operating in the flesh, not the supernatural.

Yet, like so many other situations I find myself in these days ... maybe, all ... everyone sings his praises and lauds his insightful teaching. Today, I sat there frustrated and, once again, utterly stunned. I am becoming convinced we have here just another church where the blind lead the blind; the dead teach the dead. God help us!

As I have said before, if we think we have it all, we will not seek more – we will not seek after the real thing. I contend this is the ploy of the adversary. Clever, indeed! Here we have, yet again, church leaders and teachers watering down the Truth for the devil; denying the power – from whom God said to turn away. Our churches cater to the lukewarm. I contend that the ‘Spiritual Gifts Assessment’ is an effective tool of the devil, more **Old Tradition**, to rob the church of God’s intended power.

## Midnight Cry

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In the Olivet Discourse, after Jesus' description of the "*these things*" to look for in order to be able "*watch*" for His Second Coming, there is an unusual passage about "*virgins*," "*lamps*," "*oil*," "*bridegroom*," and a "**midnight cry**."

Matthew 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten **virgins**, which took their **lamps**, and went forth to meet the **bridegroom**. 2 And five of them were **wise**, and five were **foolish**. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took **oil** in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, **they all slumbered and slept**. 6 And **at midnight there was a cry made**, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and *trimmed their lamps*. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, **the bridegroom came**; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and **the door was shut**. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the *Son of man* cometh.

The text is a picture of an ancient mid-eastern wedding; a Jewish wedding. Most take this parable to mean that we must be ready for Christ's appearing. No doubt, we should.

Many folks equate the "*virgin*" with the believer. The "*wise virgins*" were ready; the "*foolish virgins*" were not. But, is that a proper interpretation? Is it the only interpretation? Let's break it down to see if there is more to learn.

### The Oil

Most folks agree that the "*oil*" is a reference to the **Holy Spirit**. That almost seems obvious from Scripture. The Holy Spirit is our "*earnest*" of salvation, and the **power** for believers that came at Pentecost at the birthday of the Church.

The Holy Spirit is our source of direction and power as we walk in this lost world. We are promised by Jesus that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will lead us into all Truth:

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will **guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Among the more than 200 times that oil is mentioned in the Bible, it is usually a metaphor of the Holy Spirit's presence. We see this in the ritual anointing of prophets, priests and kings, and those desiring healing. For example, when the prophet-judge Samuel anointed David with *oil* to be the new king of Israel, the next statement is that "*the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.*" (1 Sam 16:13)

In David's case, all his accomplishments subsequent to being anointed by the Spirit are to be interpreted as **empowered** by the Spirit. By contrast, the Holy Spirit had abandoned King Saul because of disobedience. We see the same connection with respect to Jesus' First Coming:

Acts 10:38 How God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth with the **Holy Ghost** and with **power**: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Every reference to anointing (oil) implies either a plea for the Spirit's action or a revelation of the Holy Spirit's presence to empower individuals. He is the Power; He brings Life and Power to the Word.

Sadly, in today's church, the Holy Spirit is virtually relegated as unnecessary. Our pastors learn in seminary to run a church entirely without the Holy Spirit. Today's church is run like a secular business. We even bring in business operations and planning techniques.

"Our blunder (or shall we frankly say our sin?) has been to neglect the doctrine of the **Spirit** to a point where **we virtually deny Him** His place in the Godhead. This denial has not been by open doctrinal statement, for we have clung closely enough to the Biblical position wherever our credal pronouncements are concerned. ... Brief reference is made to Him in the Doxology and the Benediction. Further than that **He might as well not exist.**" – *AW Tozer*

This is a grievous error. Without the Holy Spirit there is, and can be no, Power. We thusly play church. We pretend to be led by the Holy Spirit. Is there any wonder that our mainline denominations are dead and lifeless?

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came *not unto you in word only, but also in power*, and in the *Holy Ghost* ...

## The Lamp

The “**lamp**” appears in Scripture to be often a metaphor for the **Word of God** – Truth.

Psalm 119:105 Thy **word is a lamp** unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Proverbs 6:23 For the **commandment is a lamp**; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

The parable of the **lamp** under a bushel is one of the parables of Jesus. This is referring to not sharing the Truth of the Gospel, the “Good News;” the Word.

## The Bridegroom

Likewise, it seems abundantly obvious that the “**bridegroom**” who “*tarried*,” is an allusion to **Jesus Christ** regarding His impending Second Coming. That is affirmed in verse 13 referring to “*the Son of man*,” referencing Daniel’s description of a preincarnate vision of Jesus.

Jesus spoke of Himself as the “*Son of man*” often, speaking in code, as it were, to those who knew their prophecy.

Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the **Son of man** came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Mark 10:45 For even the **Son of man** came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Revelation 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the **Son of man**, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

## The Sleeping Virgins

But then, who are the “**virgins**?” Theologian R. T. Kendall uses Jesus' parable of the ten virgins to describe the *slumbering condition of the church* in the last days. He believes the virgins are the churches of the last days.

It is interesting that “*they all slumbered and slept.*” Yes, they all “*slept,*” not just the “*foolish virgins.*” Could it be that the “*virgins*” are churches, or maybe the body of Believers? And that the ‘**midnight cry**’ is a final *wakeup call* to the Church in the Last Days?

Consider that a *virgin* is considered spotless, undefiled, and pure. If the “*virgins*” refer to churches, these would be the better, more doctrinally sound, and theologically pure churches. We are not talking about the aberrant apostate church steeped in compromised and false doctrine. Both the “*wise*” and the “*foolish*” are “*virgins,*” set apart and undefiled.

Regardless, I do not think anyone would disagree that the average Church today is asleep and slumbering; it is indeed, powerless – even the doctrinally sound. Moreover, we have self-divided into “**Word**” churches and “**Spirit**” churches; in other words, *mainline protestant churches* and *charismatic churches*. The “*Word*” camp is focused on the Word and doctrine only, while largely denying the power of God.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but **denying the power** thereof:  
from such turn away.

The “*Spirit*” churches are so desperate for the power of God – sign, wonders, miracles – that the “*Word*” often takes a backseat. Their emphasis is on getting back to the book of Acts. This latter camp tends to wind up in a host of extremes and aberrant beliefs without being governed by the framework of God’s Word; their services are frequently more akin to chaos.

“With the fullness of the Holy Ghost ... evangelical Christianity believes it,  
but nobody experiences it.” – *AW Tozer*

The former tends to want status quo and man-made order; they do not embrace the messiness that comes with the Power of the Holy Spirit. This group focuses more on doctrine – the Word only. While there is nothing wrong with emphasizing truth, doctrine and theological correctness, they are often guilty of excluding the Power of God.

Matthew 15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8  
This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me  
with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in **vain they do  
worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

## Trimmed Lamps

The text says that the “*all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.*” So, all the virgin’s lamps had gone out. All trimmed their lamps. It was not just the foolish, but the wise as well. What does it mean to ‘trim’ a lamp?

An oil lamp has a wick that carries the oil to the flame. Once the lamp goes out, soot and oily ash builds up at the tip of the wick. The wick must be trimmed, cleaned, to allow the “*oil*” to flow properly again. The “*virgins*” had all fallen to sleep and their lamps had gone out. Thus, they all trimmed their lamps.

As a lamp burns the oil, it burns without consuming the wick. It is somewhat analogous to Moses’ ‘*Burning Bush.*’ The wick is “*not consumed.*”

Exodus 3:2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the **bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.**

It is only when the lamp goes out that the wick must be trimmed. So what is the wick? This may be a stretch, but I take it to mean you and me, the ‘*believer.*’ Remember the Church is the body of believers. To trim the lamp, is to trim the wick.

The Lamp is the Word; we must have the undefiled “*Word.*” We, as the wick, must be made clean, pure, spotless and undefiled. We must be in right standing before the Lord. We must submit to God’s refining fire; we must allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify us in order that the Word and the Spirit burn brightly through us.

## Awakening

If the “*lamp*” is the “*word*” and the “*oil*” is the “*power,*” maybe the “*midnight cry*” is a call to bring the two back together in the *unity* of Spirit and Truth. For, it should not be *either/or*, but rather, *both/and*. We need the Spirit for Power and the Word for Truth.

The Spirit empowers the Word. Notice that the “*foolish virgins*” lacked “*oil;*” they had the Word without the Spirit. Does that not sound like our dead mainline churches? The “*wise virgins*” had the Lamp and the Oil, the Word and the Spirit.

The **Midnight Cry** is about the **church awakening** and preaching the gospel with unprecedented power – with signs and wonders again, like the early church. Like Peter in Acts:

Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all **boldness they may speak thy word,** 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that **signs and wonders** may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

Many are already waking up to realize that, if what we have now is all there is, we are in sad shape. We cannot stay in separate camps. We must come together.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in **spirit and in truth**.

What we need is an awakening to both *Power and Truth* – simultaneously. Truth without Power is dead; Power without Truth leads to erroneous extremes. Both the dead word-only church, the unrestrained charismatic movements are **Ishmael**. The true awakening “*in Spirit and in Truth*” will be **Isaac** – the “*child of promise*.”

