

## IMPRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

### Introduction

1. Any talk of impressive Christianity needs a good explanation.
  - a. We strive to impress God with our Christianity!
  - b. Jesus (Matthew 6:1-3) and Paul (Galatians 1:10) warn of the dangers in seeking to impress men.
2. God has told us how to impress Him, and we must do so.

### I. Individual Christians

#### A. Are you an opportunist?

1. Words like “seek” (Matthew 6:33), “strive” (Luke 13:24), and “give diligence” (2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV) are used to describe the Christian journey. We should be left with the impression that we need to squeeze every opportunity out of every day to please God.
2. This will take practice. I advise Christians to literally practice what they might say in defense of Christianity. This may sound strange. Remember that Paul was accused of being crazy in his defense of Christianity (Acts 26:24, 25).

#### B. Are we too causal?

1. “[T]hou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself...” (Psalm 50:21). This statement condemns the common practice of assigning human likes, dislikes, and thought patterns to Jehovah (see Isaiah 55:9). Justifying actions because “we like it” is of the devil (Genesis 3:1-4).
2. Are we too causal in worship?
  - a. In discussing worship, God tells us that He is a Spirit (John 4:24). The reason for doing so may be to remind us that there is a significant difference between God and man. What we like, He may dislike.
  - b. Are we too causal in our dress for worship? Consider Exodus 3:5. (The church building is not holy, but a lesson can be learning about approaching God.) Shouldn’t one be ashamed to dress down for church service?
  - c. Children’s church injects an unhelpful dose of casualness in the church. (See Darrel Broking’s article in the November issue of *The Gospel Journal*.)

### II. Entire Congregations

#### A. Are we forwarding thinking and looking?

1. “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18). This verse is undoubtedly focusing on the need for God’s revelation. By implication, this verse stresses the need for communication and planning (i.e. this revelation

would have to be shared, and there would have to be intentions to do the Will of God).

2. It is shameful and neglectful to not think about the future. God's people should be the best equipped to think about the future because we are charged to live with an eye toward eternity.

B. Are we using our individual talents wisely (Matthew 25:14-30)?

1. We must contribute our individual talents to help the congregation. A better congregation begins with better individuals.
2. I have heard Christians (some of whom were elders) make statements like: "As long as I'm here, they'll never paint the paneling." That brother is proving that he has the ability to take a stand, but he is taking a stand over a matter that insignificant. Aren't there bigger, better battles to fight (see 1 Samuel 17:29)!?
3. Preachers, elders, deacons, Bible class teachers, and church members often excuse their lack of action by saying things like: "I'm just one member," or "I'm just the preacher," or "I'm just *one* of the elders." We must use our talent(s) (1, 2, or 5) in the best possible way. Remember the sin of the 1 talent man was inactivity.

C. Do we confuse being busy with doing good works?

1. The devil wants us to overemphasize what we're doing for the Lord.
2. Dinners, work days, well-kept church yards, organized libraries, etc. are nice but a congregation must be aware not to confuse being busy with being the *right kind of busy*.
3. "I'm too busy" is an excuse often given for inactivity. (This is given by individuals and congregations alike.) Isn't it ironic that the very people who say they're too busy never listen to themselves? These people never free up any time; they just keep on saying, "I'm too busy."

### Closing

1. Paul said, "I **press** toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). What are your goals? Answer these questions.
  - a. How much of my Bible will I read this year?.....Now is the time to make that decision, not at the end of the year.
  - b. What kind of Christian family will I have at the end of this year? Be specific! How many of your family members will be Bible readers? How many of your family members will have memorized Bible verses? How many verses will you memorize?
  - c. What kind of congregation will we have at the end of this year? We have to be realistic. You know what is going on right now. What kind of congregation will these actions create? Are you happy with that result? If not, what proactive steps will you take to help? If you like what you see a year from now, how will you help? What can you do to help someone else be able to do more? Consider the Acts 6:1-7 model.
2. A failure to plan is a plan to fail.