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Quit Doing Nothing

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The flamboyant evangelist, Dr. Sam Jones, was well known in some circles for his "Quittin' Meetings." During his revivals he gave people a special opportunity to confess their sins and repent. Many quit swearing, quit gossiping, quit drinking, quit smoking, etc. He asked one woman what she planned to quit, and she replied, "I ain't been doing nothing, and I am going to quit doing that!"

Assuming she was true to her word, that was a worthy change. Think what great works most churches could accomplish if about two-thirds of the members would "quit doing nothing."

Yes, I know. The illustration led to an exaggeration. Two-thirds of the members are not "doing nothing." Even those who sleep through the worship are absorbing sound waves, and that makes it easier on the speaker. I learned, long ago, not to expect every called-out person to be all that the Lord says they should be; but I hope and pray I will never give up trying to bring about this condition. When reality becomes cynicism we are done. Aren't you glad the Lord did not give up on you? The Lord was not blinded to the reality of a sinful world when he died for those sins. He must have known that many for whom He died would "do nothing" about it.

Some brethren "do nothing" because they have been conditioned to think the church does it all — an erroneous institutional concept of church. Some equate the Lord's work with public service, and think they have no talent for that. Some excuse themselves with the fear they may do something wrong. And some "tried once, but no one paid any attention to me." In all these, we are too much concerned with what people think of us, instead of acting in faith and with a view to pleasing the Lord.

Somehow we must reawaken the concept of individual and direct relationship of each saint to Christ. The "priesthood of believers" must be re-established in our thinking. I must know that regardless of what others do, or do not do; regardless of popularity or opposition, of affluence or famine; I must serve my Master in all good conscience (Rom. 14:4-12).

Wake Up!

- by Marvin A. Noble

I have never tried it, but I am told that if you drop a frog into hot water, he will jump out. However, if you were to place a frog in a kettle of cool water and gradually heat the water, the frog would stay put and perish in a boiling death. Perhaps you wonder how even a frog could be so stupid as to be unaware of his gradually changing surroundings. Are we any wiser?

When I was growing up, most Christian parents were terribly concerned about the immoral influence of Hollywood films. Those are the old movies that today are shown on TV and judged innocent and harmless -- "family pictures." Now TV news, commercials and entertainment are saturated with lust and violence. Ten years ago people were saying, "If it gets any worse, I'm going to toss my TV set out." Has it gotten worse? Are we a bunch of slowly cooking frogs?

The lulled frog syndrome can also be witnessed in many churches. A few years ago many members were expressing concern about churches being diverted from their work. If what is now sponsored, from church ball teams to video game rooms, from secular education to homes for unwed mothers, if churches had introduced anything like this fifty years ago, members would have jumped clear into the next county. But these changes have been introduced gradually and

with little awareness; and the people of God have been lulled to sleep. How grave is their danger!

"Awake you who sleep. Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:14-17).

Deep or Muddy?

- by James Hahn

Through the years there have been individuals, usually preachers, who feature themselves as being "free thinkers" who present "thought provoking" lessons that are usually attacks upon what they call the "traditionally held" views. The "in depth" lessons presented by these individuals usually leave many in the audience wondering just what they have said and thinking that the preacher is so "deep" in his thinking and presentation that they do not understand simply because they do not have the knowledge or ability the preacher has.

These men have at times caused confusion and strife by their preaching and when questioned about their teaching they usually reply, *"You just don't understand what I am saying."* Again, the implication is that any problem that may exist is due to the lack of knowledge or ability on the part of the hearer to comprehend the "deep" things taught by the preacher.

I think it is time to start putting the blame where it belongs. Are these men the "deep" thinkers they want us to believe they are? I often think of a statement I once heard made by an old country fellow. He said, *"Just because you can't see the bottom of the river doesn't necessarily mean the water is deep, it may just be muddy."* I am convinced that this is the case with some of these "deep" thinkers. They have the ability to present their thoughts in such a confusing manner that they just "muddy the water."

The apostle Paul said that he wrote the things revealed to him by the Holy Spirit so that *"when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ"* (Eph. 3:4). One of the characteristics of faithful gospel preachers through the years has been their ability to present the truth of the gospel in a way that made it easily understood by those who heard. If these men who fancy themselves as being such "in depth" students of the word really have the knowledge and ability they want us to believe they have then why don't they just teach what they believe to be the truth in a simple understandable manner. If we are misunderstanding what they are teaching then we plead with them to use their "superior" ability and present their teaching so that we "inferiors" can understand. The gospel of Christ remains the same today as when first preached on the day of Pentecost. When someone has to preach something that has never been preached before or preach it in a way no one else has ever preached it we had better beware.

I certainly do not want to discourage any study of God's word nor do I condone those who become satisfied with *"the way we have always done things"* and will not change even when change is necessary to conform to God's word. However, I do not approve of those who seem more concerned with impressing men with their ability to be "deep thinkers" rather than helping men understand the plain and simple teachings of God's word. All preachers need, from time to time, to ask themselves the same question Paul asked in his epistle to the Galatians; *"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?"* (Gal. 1:10). Paul said, *"if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."*

I have often said that the two greatest compliments that could be paid to one preaching are: (1) *"He preaches the truth"* and (2) *"He presents it in such a way that all can understand."* When we become more concerned with "making an impression" than we are with "preaching the word" we are making a grave mistake. Our concern must always be the salvation of souls and not self-glorification. If the gospel is preached souls will be saved and God will be glorified.

Don't be intimidated by those who try to make you feel inferior in your ability to understand truth. Their teaching may not be "deep," it may just be "muddy."