“How many blessed truths have gotten snowed under. People believe them, but they are just not being taught, that is all.” – *AW Tozer*

What we desperately need is a renewed emphasis on both Word/Truth (lamp) and Spirit/Power (oil) – no longer to be separated by either/or. Then the “*midnight cry*” is likely an awakening with Power like has not been seen before as we enter the last days. Consider Joel’s promise:

Joel 2:28 And **it shall come to pass** afterward, that **I will pour out my spirit** upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids **in those days** will I pour out my spirit. ... 31 ... **before** the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come.

This occurs “*before*” the “*day of the Lord*,” before Christ’s Second Coming. “*In those days*” refers to the last days leading up to Jesus’ return when God will “*pour out [His] spirit*.”

We need the **Supernatural Gifts of the Holy Spirit** brought back into our churches. We should burn the ‘*Gifts Assessment Instrument*’ now in virtually every dead church in America, and seek the real Spiritual Gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit.

“The time is ... for a rethinking ... **spiritual gifts** within the church of Christ. The subject has fallen into the hands of people for the most part *extreme and irresponsible* and has become associated with *fanaticism* in its various forms. ... Prejudices ... make the consideration of this subject extremely difficult, but its **neglect is costing us more than we should be willing to pay**. A revival of true New Testament Christianity must surely bring with it a manifestation of spiritual gifts.” – *AW Tozer*



## Ditches

**The old traditions and doctrines of man have blinded the masses from seeing scripture the way God intended.** Both camps have “*thrown the baby out with the bathwater,*” as it were. One camp is denying the Power and holds to a lifeless form of religion; the other camp is so desperate for Power they ignore God’s Word only to wind up in crazy extremes and false doctrine.

“[Satan] has taken some fanatical, weird, wild-eyed Christians who do things that they shouldn't, and he has stationed them in the middle of God's cornfield, and warns, ‘**Now, don't you go near that doctrine about the Holy Spirit** because if you do, you will act just like these wild-eyed fanatics.’” – *AW Tozer*

They are both in **ditches**, albeit opposite ditches, and as always, the truth lies between the warring extremes. (See: *Ditches*) We will never experience God’s power in Truth until both camp climbs out of their respective ditches and seek the Word and the Spirit.

“**Biblical illiteracy is a major issue** in the church (in both camps). But it came from all directions. ... On the other side, in the charismatic movement, came people that had **out-of-Bible experiences** ... And since the Bible was not being taught, it **opened the door for these prophets that are false** to rise up and fill what was a condition of malnutrition in the body of Christ.” – *Mario Murillo*

They must move between the warring extremes to the centerline of Truth. We need to gather together in unity on the road of Truth running between the ditches.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came *not unto you in word only, but also in power*, and in the *Holy Ghost*, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

It is high-time that we came together to seek both the Truth and the Power together. It is but another **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power. According to Joel, there is coming a day, before Christ returns, when this will happen, when ‘*He will pour out His spirit on all flesh.*’

Sadly, I strongly suspect that those who are not in right standing before God and walking in the Spirit, who are standing pridefully in their respective ditches, will miss it. I suspect those who have yet learned to hear God for themselves, will miss it as well.

“The next thing to happen on God's calendar is not the Second Coming but rather **the awakening of the church** before the Second Coming. Matthew 25:6 says, "At **midnight** ['middle of night' - *meses de nuktos*] there was a cry. ... "**cry**" and the actual coming of the bridegroom (see verses 7-10). The awakening of the **ten virgins** - who I take to **represent**

**the church** in the very last days — precedes the coming of the bridegroom. ... The scary thing about sleep is that you don't know you were asleep until you awake up. ... The midnight cry is coming!" – *RT Kendall*

## Last Trump

The “*Last Trump*” in Scripture is used to announce “*the Day of the Lord*,” Christ’s Second Coming. It is a “*great*” “*trumpet*” sounded announcing Christ’s return and the gathering of His elect.

1 Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trump**: for the **trumpet shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Matthew 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

However, it seems that this ‘*midnight cry*’ is not being equated to the “*Last Trump*.” Thus, it is not announcing Christ’s immediate coming. Rather, it seems to be a wakeup call to the slumbering church (“*slumbered and slept*”) that His coming is growing near. It is a prophetic call to return to the full gospel.

Kendall believes, “it will be the greatest awakening since Pentecost. When revival comes, three things will happen: nominal Christians become truly converted, sleepy Christians are awakened, and those in the World will be saved.” It is a cry of the Holy Spirit Himself to awaken the slumbering Church to the Word and Spirit.

We have all heard the phrase “*at the stroke of midnight*,” meaning at the last moment before something happens. We may very well be in, or approaching, the last moment. It is a call for an awakening to embrace both *the Word and the Spirit – the Truth and the Power* – before Jesus comes back. The “*virgins*” are awoken at “*midnight*,” meaning the hour was late; or rather, there is little time left.

Mark 13:35 Watch ye therefore: for **ye know not when the master of the house cometh**, *at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning*:

Job 34:20 In a moment shall they die, and **the people shall be troubled at midnight**, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

## Wigglesworth Prophecy

The 1947 Smith Wigglesworth Prophecy, if true, may rank among the most important end-time prophecies that the Church has received. It parallels this concept. First, there would be a renewal and restoration of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit along with the Gifts of the Spirit. Many will leave the traditional dead lifeless churches looking for more of what God promised.

Meanwhile, man-centered churches and church movements will wane. Then, there will come about a renewed emphasis on both Word/Truth and Power/Spirit together.

“During the next few decades there will be two distinct moves of the Holy Spirit across the church in Great Britain. The first move will affect every church that is open to receive it and will be characterized by a restoration of the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The **second move of the Holy Spirit will result in people leaving historic churches and planting new churches**. In the duration of each of these moves, the people who are involved will say 'This is the great revival'. But the Lord says 'No, neither is this the great revival but both are steps towards it.’

When the new church phase is on the wane, there will be evidenced in the churches something that has not been seen before: **a coming together of those with an emphasis on the Word and those with an emphasis on the Spirit**. When the Word and the Spirit come together, there will be the biggest movement of the Holy Spirit that the nation, and indeed the world, has ever seen. It will mark the beginning of a revival that will eclipse anything that has been witnessed within these shores, even the Wesleyan and the Welsh revivals of former years. The **outpouring of God's Spirit** will flow over from the UK to the mainland of Europe, and from there will begin a missionary move to the ends of the earth.”

<http://www.jonasclark.com/revival-history/smith-wigglesworths-rare-1947-prophecy.html>

This seems to be already underway. Sadly, our present method of handling the scripture is effectively blocking the progress of the Spirit-filled Believers, and blocking the re-establishment of the true and complete "*Gospel of the Kingdom*."

"*You will receive power*' (Acts 1:8a). '*Eagerly desire the greater gifts*' (1 Corinthians 12:31a). Anything that God has ever done for a soul He will do for anyone else, if the conditions are met. ... **Faith says**: Anything He did anywhere else He will do here; **anything He did any other time He is willing to do now**; anything He ever did for other people He is willing to do for us! ... We walk out in this fullness of the Spirit, if we will **yield and obey**." – AW Tozer

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I would suggest that, now is the time to **put the Oil back in the Lamp**.

We cannot light the Lamp without the Oil. Without the Oil, the Lamp provides no light. There is no Power apart from the Holy Spirit. The Truth becomes just words, just doctrine and theology, without Power. It is merely religion.

Now is the **time to seek God in Spirit and Truth**. Now is the time to bring the Word and the Spirit back together to finish our mission in Power and Truth before Jesus returns. The mainline Word denominations have something to learn from our charismatic brethren; likewise, our charismatic churches could learn from the Word churches.

“We are going to have to restudy this whole teaching of the **place of the Holy Spirit in the Church**, so the Body can operate again. If the life goes out of a man's body, he is said to be a corpse. ... So it is in the Church of Christ. It is literally true that **some churches are dead. The Holy Spirit has gone out of them** and all you have left are ‘he remains.’ You have the potential of the church but you do not have the church. ... When the Holy Spirit is not present in the Church, you have to get along after the methods of business or politics or psychology or human effort.” – *AW Tozer*

We must have “*trimmed [our] lamps*” to be ready for the “*Oil*.” In other words, we must again rightly divide God’s Word so as to allow the Oil of the Spirit to bring it to life – to light the Lamp of Truth. Our wicks must be made pure, clean, sanctified to allow the Oil of the Spirit to flow through us as He pleases.

The hour is late. Midnight is coming. The cry will be made. We must wakeup and come together before it is too late; before the time has passed. The “*wise*” will hear and obey; the “*foolish*” will continue as they have. Maranatha!

**Note:** I do not want to get carried away with the metaphors in this parable. RT Kendall says “*a parable does not stand on all four legs*.” Meaning that you can carry metaphors in a parable only so far without making it mean something other than what it was intended to mean.

I pray that I haven’t carried the metaphors too far. However, I am confident that there is a deeper meaning in this parable than has typically been conveyed.

Likewise, even if this Matthew 25 parable is not referring to the bringing of the Word and Spirit back together in our churches, the message holds true. We need to bring the Word and Spirit, the Truth and Power, back together to experience all that God intended for the Church to be.

## Plagued with False Doctrine

*Leading the Way, et. al.*



For the last 2,000 years, the church has been plagued with heresy after heresy seeking to tame the gospel, and today is no different.

