



Spirit of Grace Herald

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Distractions and Foundations

As Christians, we live these days in the best of times and the worst of times. It's the best in that Christian resources abound as previous generations have never experienced. Christian television networks, channels, and programs, Christian podcasts, churches all over the place, at least here in Texas, and Christian bookstores filled with Bible commentaries, Bible software, Bibles in every possible version, and Christian books of every stripe and type. And if you need a special Christian book in a hurry, you can often order it off Amazon and have it at your door in two days. Surely there is no excuse for ignorance of the word of God or the things of God these days.

And yet, for all the available resources, Christians in general are arguably less knowledgeable of the Scriptures than any generation in the last couple of hundred years. Probably most Christians will go their entire lives without reading through the entire Bible, and many have a very shallow and superficial view of the faith they profess. Few could

quote five verses of the Bible by memory. Christianity has been dumbed down and made "lite" for the sake of the seekers, almost to the point that those very seekers will gain no accurate and genuine insight of the nature of the kingdom of God that Christ proclaimed.

There are no doubt several important reasons for this dearth of substantial and mature Christianity. The one I want to address here is the abundance of distractions in our lives today. Previous generations could engage in spiritual activities with only the rare distraction of an occasional phone call or a knock on the door. How things have changed! Today we may start to pray and suddenly hear a notification from our phones that we have just received a text message. Our minds start to wonder: "Who could that be? This could be important! I think I'd better check that out!"



And of course, there is the Internet, with its millions of websites and our email inbox with its never-ending emails, pulling on us like powerful electromagnets. Our televisions no longer offer a handful of channels and stations; they provide hundreds of channels and multiple networks, so that there is never a time that we

cannot find something fascinating to watch. And then there is Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, which usurp our time and attention until our time with God has been reduced to a tiny, tiny piece of our daily pie.

In the New Testament we read these words about the apostles: "And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:33). Reading this the other day I had the thought, "Why is it that these men were so full of the power of God, so deep in their knowledge of Christ, so solid in their theology, compared with most ministers today, who specialize in humorous little pep talks and often seem to lack the depth of those early leaders in the body of Christ?"

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Of course, these men had been with Jesus, and that was no small thing! But beyond that, even after Jesus had resurrected and ascended, they walked in a power, anointing, and theological maturity that we rarely see today. But you don't have to look only at the apostles. In previous centuries we had such amazing leaders as John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, and others who were just so... grown up, as ministers. They had a certain gravitas, a certain maturity that we don't see so much of today. They were not silly, they weren't goofy, they didn't content themselves just to preach every sermon on how to make all your wildest dreams come true, or to tell you that God adored you and couldn't possibly ever be upset with you, regardless of how miserable, wretched, and wicked your life was.

These men did not always agree with each other on every theological point – far from it! But at least they studied theology and wrestled with some of the deeper issues. They took the Bible and their faith seriously enough to read the Scriptures constantly and spend a great deal of time in prayer. They had no cell phones, no computers connected to the Internet, no Twitter accounts, no Facebook page or YouTube channel. Their lives were given to their families and to Christ, and very little else.

I am not suggesting that we throw away our computers and phones. I am saying that if we are ever to walk with Christ in a place of power and maturity, we will have to have the discipline to set apart chunks of time in our schedules where we draw back from all distractions and close ourselves in with our God. Jesus declared that what He tells us in the dark we are to speak in the light, and what we hear quietly in our ears we are to preach on the housetops. But if we never spend any time in the “dark,” those hidden places where we are alone with our God, we will have nothing to say when we are in the light. If we never commune with Jesus in the “inner rooms” we will be mute when we are on the housetops.

In March: MINISTRY IN NIGERIA

Nigerian Ministry Scheduled for March — Dennis and Benedicta will be preaching Christ in evangelistic meetings, teaching in conferences for believers, providing a free medical clinic, and providing help for the local orphans. Your prayers and support are vitally needed!



“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” — Jesus

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