

APOSTASY

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Apostasy is the act of believers and churches who are moving away from the truths of God's Word

2 Timothy 2:15

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of Truth.

2 Timothy 4:3, 4

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.[NASB]

People today run frantically to and fro, from church to church, from one ecstatic experience to another. Hype, entertainment, emotionalism, spiritual sensationalism (ecstatics), and the “prosperity gospel” have become magnets that are drawing believers and unbelievers alike to churches all across America. Entertainment and ecstatics, have, and are, *replacing* the teaching of God’s Word in so many Churches. The “prosperity gospel” has replaced the suffering Christ with the gospel of “self and wealth.” Churches are becoming large for the wrong reasons. Motivations and priorities are out of sequence.

Church should be ***first and foremost*** an *academic class room*, therefore, the primary function of the Pastor is to *study and teach*. ***This is not the case in the majority of America’s Churches***. ***Secondly***, the local Church should be an ***open door social gathering-place*** where families and individuals, believers and unbelievers come together. ***Thirdly***, it should be a place for fellowship, worship and praising the Lord in music and song. ***Fourth***, the local Church should be a place for entertainment, picnics and parties, sports and family fun centers. The local Church should be a gathering place for the hungry, the needy and the un-churched. The un-churched people in every neighborhood should be made to feel welcome ***without coercion***. The un-churched should be able to depend on believers for help, guidance and direction, and love ***without coercion***. The principles of love and concern; right and wrong should shine forth from our local churches. Only

when God's principles shine through each believer will our communities see the light of the glorious gospel. We (believers) must by humble exhibit, show forth Godly behavior, but not as a goody-two-shoes.

The old cliché of “practice what you preach” exposes hypocrisy. Believers should be “witnessing” *by example* – by reaching out rather than turning their nose to the air because of bigotry and arrogance. Witnessing is not just trying to save people, but doing what Christ did. Jesus was a friend of unbelievers. Are you? How do unbelievers see you? How do you see them?

Together, let's review several distinct functions of the local church:

Love is the primary function of the Church and the believer. “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength*” (Mark 12:30). “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word (love), even in this: love your neighbor as yourself*” (Galatians 5:14). “*But love your enemies, do well, and **lend**, hoping (**expecting**) for **nothing in return***” (Luke 6:35). “*That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment*” (1 John 3:23). Love means giving yourself to others as Christ gave Himself which is our next principle.

GIVING allows the believer to express the incredible love of God. We express our love for God, **toward God** (Psalms 107:15; 136:3). We express our love for God toward our family. We express our love for God toward the local church. We express our love for God towards fellow believers. We express our love for God towards the unsaved. There are two ways to give: A). as the Corporate Church; B). as the individual believer. Giving is much more than monetary, it also incorporates the concept of “giving of *self*” to the Church and the community especially the less fortunate (Luke 8:1; Romans 10:15; 12:13; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 9:13).

WITNESSING Christ to a lost and dying world includes both *personal evangelism* and *personal life style* under God's plan for each individual believer. As believers we should express the love of Christ to the world through our lives (living examples of Christ) by the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Witnessing honors our Savior. We are to witness to a lost world (Mark 16:15; Luke 4:18; Romans 10:15; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

TEACHING the Word of God – ***maturing*** the body of Christ by edification and exhortation. Christ taught daily in the temple (Luke 19:47.) God’s Word commands us to teach and study (Deuteronomy 4:9; 11:19; Isaiah 2:3; Romans 10:15-17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 4:2). We are to preach deliverance to the unfortunate; the unsaved; the community (Isaiah 61:1; Mark 16:15; Luke 4:18). See also Isaiah 28:13).

FELLOWSHIP, WORSHIP AND PRAYER - Psalms 2:11; John 4:24; Philippians 1:4; 3:3. 4:6; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

COMMUNION & BAPTISM - 1 Corinthians 11:23-30; Romans 6:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12;

REACHING OUT

Mark 15:15; 2 Corinthians 5:19

You (personally) should be reaching out to the needy with food, clothing, shelter and financial assistance as needed (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 15:25-26; Galatians 2:10; James 2:15-16).