**“Progressive christianity** started as a hip movement that reinterpreted scriptures with **comfortable compromises and consequence-free sin**. From the beginning, it was imbued more with new age philosophies than supernatural power. In a word, they were desperately trying to be relevant. As if the Father who spoke all of creation into existence, reveals himself in Jesus, and now chooses to dwell within His Children by his Spirit isn't relevant enough. ... The result is a cacophony of **sloppy theology, ineffective activism**, and the living of authentic selves that look nothing like Jesus.” - *Keith Guinta, Wine Patch*

“Identitarian collectivism always works to negate the individual. God doesn't love movements or ideologies. He loves you. ... **Without unity, the church is powerless.**” - *Keith Guinta, Wine Patch*

Here are just a few of the popular beliefs in our current culture that threaten to infiltrate the church:

1. **Universalism:** the belief that all people will be saved or that all ways lead to God and eternal life. Many who subscribe to this theology claim that, for instance, Christians and Muslim worship the same God.
2. **The Prosperity Gospel:** the belief that God's primary concern is for believers to be healthy and wealthy. If Christians are sick, suffering or poor, it is because of sin or a lack of faith.
3. **The New Age Movement:** a belief system of Eastern influence that emphasizes universal tolerance and doing what feels good (moral relativism). It contends that man is divine and can create his own reality and identity.
4. **Legalism:** the improper use of the law described in Scripture to try to attain or maintain salvation. Legalism also fosters judgment of fellow Christians for not adhering to one's own ideas of holiness rather than encouraging them to imitate Christ, obeying God's standards as explicitly outlined in Scripture.
5. **Hyper-grace:** the overreaction to legalism, resulting in abuse of God's grace. Believers find themselves drawn to the modern hyper-grace

movement because they are looking for freedom not just from legalism, but also from God's standards.

6. **The Emerging Church:** a movement that claims to be Christian but employs culturally sensitive methods to make the gospel more palatable to a postmodern culture. Jesus' life is treated more as an **allegory** or narrative rather than a true event. Of particular concern is the **inclusive** approach to various belief systems, an **emphasis on emotions** over absolute truth and the notion that there is **no hell**, judgment or need for forgiveness. The Emerging Church movement also glorifies honesty and confession, but **without repentance**.

Behind all these false ideologies is the belief that Scripture is not infallible and truth simply changes with the times. ... How do we respond?

1. To the **universalists:** No one will be saved apart from Jesus Christ. Only those who choose to repent and call on the name of Jesus will have eternal life (see Acts 4:12, Matt. 25:46, Heb. 9:27, John 14:6).
2. To heralds of the **prosperity gospel:** Jesus promised us that we will suffer, but that He is with us and has overcome the world (see John 16:33, Rom. 5:3-5, 2 Tim. 3:12, Luke 14:27).
3. To the **new agers:** There is only one sovereign God, Creator of all things (see Is. 55:8-9, Job 12:10, Heb. 2:5-10).
4. To **legalists:** If righteousness were attainable through the law, Christ would not have had to die (see Matt. 7:22-23; Gal.2:21; Rom. 3:10-12, 28; James 2:10). We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ's singular work on the cross, and even this faith is a gift from God not achieved by our own efforts (see Rom. 4:5, Eph. 2:8). And we are not to judge our brothers and sisters in Christ on debatable issues (see Rom. 14:1-12).
5. To proponents of **hyper-grace:** God's grace has freed us from the bondage of sin, but we should not receive His sacrifice in vain (see Rom. 6:23, Heb. 10:26-29). We must repent and seek to live under the lordship of Christ, seeking holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Pet. 1:13-16, 2:11-12, 16; Rom. 5:20-6:18).
6. To the **emerging church:** If we dilute the gospel, then we no longer have Good News to share (see Gal. 1:8-9, 1 Cor. 15:1-4, Ex. 20:3-6, John 8:24). Only Christ can break the chains of sin, set the captives free and conform us to His image (see 1 John 5:3-5, Phil. 3:7-9, Gal. 5:16).

## Self-Purpose – Planning

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We all seem to inherently desire purpose and meaning in life. As Christians, we yearn for purpose and relevance for God. We seem to all want to have a meaningful role in God's kingdom. We look up to those who appear to have meaningful ministries with a touch of envy. We wonder why God uses them so significantly and ourselves with such apparent insignificance. We occasionally feel unimportant; like unwanted step-children in God's family.

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish ...

While so many of us Christians are trying to find God's purpose, meaning, and relevance, we are far too often looking the wrong direction. In our desperation, it is no surprise that we would turn to human self-help methods and fleshly planning techniques. In the delays, we come to believe that God may be waiting on us to take matters into our own hands, while we are waiting frustratingly on Him to open the door. Remember Ishmael!

In our eagerness, sadly, the methods we turn to are rooted in humanism. Through well-meaning businessmen, the devil has brought wonderful-sounding business techniques right into our churches, sprinkled a little scripture on it, and declared it God's way.

Thus, Churches and individual Christians create their little vision, mission, and purpose statements, and devise plans to achieve great things for God. Unfortunately, these efforts wind up being *good things that are not God's things*. Purpose in God is not found in devising grandiose plans for Him; rather, it is dying to self as we learn to walk with Him in obedience, as He leads. The "*vision*" we desire must come from God.

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me ye can do nothing.**

No doubt, it often seems is easier to plan and execute than it is to follow and obey God. However, the only way to be great in God's realm is to learn to yield to the Holy Spirit's leading as we obey Him. We must crucify our fleshly craving for personal relevance and the esteem of men.

“Jesus Christ is always unyielding to my claim to my right to myself. The **one essential element** in all our Lord’s teaching **about discipleship is abandon, no calculation, no trace of self-interest.**” – *Oswald Chambers*

Waiting on God can be hard. As a result, too many refuse obedience to God and following His ways and timing, as we would rather chart our own course. We find it easier to devise our own plans than to crucify self and merely obey. It is the *Tower of Babel* which the devil attempts to construct within each of us. We want to rise up and be great for God in the way that we chose.

I find that most who engage in this practice are straddling with the things of the world, while wondering why they lack purpose and power in God’s kingdom. We fail to realize that we cannot have both.

“The **reason why many are still troubled**, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they **haven’t yet come to the end of themselves**. We’re still trying to give orders, and interfering with God’s work within us.” - *AW Tozer*

Many are going along in business with detestable practices and refuse to stand against such for the sake of their careers. We too often remain silent when we should take a stand. As such, we fear man more than God. Ultimately, we find that worldly-compromising success does not satisfy. Then, we begin to appease our guilty consciousness by attempting to prove our acceptance by God as we determine to accomplish great things for Him – even in our own feeble efforts.

“Thou professest to be a follower of Jesus--dost thou truly love him? Is thy heart right with God? Art thou of the family of old Father Honest, or art thou a relative of Mr. By-ends? A name to live is of little value if I be indeed dead in trespasses and sins. **To have one foot on the land of truth, and another on the sea of falsehood, will involve a terrible fall and a total ruin.** Christ will be all or nothing. ... If He reigns in my heart, there will be no space for another reigning power.” – *Charles Spurgeon*

The problem is we refuse to obey God in life and business, and therefore find Him absent in our kingdom lives. We refuse His gentle direction. Self has been placed on the throne. We will plan our own way, execute our plans, and tell folks that God did thus and such. To placate our conscious we give attribution to God for that which He had no part in. In essence, we are saying, ‘look how important I am to God.’

“The one **consistency of the saint is** not to a principle, but **to the Divine life**. It is the Divine life which continually makes more and more discoveries about the Divine mind. **It is easier to be a fanatic than a faithful soul**, because there is something amazingly humbling, particularly to our religious conceit, in being loyal to God.” – *Oswald Chambers*



We desire both the world and God. Yet, He will have no competition. It must be God and nothing else. The rub comes when we decide to become equally successful in both realms. Thus, we determine to make a name for ourselves in God's kingdom through our own efforts. God will not have it.

Directed to those who had done big things for God, the most frightening passage in all of scripture is:

Luke 13:27 But he shall say, I tell you, **I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.**

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**

Wow! "*I never knew you: depart from me.*" Oh, but great vision statement, wonderful mission statement, and a stellar plan, by the way. Jesus spoke those words to scare the hell out of us; or, more to the point, to scare us out of hell.

If we desire to commit to a plan for God, the only plan that will be spiritually fruitful is to commit to His plan – to obey and follow His leading. We must know God. We must seek to "*doeth the will of [the] Father.*" Do not allow the devil to deceive you into making your own plans for God.

Thus, the misconstrued '*purpose driven life,*' is pointless if it is not God's purpose for our life. All of our best plans and purpose statements are rubbish. If we truly love God, we will obey His commands as we follow His lead.

Philippians 3:8 Yea doubtless, and **I count all things but loss** for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Many of today's Christian leaders, who have embraced self-help and business planning techniques, would likely consider the fathers of our faith to have been abject failures. They would likely suggest that they could have accomplished so much more if only they had developed a written vision statement and plan. Yet, empirically speaking, it was the exact opposite.

Consider, for example, did Abraham, David, or Paul develop a vision and mission statement, and a plan? No, they followed God's direction – day by day, moment by moment. Childless Abraham did not set out to be the father of the Jewish nation.

Shepherd David never planned to be king of Israel. Pharisee Paul's' vision was to destroy the Church, not to found it.

It was ultimately dedication to God's plan for their life, a plan diametrically opposed to their own expectations, which made them great in God's realm as they gave up their life and plans for God's.

This is, without a doubt, more **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power. I suggest we lay aside our best plans, seek God, and follow His leading. We desperately need to invite the Holy Spirit back into our churches. The Holy Spirit has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. We innately, as Christians, desire to have purpose, meaning, and relevance in God's economy. I doubt there is anything wrong with this aspiration.

However, if in our desire to find His purpose, we go about it in fleshly, worldly methods, we will remain forever frustrated; we will remain spiritually empty. We must learn to obey God and Him alone, as we crucify our flesh. For, though our God-given purpose may appear insignificant in the world's eyes, only He knows where and how best we might serve Him. We must lay aside self-purpose and follow Jesus'-purpose, just as Jesus followed His Father's-purpose.

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**Note:** Please know I am not opposed to planning. I consulted for 20 years at the corporate senior executive and boardroom level. In fact, I started and ran the Information Technology & Business Strategy & Planning practice for Coopers & Lybrand for a decade. In 1993, IBM recruited me to create a similar practice for their emerging consultative services. After running the practice for three years, I was asked to take over the International Service Line for Information Technology Planning. As a result, I am quite familiar with most prevalent planning methods and techniques. Over the years I have been asked by numerous churches to lead them in church planning. I declined each offer believing that it was the role of the Holy Spirit, not me, to plan the direction of a church. The church's leadership must learn to hear the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, they are merely playing church. Sadly, I find that few are able to hear the Holy Spirit and most are practicing a "*form of religion*," at best.

"I remind you that there are churches so completely out of the hands of God that if the Holy Spirit withdrew from them, they wouldn't find it out for many months" - A. W. Tozer

Oh, to be sure, if a church had a God-given mission that would benefit from proper execution planning and the leverage of Information Technology, I would gladly assist. But, the church, and the activities therein, must be led by the Holy Spirit to be in God's perfect will.

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## More Planning

To **obey** is better than to plan. So many businessmen within the church want to turn God's word into a self-help, business and life planning manual. Many make it a faux '*ministry*.' It usually involves much scripture twisting. Proverbs 16 is a common source for scripture that they contend speaks to planning.

Proverbs 16:1 The **preparations of the heart** in man, and the answer of the tongue, is *from the Lord*. 2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but *the Lord weigheth* the spirits. 3 **Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.** ... 5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. 6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. 7 **When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh** even his enemies to be at peace with him. ... 9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but **the Lord directeth his steps.**

The "*preparations of the heart,*" I believe address sanctification and obedience, not planning our life or business. It is "*from the Lord.*" He is our "*refiner's fire.*" (See: *Sanctification*) It is His doings. He "*weighteth the spirits*" – the intents of our heart. However, we must yield to Him; we must **obey**.

In fact, much of Proverbs chapters 15 and 16 speak to the *heart*, getting our heart right before God. We know our heart is right only when we obey God. We have a part to play in the process. We are to "*renew our mind*" in God's word; we are to **obey** God's word. We must be disciplined to do His will.

"God will not discipline [make us disciplined] us, we must discipline ourselves. God will not bring every thought and imagination into captivity; we have to do it." - *Oswald Chambers*

When we "*commit our works (ways) to the Lord,*" He will "*establish*" our "*thoughts.*" He will '*prepare our heart,*' and '*direct our steps.*' To commit is to **obey**, to follow, to yield, to "*please the Lord,*" and to order our life after His will.

"By the discipline of obedience I get to the place where Abraham was and I see Who God is." – *Oswald Chambers*

"The promises of God are of no value to us until, through obedience, we come to understand the nature of god. ... When by the obedience of our lives we say "Amen" to a promise, then that promise is ours." – *Oswald Chambers*

When we **obey** God, we can expect the Lord to *direct our steps*. When we obey, we please the Lord. Jesus said, "*If you love Me, you will obey My commandments.*" When our heart is right with God, we can expect God to direct our steps.

It is God's doings; not ours. Yes, we must obey and yield, but God does the work – the change in our heart. We cannot plan our way into God's will. We must yield, we must follow His lead, and we must obey Him. There is no self-help in God's economy. He is the "*potter*" we are the "*clay*." The clay does not plan its use, its purpose, and it does tell the potter what it will do or be.

## Relevant Quotations

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**Church** - If you could increase the attendance of your church until there is no more room, if you could provide everything they have in churches that men want and love and value, and yet you didn't have the Holy Spirit, you might as well have nothing at all. For it is "*Not by might nor by power, but **by my Spirit,**' says the Lord Almighty*" (Zechariah 4:6). – *AW Tozer*

**Church - Power – OT** - "The stronghold of deception is pride. ... **Pride often creeps in** because of the power and blessing of God. Individuals and churches get an **inflated sense of their own importance** as a result of God's blessing on their lives." - *Eddie Hyatt*

**Church** - Christianity today is **man-centered**, not God-centered. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - It is easy for the minister to be turned into a **privileged idler, a social parasite** with an open palm and an expectant look. He has no boss within sight; he is not often required to keep regular hours, so he can work out a comfortable pattern of life that permits him to loaf, putter, play, doze and run about at his pleasure. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - "If the Holy Ghost came to some churches, there would be a stampede to the door." - *Leonard Ravenhill*

**Church** - In the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is necessary. There He works powerfully, creatively; here He is little more than a poetic yearning or at most a benign influence. There He moves in majesty, with all the attributes of the Godhead; here He is a mood, a tender feeling of good will. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The only power God recognizes in His church is the power of His Spirit whereas the only power actually recognized today by the majority of evangelicals is the power of man. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - In our churches today we are leaning too heavily upon human talents and educated abilities ... we're **drowning in human helps**, modern methods, business principles, and growth strategies. – *AW Tozer*

**Power – Purpose – Church** - The word "*power*" means the ability to do. ... It means the dynamic ability to be able to do what you are given to do. You will receive ability to do. It will come on you. – *AW Tozer*

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

**Power – Purpose – Church** - All true strength comes from "*the mighty God of Jacob.*" – *Charles Spurgeon*

**Church** - Much church activity is thrown back upon a **shaky foundation of psychology and natural talents.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The man who will not lead his flock up the mountainside leads it down without knowing it. – *AW Tozer*

**Truth – Church** - I can only say that I have observed one significant lack among evangelical Christians ... The great deficiency to which I refer is the lack of **spiritual discernment**, especially among our leaders. How there can be so much Bible knowledge and so little insight ... We desperately need seers who can see through the mist. - *AW Tozer*

**Church** - If we are **in God's order the thing will go**; if we are not in His order, it won't. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - You cannot deny that the life and vitality of the Christian church lie in the spiritual leadership of men anointed of the Holy Ghost. I dare to tell you that there is danger in **too much democracy** in the life of the church. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Much we are doing in the name of the Christian church that is wood, hay and stubble **destined to be burned up** in God's refining fire. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Jesus rarely comes where we expect Him ... If we are going to be ready for Jesus Christ, we have to stop being **religious** (that is, **using religion as a higher kind of culture**) and be spiritually real. ... Trust no one, not even the finest saint who ever walked this earth, ignore him, if he hinders your sight of Jesus Christ. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - No man has any right to speak to men about God who has not **first spoken to God about men.** And the prophet of God should spend **more time in the secret place praying** than he spends in the public place preaching. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - We are suffering from a **rash of amateurism** in Christian circles. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The Church would be better off if we would **call a moratorium on activity** for about six weeks and just wait on God to see what He is waiting to do for us. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Watch that we do not slide imperceptibly to a state where the women do the praying and the men run the churches. Men who do not pray have no right to direct church affairs. – *AW Tozer*

**Creation** – If you ask who created God, you believe in a created God. If you believe the universe created you, who created your creator?

**Church** - There is **more talk than walk**, more shout than clout and more symbolism than substance. - *Dr. Eddie Hyatt*

**Church** - I do not want them to leave my services feeling good. The last thing I want to do is to give them some kind of religious tranquilizer—and let them go to hell in their relaxation. The Christian church was designed to **make sinners sweat**. The messages preached in our churches should make backslidden Christians sweat. And if I achieve that objective when I preach, I thank God with all of my heart, no matter what people think of me. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Because we have preached an **anthropocentric** (man-centered) gospel, our churches are filled with **self-centered, immature Christians**. - *Dr. Eddie Hyatt*

**Church - Truth** - In many churches Christianity has been watered down until the solution is so weak that if it were poison it would not hurt anyone, and if it were medicine it would not cure anyone! – *AW Tozer*

**Church – End Time** - The falling away will be characterized, not by a rejection of Jesus, but by a **distortion of Jesus**. He would be portrayed as a means to self-fulfillment rather than as the end and goal of life. - *Dr. Eddie Hyatt*

**Church** - “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.” - *H. Richard Niebuhr, 1930s*

**Church** - The Christian Church should not be a secret society of specialists, but a **public manifestation of believers** in Jesus. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - The Church is **pursuing happiness not holiness**.