We are to be self-less, though most are selfish. We are so preoccupied with worldliness (our own desires and pleasures) that we don’t have time or money for the less-fortunate. Christianity is all about Christ and your fellow human beings. Christianity is not about you!

AMBASSADORSHIP

Believers are ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) left on earth after salvation to do God’s work – to be witnesses for Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15). We are here in place of our Savior. ***We are to carry-on “His life style”*** (example) until He comes again “in remembrance of Him” is a memorial to His Name, His Love, His mercy and His lifestyle.

Ambassadorship is both corporate and personal. So, what are you doing personally? When was the last time you visited a nursing home or a hospital or a shelter for recovering addicts? When was the last time you paid a visit to the poor people down the street? When was the last time you personally and anonymously gave a Christmas to a needy family? When was the last time you personally prayed for the ministries at your church? ***Praying and/or giving money to your church should not be a cop-out for not personally ministering to people in your community if you are physically able.*** Your prayers and your money are support vehicles for the work of Christ. Your personal physical involvement is needed. Reach out! Reach out with the love of Christ.

Believers are commanded to “love the brethren” (fellow believers) which infers mental tolerance as much as love (Romans 16:17). Every believer is indwelt by the Trinity for this purpose and for intimate fellowship with the Lord (Revelations 3:20). Intimacy with the Lord is called the “filling of the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). The mechanic for being filled with the spirit is 1 John 1:9. “*Filled with the Holy Spirit*” is stated ten times in the New Testament.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is the “power source” for each individual believer to produce “Divine Good” - this is our mandate from God. Our Savior Jesus Christ ministered to the needy and the unsaved. Every day Christ went about the Father’s business - **teaching the Word**. The results of Christ’s teaching are still changing the world one soul at a time just as it did 2000 years ago. People want to know God without any strings attached – just share the Gospel and the Holy Spirit will use the Word to convict the people. People flocked to Christ because He had the Words of Wisdom. He was constantly teaching and talking about His Father and the Kingdom of God. His Words are recorded in Scripture so that mankind can be blessed and believers can use them to do what Christ did and say what Christ said. Scripture is recorded for the benefit of mankind. Therefore Scripture is how we reach the lost therefore Scripture must radiate from the pulpit and from the Sunday School class.

Jesus was constantly filled with the Spirit doing the Father’s will. What exactly is the “Will of God?” First of all the Will of God is everything that Christ did and said! So, to know God’s Will you must learn Bible Doctrine. You must know how Jesus thought. You must know what He said. You must know what He did. This is why God has “inspired” the entire Bible (every original word). This is why we have “The Mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). ***To be “spiritually minded” you must have the Mind of Christ resident in your soul! To do God’s Will you must know His Will - LEARN GOD’S WORD.***

During the “**Age of the Church**” and for the first time in history the believer’s instructions do not come from visions or dreams, but from a completed canon of Scripture. The Holy Spirit

directs our “**love of giving and sharing.**” Virtually everything God has to say to us is in writing in His wonderful Word. Because the believer is left on earth to be an ambassador for our Savior we are to metabolize God’s Word. **Every** believer is in “**full-time service**” for the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

Our ambassadorship is to reconcile a lost and dying world to Christ. Are you reconciling? Christ reconciled us to God by the Cross. We are to reconcile the world until he comes. Jesus died so we could live with the Father forever. We are to share the Gospel of Salvation which is available through Christ only! God’s Word is our resource of Divine Knowledge. ***This was Christ’s power source – God’s Word, God’s will and the indwelling control of the Holy Spirit.*** This same power source is available to every believer. The Church just keeps getting off track because of the influence of the World, the Flesh and the Devil. Apostasy is the result of programs designed by man operating in the flesh. Mortgages to build larger and larger churches cause the churches to become big business. Show me in Scripture where big business is the calling of the Church.

When churches operate like the world they are worldly! When churches do not stand firm on teaching God’s Word by systematic expository instruction they become apostate and God will spew them out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16). Is your church teaching God’s Word with a systematic approach based on the historical setting of the original language? Where do you stand? Do you truly thirst for Divine revelation in God’s Word, or are you in denial hiding behind showmanship and hypocrisy? Happy Studying!