**Church - Truth** - There are Christians who grow up and have no relish for anything spiritually advanced. They're preoccupied with their first lessons. The **average church is a school with only one grade** and that is the first one. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - "Perhaps not one in a hundred of those who use the term Methodist have any ideas of what it means." ... "If you walk by this rule, continually endeavouring to know, and love, and resemble, and obey the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the God of love, of pardoning mercy; if from this principle of loving, obedient faith, you carefully abstain from all evil, and labour, as you have opportunity, to do good to all men, friends and enemies; if, lastly, you unite together to encourage and help each other in thus working out your salvation, and for that end watch over one another in love—you are they whom I mean by Methodists." - *John Wesley*

**Church** - "The accent in the Church today is not on **devotion**, but on **commotion**." - *Leonard Ravenhill*

**Church** - The still small voice can be heard no more. **The whole religious machine has become a noisemaker.** ... Such religious conduct ... stems from the current cult of commotion and possesses no sound inner life. – *AW Tozer*

**Truth – Church** - Art is organized beauty; music is organized sound; philosophy is organized thought; science is organized knowledge; government is merely society organized. And what is the **true church** of Christ but **organized mystery**? – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The important thing in church organization is to discover the scriptural balance between **two extremes and avoid both**. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The true church has almost always suffered more from prosperity than from poverty. Her times of greatest spiritual power have usually coincided with her periods of indigence and rejection; with wealth came weakness and backsliding. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The average church has so established itself organizationally and financially that God is simply not necessary to it. So entrenched is its authority and so stable are the **religious habits** of its members that God could withdraw Himself completely from it and it could run on for years on its own momentum. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The Church ceases to be a spiritual society when it is on the look-out for the development of its own organisation. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - To court a Christian for his financial contributions is as evil a thing as to marry a man for his money. ... To flatter a man because he is a heavy giver is to offer him a concealed affront as well, for back of the purring and the smirking is the hidden opinion that the man's money is more important than the man and more to be esteemed. – *AW Tozer*



**Church** - <https://research.lifeway.com/2022/07/12/pastors-and-churches-face-historic-lack-of-trust/>

**Church** - Some churches train their greeters and ushers to smile, showing as many teeth as possible. But I can sense that kind of display, and when I am greeted by a person who is smiling because he or she has been trained to smile, I know I am **shaking the flipper of a trained seal**. When the warmth and joy of the Holy Spirit are in a congregation, however, and the folks are spontaneously joyful, the result is a wonderful influence upon others. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The real fasting of the preacher is not from food, but rather from eloquence, from impressiveness and exquisite diction, from everything that might hinder the gospel of God being presented. ... Anything that flatters me in my preaching of the Gospel will end in making me a traitor to Jesus. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - The question is this: **Shall we modify the truth** in doctrine or practice to gain more adherents? Or shall we preserve the truth in doctrine and practice and take the consequences?

2 Timothy 1:13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

**Church** - It is **easy for the minister to be turned into a privileged idler**, a social parasite with an open palm and an expectant look. He has no boss within sight; he is not often required to keep regular hours, so he can work out a comfortable pattern of life that permits him to loaf, putter, play, doze and run about at his pleasure. And many do just that. To avoid this danger the minister should **voluntarily impose upon himself a life of labor** as arduous as that of a farmer, a serious student or a scientist. No man has any right to a way of life less rugged than that of the workers who support him. No preacher has any right to die of old age if hard work will kill him. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Elijah was like so many faithful preachers of the Word who are too true and too uncompromising for their congregations. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - "There must be a waking up of energy, on the part of Christians, and an **outpouring of God's spirit**, or the world will laugh at the church." - *Charles Finney*

**Church** - The [first] Church was not an organization merely, **not a movement**, but a walking incarnation of spiritual energy. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Billy Sunday explained that churches were fine so far as they were "in the world, but **all wrong when the world is in them**," adding: "You can go to hell just

as fast from the church door as from the grog shop or bawdy house," And "**Going to church doesn't make you a Christian** any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile." – *Billy Sunday*

**Church** - You have no further to look for the answer to why evil is exalted than the paralysis that grips the American pulpit and the indifference of the church. Christians need to drop 'business as usual' and unify under the banner of decency. ... The most frustrating part of all this is the fact that we can so easily prevent impending disaster if we will just come together and unify. – *Mario Murillo*

**Church - Natural gifts are not enough** in God's work. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - "Over the last few decades, Americans have seen **the destruction of the institution of marriage between a man and a woman**, the removal of God's Word in several areas, and the blatant murdering of millions of babies. This is an indictment against America and the pulpit is partially responsible—our silence speaks volumes. The pulpit regulates the spiritual condition of God's people, which affects the nation. ... Sadly, **many pastors are exchanging truth for passivity**, boldness for cowardliness, and conviction for comfort." They aim "to be motivational speakers rather than preachers of righteousness." - *Shane Idleman, Pastor Westside Christian Fellowship in Southern California*

**Church** - The man (pastor) who will not lead his flock up the mountainside leads it down without knowing it – *AW Tozer*

**Purpose – Sanctification – Higher Calling – Church** - Cattle are driven; sheep are led; and our Lord compares His people to sheep, not to cattle. ... [A pastor] **can lead others only as far as he himself has gone** ... The minister must experience what he would teach or he will find himself in the impossible position of trying to drive sheep. For this reason he should seek to **cultivate his own heart before he attempts to preach to the hearts of others**. ... We cannot take our people beyond where we ourselves have been – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - You cannot deny that the life and vitality of the Christian church lie in the spiritual leadership of men anointed of the Holy Ghost. I dare to tell you that there is **danger in too much democracy** in the life of the church. – *AW Tozer*

**America – Church** - Instead of Christian leaders who dare, we have a pandemic of self-pity and timidity. American preachers used to be reformers and agents of change. ... They will take no stand that might cost them tithing members, bookings or product sales. **Never has a nation had so many ministers who are doing so much that does not matter**, for so few. – *Mario Murillo*

**America – Church - Satan laughs at our idea of success.** He does not respect sermons that merely entertain a tame audience. ... Every vessel of God is, right now, standing at a fork in the road. On the right is the path of greatness. On the left is a wide and convenient path. ... The **secret to greatness is pain.** ... When the pain of being average becomes more intense than your fear of greatness, you will go to your next level - greatness. – *Mario Murillo*

**America – Church** - There is a move to reshape America. Whether by man or the devil, it is to reshape America without God. Everybody has a god, so who will replace the God who has been so prominent in the foundation and development of America. The new god is designed to be the state. To achieve this God has to be marginalized. – *Nelson Price*

**America – Church** - The Church at this moment needs men, the right kind of men, bold men. ... We languish for men who feel themselves expendable in the warfare of the soul, **who cannot be frightened by threats of death because they have already died to the allurements of this world.** Such men will be free from the compulsions that control weaker men. They will not be forced to do things by the squeeze of circumstances; their only compulsion will come from within—or from above. This kind of freedom is necessary if we are to have prophets in our pulpits again instead of mascots. – *AW Tozer*

**Church - Truth – Sanctification** - It takes great spiritual discipline to 'spend more time in the secret place praying than we spend in the public place preaching.' – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Let us watch that we do not slide imperceptibly to a state where the women do the praying and the men run the churches. **Men who do not pray have no right to direct church affairs.** We believe in the leadership of men within the spiritual community of the saints, but that leadership should be won by spiritual worth. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - No sooner is the pandemic fading, than churches are falling into a terrible habit: punishing those who are on fire for God and **catering to the lukewarm!** – *Mario Murillo*

**OT – Church** - Many people are dying a **slow spiritual death** because their hope lies in the **traditions of the church** only, and not in JESUS! – *Charles Sims*

**Church – America** - To keep America from being destroyed—**God is willing to uproot churches built by human marketing.** He is willing to rain down judgment on **ministries that have perverted His purposes for the church;** those who have **led the sheep of God into false doctrine and false goals.** He is willing to drag their secrets sins out into public shame. He could strike them down even while they are standing in the pulpit—if the only alternative is the death of America. The day can

come where it is said that flashy, fleshly preachers were repeatedly warned—but now it is too late. Moreover, believers must understand that **God is willing to go on without us**. He may totally disqualify a generation of American believers if they threaten the survival of America. Look at 1 Corinthians 10 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.” – *Mario Murillo*

**Truth – Teaching – Purpose – Sanctification – Spiritual Growth – Church** - Too many [pastors and teachers] seem **satisfied to teach the fundamentals of the faith year after year**, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry **no manifest Presence**, nor anything unusual in their personal lives. They minister constantly to believers who feel within their breasts a longing which their teaching simply does not satisfy. ... There are more and more churches where people are **starving at the Father's table**. – *AW Tozer*

**Truth – Teaching – Purpose – Sanctification – Spiritual Growth – Church** - A naturally bright person can carry on religious activity without a special gift from God. Filling church pulpits every week are some who are using only natural abilities and special training. Some are known as Bible expositors, for it is possible to read and study commentaries and then repeat what has been learned about the Scriptures. Yes, it may shock you, but it is true that anyone able to talk fluently can learn to use religious phrases and can become recognized as a preacher. But if any person is determined to **preach so that his work and ministry will abide in the day of the judgment fire**, then he must preach, teach and exhort with the kind of love and concern that comes only through a genuine **gift of the Holy Spirit**—something beyond his own capabilities. – *AW Tozer*

**Truth – Teaching – Purpose – Sanctification – Spiritual Growth – Church** - If we could have the Apostle Paul on tape recordings and let him stand here and preach, he could do no more for you than the Holy Ghost can do, with The Book and the human conscience. ... Oh, brethren, I would not detract from God's great men, but I can safely say that that's not what the church needs. – *AW Tozer*

**Truth – Teaching – Purpose – Sanctification – Spiritual Growth – Church** - The church **needs to listen to the inner voice** and do something about it! – *AW Tozer*

**Truth – Teaching – Purpose – Sanctification – Spiritual Growth – Church** - God's truth has never been popular. **Wherever Christianity becomes popular, it is not on its way to die--it has already died.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Popular Judaism slew the prophets and crucified Christ. Popular Christianity killed the Reformers, jailed the Quakers and drove John Wesley into the streets. **When it comes to religion, the crowds are always wrong.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - When the Roman masses, without change of heart, were made Christian by baptism, Christianity gained popularity and lost her spiritual glow. From there she went on to adopt the ways of Rome and to follow her pagan religions. **The fish caught the fisherman**, and what started out to be the conversion of Rome became finally the conversion of the church. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - A church can wither as surely under the ministry of soulless Bible exposition as it can where no Bible is given at all. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - When a man of God stands to speak, he ought to have the **authority** of God on him so that he makes the people responsible to listen to him. ... In place of that needed authority, we have tabby cats with **their claws carefully trimmed in the seminary**, so they can paw over the congregations and never scratch them at all. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The last thing I want to do is to give ... some kind of religious tranquilizer—and let them go to hell in their relaxation. The Christian church was designed to make sinners sweat. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - In many churches Christianity has been watered down until the solution is so weak that if it were poison it would not hurt anyone, and if it were medicine it would not cure anyone! – *AW Tozer*

**America – Church** - The Christian Church should not be a secret society of specialists, but a public manifestation of believers in Jesus. – *Oswald Chambers*

**America – Church** - The post-Christian times in which we live are very much like the early Christian era in the Book of Acts. The dominant culture hated Christianity and tried to stamp it out. I believe we are **heading into a time of severe testing**. We are about to find out if we are willing to stand for God's truth, whatever the cost. – *Dr. Youssef*

2 Timothy 3:10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall

suffer persecution. 13 But **evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.**

**America – Church** - At the worst possible time, we have more **false teachers** and false teaching than ever. ... We also have some of the most gullible Christians ever. ... Satan has sent this herd of **wolves**, just at the right time, to devour and derail the Body of Christ from saving America. ... The chief threat to American Christianity is not men who identify as women, but wolves who identify as sheep. – *Mario Murillo*

**America – Church** - One false minister inside the church is worse than a thousand enemies outside the church. – *Mario Murillo*

**America – Church** - "One **false traitor** in the garrison may do more mischief than a thousand avowed enemies without. ... **Seducers** are more dangerous enemies to the church than persecutors." – *Matthew Henry*

Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**

Acts 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous **wolves enter in among you**, not sparing the flock. 30 Also **of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.** 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

**America – Church** - "I believe that one reason why the church of god at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church." - *Charles H. Spurgeon*

**Power – Purpose – America – Church** - It's not in our strength, but in our weakness that His strength becomes known. It's time for the Church of Jesus Christ to rise up again. – *Carter Conlin*

**America – Church** - We should not be 'woke,' but **awakened by the Holy Spirit** ... 'Woke' is to call evil good; many are now 'woke' by the devil

**Church** – We need, like in the First Century, **Deacons at the door** – spiritually mature believers on guard against false doctrine and wolves amongst the flock.

**America – Church** - Any person who says there is no absolute moral truth is basically rejecting the Bible. They may not realize they're saying that, but that is what they're actually saying. They think it's up to them to decide what is moral and what is immoral. – *Andrew Wommack*

**Church** - It seems to me that it has always been a frightful incongruity that **men who do not pray and do not worship** are nevertheless actually **running many of the churches** and ultimately determining the direction they will take. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - In our times the **program has been substituted for the Presence.** - *AW Tozer*

**Church** - If with the zeal of **Methodists** we can preach the doctrine of **Puritans** a great future is before us. - *Charles Spurgeon*

**Truth – Church** - The Church does not determine what the Bible teaches, it is the Bible that determines what the Church must teach. – *Charles Spurgeon*

**Church** - "The accent in the Church today, is not on devotion, but on **commotion.**" - *Leonard Ravenhill, English evangelist*

**Church** - The whole **religious machine has become a noisemaker.** The adolescent taste which loves the loud horn and the thundering exhaust has gotten into the activities of modern Christians. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The man who is **ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader.** ... the church is languishing not for leaders but for the right kind of leaders; for the wrong kind is worse than none at all. ... The sheep rarely go much farther than the Shepherd. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - They are trying to get people to come and **share their rut.** They want people to help them celebrate the rote and finally join in the rot. Because the Holy Spirit is not given a chance to work in our services, nobody is repenting, nobody is seeking God, nobody is spending a day in quiet waiting on God with open Bible seeking to mend his or her ways. Nobody is doing it— we just want more people. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The church's mightiest influence is felt when she is different from the world in which she lives. Her power lies in her being different, rises with the degree in which she differs and sinks as the difference diminishes. – *AW Tozer*

**America - Church** - Evangelical Christians ... say they serve the Lord, but they divide their days so as to leave plenty of time to play and loaf and enjoy the pleasures of the world as well. They are **at ease while the world burns.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - "There must be a waking up of energy, on the part of Christians, and an **outpouring of god's spirit, or the world will laugh at the church.**" - *Charles Grandison Finney*

**Church** - Much religious activity reeks with pride, display, self-assertion, self-promotion, love of gain and devotion to trivial pleasures. ... It is time for Bible-believing Christians to begin to cultivate the sober graces and to live among men like sons of

God and heirs of the ages ... whole world and a large part of the church is set to prevent it. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Indeed a revived church may be distinguished from a dead one by the attitude of its members toward the truth. The **dead church holds to the shell of truth without surrendering the will to it**, while the church that wills to do God's will is immediately blessed with a visitation of spiritual powers. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - When it comes to religion, the **crowds are always wrong**. At any time there are a few who see, and the rest are blinded. – *AW Tozer*

**Purpose – Church** - Christianity's scramble for popularity today is an unconscious acknowledgment of spiritual decline. ... Lot was a popular believer. He sat in the gates of Sodom. But **when trouble struck**, he had to send quick for Abraham to get him out of the jam. And **where did they find Abraham? Out on the hillside, far away from the fashionable crowds. It has always been so**. For every Elijah there have always been 400 popular prophets of Baal. **For every Noah there is always a vast multitude who will not believe it is going to rain**. – *AW Tozer*

Psalm 37:1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

**Purpose – Church** - "If you are too big for a little place, you are too little for a big place." ... When we try to get big, we always get smaller by the moment. God is jealous of His glory and will not allow anyone to share it with Him. The effort to appear great will bring the displeasure of God upon us and effectively prevent us from achieving the greatness after which we pant. – *Anonymous quote (AWT)*

**Church** - Nothing can save a church whose **root is dried up**. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The shallow brook of popular religion chatters on its nervous way and thinks the ocean too quiet and dull because it lies deep in its mighty bed and is unaffected by the latest shower. – *AW Tozer*

**OT – Church** - The great enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ in the present day is the conception of practical work that has not come from the New Testament, but from the Systems of the world in which endless energy and activities are insisted upon, but no private life with God. The emphasis is put on the wrong thing. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - "If the presence of Cod is in the church, the church will draw the world in. If the presence of Cod is not in the church, the world will draw the church out." - *Charles Finney*



**Church** - "I remind you that there are churches so completely out of the hands of God that if the Holy Spirit withdrew from them, they wouldn't find it out for many months" - *A. W. Tozer*

**Church** - Unsaintly saints are the tragedy of Christianity. - *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Elijah was like so many faithful preachers of the Word who are too true and too uncompromising for their congregations. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The treacherous enemy facing the church of Jesus Christ today is the **dictatorship of the routine**, when the routine becomes "lord" in the life of the church. ... When we come to the place where everything can be predicted and nobody expects anything unusual from God, we are in a rut. ... That would be perfectly all right and proper for a cemetery. Nobody expects a cemetery to do anything but conform. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The **old cross slew men**; the new cross entertains them. ... [It is] an appearance of wisdom to the hollow and meaningless cross of popular Christianity. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The cross speaks of **death and separation, never of compromise**. No one ever compromised with a cross. – *AW Tozer*

**Church - Truth – Sanctification** - Spiritual truth is discernible only to a pure heart, not to a keen intellect. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - We have actually seen a major shift in the beliefs and practices of the evangelical wing of the church so radical as to amount to **a complete sellout**; and all this behind the cloak of fervent orthodoxy. – *AW Tozer*

**Salvation – Church** - Some of us are Christians only because it is convenient and pleasant and because it is not costing us anything. ... Most of us do not want to get that serious about our faith—or our Savior. – *AW Tozer*

**Church - Power** - The greatest question that can be asked of the "twice born" ones is, "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*" This was the password into the early Church. – *Christmas Evans*

**Church** - Our most pressing obligation today is to do all in our power to obtain a revival that will result in a reformed, revitalized, purified church. It is of far greater importance that we have better Christians than that we have more of them. Each generation of Christians is the seed of the next, and degenerate seed is sure to produce a degenerate harvest. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** – There is “an urgent message that we become a New Testament church, that we become a model church, that we have the order of the New Testament and the power of the Holy Spirit in order that we might worship, work and witness.” – *AW Tozer*

**Church** – “God-hungry people are saying among themselves, ‘This is not it. There is something more. The bigness and the sensationalism of it all has left us empty and dry. We want more. More than entertainment. More than big, showy buildings. More than a shallow celebrity gospel. We want deeper values. We want to see Jesus. We want spotless robes of righteousness. We want to go back to doing things in total dependence on God.’” - *David Wilkerson*

**Church** - Revival comes when, no longer satisfied just to know about a God in history, we meet the conditions of finding Him in living, personal experience. ... Only a rare person now and then is curious enough to want to know God. – *AW Tozer*

**Church – Sanctification** - The Lord's people ought to be a sanctified, pure, clean people, but we are a carnal crowd. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** – We have so degraded our religious tastes that our Christian service is largely exhibitionism. We desperately need a divine visitation-for our situation will never be cured by sermons! It will never be cured until the Church of Christ has suddenly been confronted with what one man called the *mysterium tremendium*-the fearful mystery that is God, the fearful majesty that is God. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** – “I never saw anything result from **trying to import God**. He does not fly over in a jet. He says, ‘I am Jehovah; I am with you. I am where you are; I am here now. Call on me.’” – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - If we are to be effective in anything we do for the Lord, the Lord must be in the midst of it. **Unless the Lord's power is seen among us, we will be just another person who has religion.** – *Os Hillman*

**Church** - A shepherd who fails to look after his flock will find the wolves looking after it for him. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Cultivate the sober graces ... to live among men like sons of God and heirs of the ages. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - “Within the fold of conservative Christianity there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God Himself. They are eager for spiritual realities and will not be put off with words, nor will they be content with correct "interpretations" of truth. They are athirst for God, and they will not be satisfied till they have drunk deep at the Fountain of Living

Water. This is the only real harbinger of revival ... a recapture of that radiant wonder which should accompany faith in Christ, that wonder which has all but fled the Church of God in our day." – *AW Tozer*

**Church - Purpose** - There are good things we can do, but **only God-things we should do**. Those activities not born out of the Spirit will result in wood, hay, and stubble. What seems good in our eyes may be an abomination in God's eyes. ... When we begin to make decisions based on reason and analysis instead of **the leading and prompting of the Holy Spirit**, we get into trouble with God. – *Os Hillman*

**Church - Sanctification – Power** - God always works where His people meet His conditions, but only when and as they do. ... Every pastor should show his people the possibilities for power that lie in this fusion of many souls into one. – *AW Tozer*

**Church – Revival** - Historically, revivals have been mainly the achieving of a oneness of mind among a number of Christian believers. In the second chapter of Acts it is recorded that they were "all with one accord in one place" when the Spirit came upon them. ... **The Spirit ... comes to that company who have, through repentance and faith, brought their hearts into one accord.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - "I don't need a church to tell me I'm wrong when I know I'm wrong; I need a church to **tell me I'm wrong when I think I'm light.**" - *G.K. Chesterton*

**Church - Power** - The Holy Spirit comes because we are a united people; He does not come to make us a united people. ... **Unity is necessary** among the children of God if we are going **to know the flow of power.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church – Power** - When the apostles received the baptism with the Holy Ghost they did not rent the upper room and stay there to hold holiness meetings, but went everywhere preaching the gospel. - *Will Huff*

**Church** - "The church is a hospital for sinners, and not a museum for saints." - *Vance Havner, et.al.*

**Church** - "If they had a social gospel in the days of the prodigal son, somebody would have given him a bed and a sandwich and he never would have gone home." - *Vance Havner*

**Church – Sanctification** - "Plenty of church members are shaky about what they believe, while not many are shaken by what they believe." - *Vance Havner*

**Church** – "The parents of Jesus lost Him at church, and they were not the last ones to lose Him there." - *Vance Havner*

**Church – Sanctification** - “Most church members live so far below the standard, you would have to backslide to be in fellowship with them.” - *Vance Havner*

**Church** – “If there’s a mist in the pulpit, there’s a fog in the pew” - *Charles Swindoll*

**Church – Sanctification** - “Modern day preachers try to comfort the afflicted but never afflict the comfortable.” – *Jack Wellman*

**Church - Sanctification Power** - "The reason the world is not seeing Jesus is that Christian people are not filled with Jesus. They are **satisfied with attending meetings** weekly, reading the Bible occasionally, and praying sometimes. It is an awful thing for me to see people who profess to be Christians lifeless, **powerless**, and in a place **where their lives are so parallel to unbelievers' lives** that it is difficult to tell which place they are in, whether in the flesh or in the Spirit." - *Smith Wigglesworth*

**Church** - Would any believers seek state endowments for their Church, if they remembered that the Lord is dishonoured by their asking Caesar's aid? as if the Lord could not supply the needs of his own cause! – *Charles Spurgeon*

**Apostles – End-time Church** - This is a real danger facing many church and parachurch organizations of the end times, typified by the church at Laodicea. The Lord says to such churches, “I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:16-17).

**Church – Truth** - When it comes to religion, the crowds are always wrong. At any time there are a **few who see**, and the rest are blinded. To stand by the truth of God against the current religious vogue is always **unpopular** and may be downright dangerous. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** – Christianity's **scramble for popularity** today is an unconscious acknowledgment of spiritual decline. ... For every Elijah there have always been 400 popular prophets of Baal. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Pastors and churches in our hectic times are harassed by the **temptation to seek size** at any cost and to secure by inflation what they cannot gain by legitimate growth. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Much that passes for Christianity today is the brief bright **effort of the severed branch to bring forth its fruit** in its season. ... A tree can weather almost any storm if its root is sound. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** – [The Church] must not count numbers but **test foundations**. She must **work for permanence** rather than for appearance. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** – The shallow brook of popular religion chatters on its nervous way and thinks the ocean too quiet and dull because it lies deep in its mighty bed and is unaffected by the latest shower. – *AW Tozer*

**Church - Sanctification** - "Seek those enduring things that have been touched with immortality." - *AW Tozer*

**Hearing** - If the impression be from God, He will Himself give sufficient evidence to establish it beyond the possibility of a doubt. – *AB Simpson*

**Hearing** - "Where God's finger points, there God's hand will make the way." – *Streams, LB Cowman*

**Hearing** - So long as that way is hidden it is clear that there is no need of action, and that He accounts Himself responsible for all the results of keeping thee where thou art. – *Streams, Selected*

**Sanctification** - The great enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ ... in which endless energy and activities are insisted upon, but no **private life with God**. ... We have to get rid of the plague of the spirit of the religious age in which we live. ... The central thing about the kingdom of Jesus Christ is **a personal relationship to Himself**, not public usefulness to men. – *Oswald Chamber*

**Sanctification - Church** - Godliness is no longer valued, except for the very old or the very dead. The saintly souls are forgotten in the whirl of religious activity. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - This is the **age of the Laodiceans**. The great **goddess Numbers** is worshiped with fervent devotion and all things religious are brought before her for examination. Her Old Testament is the financial report and her New Testament is the membership roll. To these she appeals as arbiters of all questions, the test of spiritual growth and the proof of success or failure in every Christian endeavor. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - No matter the size of the assembly or its other *attributes*, our Lord wants it to be **known by His presence in the midst**. ... The secret of true spiritual worship is to discern and know the presence of the living Christ in our midst. – *AW Tozer*

**Relationship** - Until we know Jesus, God is a mere abstraction. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** – Being old does not make one wise. Many elders are not wise, but merely old.

**Church - Promoting self** under the guise of promoting Christ is currently so common as to excite little notice. – *AW Tozer*

**Church – Sin – Sanctification** - No sin is private. It may be secret but it is not private. ... The minister, the deacon, the teacher who yields to temptation in secret becomes a carrier of moral disease whether he knows it or not. **The church will be worse because one member sins.** The polluted stream flows out and on, growing wider and darker ... - *AW Tozer*

**Truth** - Some questions which are the reverse of foolish, which we must not avoid, but fairly and honestly meet, such as these: **Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?** Am I renewed in the spirit of my mind? Am I walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit? Am I growing in grace? Does my conversation adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour? Am I looking for the coming of the Lord, and watching as a servant should do who expects his master? What more can I do for Jesus? – *Charles Spurgeon*

**Salvation** - The great miracle of the grace of God is that He forgives sin, and it is the death of Jesus Christ alone that enables the Divine nature to forgive and to remain true to itself in doing so. It is shallow nonsense to say that God forgives us because He is love. ... **The only ground on which God can forgive me is through the Cross of my Lord.** – *Oswald Chambers*

**Salvation – Redemption – Sanctification** - Forgiveness means that I am forgiven into a **recreated relationship**, into identification with God in Christ. The miracle of Redemption is that God turns me, the unholy one, into **the standard of Himself**, the Holy One, by putting into me a new disposition, the disposition of Jesus Christ. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - "The Church changes the world not by making converts but by making disciples." – *John Wesley*

**Church** - The **feebleness** of the churches is being criticized today, and the criticism is justified. – *Oswald Chambers*

**End Time – Salvation** – "Ought I not to do what I can for the Lord Jesus while He tarries, and to **rouse a slumbering church?**" – *George Mueller*

**Church - End Time – Salvation** – O you **dead churches wake up!** ... Thine is the kingdom. - *Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage*

**Salvation** - Effectual grace calls forth many of the vilest of the vile to sit at **the table of mercy**, and therefore let none despair. – *Charles Spurgeon.*

**Church** – “As GK Chesterton once remarked, five times the church has ‘Gone to the dogs,’ but each time ‘It was the dog that died.’” - *Os Guinness*

**Revival** - God starts every revival but it's we the people who stop them.

**Church** - If you think church is boring, you're going to the wrong church. - *Keith Guinta*

**Church** - And [Satan's] pronouns are: Subtle / Sly / Shrewd - *Keith Guinta*

**Church** - The **true minister is one not by his own choice** but by the sovereign commission of God. ... The young man who rushes too eagerly into the pulpit at first glance seems to be unusually spiritual, but he may in fact only be revealing his lack of understanding of the sacred nature of the ministry. ... **I cannot offhand recall one single instance of a prophet's having applied for the job.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The history of Israel and Judah points up a truth taught clearly enough by all history, viz., that **the masses are or soon will be what their leaders are.** ... The truth is that for better or for worse religious people follow leaders. ... **The local church soon becomes like its pastor.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - "My parish, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and what is worse, I find that very many of my desires for the melioration of both, proceed **either from pride or vanity or indolence.** I look at the weeds which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? It may be that I may walk out and say to myself, In what fine order is my garden kept! This is pride. Or, it may be that my neighbours may look over the wall and say, How finely your garden flourishes! This is vanity. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds, because I am weary of pulling them up. This is indolence." - *Dr. Payson*

**Church** - Under the greenest sods **worms hide themselves;** we need not look long to discover them. – *Charles Spurgeon*

**Church** - Probably the most widespread and persistent problem to be found among Christians is the problem of **retarded spiritual progress.** ... The main cause: failure to give time to the cultivation of the knowledge of God. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Progress in the Christian life is exactly equal to the growing knowledge we gain of the Triune God in personal experience. And such experience requires a whole life devoted to it and plenty of time spent at **the holy task of cultivating God.**  
– *AW Tozer*

**Church** - Too many of us ministers and Sunday school teachers are content to reach for a commentary on the Scriptures. What we need most is to **search the Scriptures** for ourselves. – *AW Tozer*

**Hearing** - The majority of us have no ear for anything but ourselves, **we cannot hear a thing God says**. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church – Relationship** - Our failure today is religious activity that is not preceded by **aloneness**, by inactivity. I mean getting **alone with God** and waiting in silence and quietness until we are charged with God's Spirit. Then, when we act, our activity really amounts to something because we have been **prepared by God** for it. – *AW Tozer*

**Teachers:** 1 Corinthians 12:28 And **God hath set** some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Ephesians 4:11 And he (*Jesus*) **gave** some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and **teachers**;

1 Corinthians 12:29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? **are all teachers?** are all workers of miracles?

Hebrews 5:12 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. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

**Teaching** - Avoid the digest type of mind—short bits of unrelated facts, cute stories and bright sayings. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - If we are in God's order the thing will go; if we are not in His order, it won't. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Healing** - I do not believe in commercialized miracles. "Miracles, Incorporated"—you can have it! "Healing, Incorporated"—you can have that, too! – *AW Tozer*

**Faith – Power – Church** - But the person of faith who can go alone into the wilderness and get on his or her knees and command heaven—God is in that. The preacher who will dare to stand and let his preaching cost him something—God is in that. – *AW Tozer*



**False Prophets-Teachers** - 2 Peter 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason **of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.**

1 Timothy 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest **charge some that they teach no other doctrine,**  
4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

**Church – False Teachers** - “One traitor inside the church is worse than a thousand persecutors outside the church.” - *Matthew Henry*

**Sanctification - Teacher** - The man after God's own heart must be **dead to the opinion** of his friends as well as his enemies. He must be as willing to cross important persons as obscure ones. – *AW Tozer*

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort** (*Convince, rebuke, exhort - NKJV; correct, rebuke and encourage - NIV*) with all long suffering and doctrine.

**Sanctification** - To reprove one man in order to gain the favor of another is no evidence of moral courage. It is done in the world all the time. – *AW Tozer*

**Purpose – Teaching** - If you leave people as you found them, God is not speaking through you. – *Smith Wigglesworth*

**Purpose** – You cannot talk beyond your wisdom. - *Smith Wigglesworth*

**Church** - The Holy Spirit is not the center of attraction, and the Lord is not the one who is in charge. We bring in all sorts of anti-scriptural and unscriptural claptrap to keep the people happy and keep them coming. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - I would rather be part of a small group with **inner knowledge** than part of a vast group with only intellectual knowledge. – *AW Tozer*

**Faith** - Faith that goes forward triumphs. – *LB Cowman*

**Church – Spirit - Power** - With the fullness of the Holy Ghost ... evangelical Christianity believes it, but nobody experiences it. – *AW Tozer*

**Church – Truth** - How many blessed truths have gotten snowed under. People believe them, but they are just not being taught, that is all. – *AW Tozer*

Matthew 15:7 Ye **hypocrites**, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their

lips; but their **heart is far from me**. 9 But in **vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**.

**Hearing** - We show how little we love God by preferring to listen to His servants only. ... Why are we so terrified lest God should speak to us? Because we know that if God does speak, either the thing must be done or we must tell God we will not obey Him.  
– Oswald Chambers

**OT - Church – Power** – “Such words as these in the second chapter of Hebrews stand as a **rebuke to the unbelieving Christians** of our day: ‘*God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.*’ A **cold Church** is forced to “interpret” such language. She cannot enter into it, so she **explains it away**. ... Anything will do to save face and justify our **half-dead condition**. Such defensive exegesis is but a refuge for unbelieving orthodoxy, **a hiding place for a Church too weak to stand.**”  
– AW Tozer

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

**OT - Church – Power** – “The Christian who goes out **without faith in ‘wonders’ will return without fruit**. No one dare be so rash as to seek to do impossible things unless he has first been empowered by the God of the impossible.” – AW Tozer

**Revival** - It was Finney who observed that revivals die, both because of the bad spirit of the old school, and the arrogant spirit of the new school.

**Church** – Jesus tore the veil; religion tries to stitch it back together.

**Church** - We are going to have to restudy this whole teaching of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Church, so the Body can operate again. If the life goes out of a man's body, he is said to be a corpse. ... So it is in the Church of Christ. It is literally true that **some churches are dead. The Holy Spirit has gone out of them** and all you have left are ‘he remains.’ You have the potential of the church but you do not have the church. ... When the Holy Spirit is not present in the Church, you have to get along after the methods of business or politics or psychology or human effort. – AW Tozer

**Church – Power** - The only power God recognizes in His church is the power of His Spirit whereas the only power actually recognized today by the majority of evangelicals is the power of man. **God does His work by the operation of the Spirit**, while Christian leaders attempt to do theirs by the power of trained and devoted intellect. – AW Tozer

**Church** - Many people are **trying to give leadership in Christian churches** today **without ever having yielded to the** wise and effective leading of the **Holy Spirit**. ... We are leaning too heavily upon human talents and educated abilities. We forget that the illumination of the Holy Spirit of God is a necessity. ... **We need the Holy Spirit more and more, and we need human helps less and less.** – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - The time is ... for a rethinking ... **spiritual gifts** within the church of Christ. The subject has fallen into the hands of people for the most part extreme and irresponsible and has become associated with fanaticism in its various forms. ... Prejudices ... make the consideration of this subject extremely difficult, but its **neglect is costing us more than we should be willing to pay**. A revival of true New Testament Christianity must surely bring with it a manifestation of spiritual gifts. – *AW Tozer*

**Church – Purpose – Power** – [The promise of the Holy Spirit] means the **dynamic ability** to be able to do what you are given to do. You will receive ability to do. It will come on you. – *AW Tozer*

Genesis 49:24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob ...

**Church – Purpose – Power** – “It is not a *boasted valour*, a fiction, a thing of which men talk, but which ends in smoke. ... All true **strength** comes from ‘the mighty God of Jacob.’” – *Charles Spurgeon*

**Church – Purpose – Power** – John’s coming was prophesied 400 years before: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me” (Malachi 3:1). ... John said, “I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he **shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire**” (Luke 3:16). - *CRI*

**Church – Power** - To please God, a person must be just **an instrument for God** to use. ... **Natural gifts are not enough** in God's work. – *AW Tozer*

**Church** - *The soul has got out of intimate contact with God by leaning to its own religious understanding.* ... When we do anything from a sense of duty, we can back it up by argument; **when we do anything in obedience to the Lord, there is no argument possible; that is why a saint can be easily ridiculed.** – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - Practical **common sense is a very scarce** thing among the conductors of Christian enterprises. – *Charles Spurgeon*

**Old – Wide Guys - Purpose** - Psalm 92:12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

Psalm 71:17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. 18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

Joshua 13:1 Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

**Church - Leadership in the church of Christ is a spiritual thing** and should be so understood by everyone. – *AW Tozer*

**Church – Teacher** - It is easier to serve God without a vision, easier to work for God without a call, because then you are not bothered by what God requires; common sense is your guide, veneered over with Christian sentiment. – *Oswald Chambers*

**Church** - The church should be a healthy, fruitful vineyard that will bring honor to Christ.  
– *AW Tozer*

