

## DISCERNING

When a church fails to train its people to serve, and when the atmosphere of that church is one of entertainment and not service, one in which the people are spectators and not participants (uninvolved observers), many difficulties arise.

One of the greatest problems is the lack of understanding of what is right and wrong, what is good and what is evil. If people do not get involved in teaching and witnessing, they will remain babes in Christ.

Notice the following passage and the dangers that accompany the lack of understanding:

Hebrews 5:11 "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing."

vs. 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."

vs. 13 "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe."

vs. 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."

The cause:

Vs. 12 — People should be teachers. They should learn to be comfortable witnessing and applying what they have learned from the Bible;

Vs. 14 — The lack of USE of the Bible versus a head knowledge of the Bible.

The problem or result:

Vs. 11 — People are dull of hearing and are unable to discern Bible truth;

Vs. 12 — Believers must hear simple truth over and over (milk and not meat);

Vs. 13 — Christians end up unskillful in the use of the Word;

Vs. 14 — The senses of believers can not discern between good and evil.

Let us take that last note a little farther.

As Christians use their knowledge in witnessing and teaching, their SENSES are exercised, developed, and matured; therefore they can see something and know it is wrong; and they see something else and know it is right. They become discerning believers not through sitting and listening, but through use of the knowledge they have received.

"Full age" (verse 14) is only attained by those who are busy using their knowledge of God's Word. For this reason, we want soul winning to take place everywhere. We want people to get comfortable witnessing and teaching the Bible to friends at work or at church.

As a brand new Christian, I talked about the Lord everywhere. I read large portions of the Bible, and I wanted to talk about what I read, all while I was on a secular college campus. I invited people to my room to have Bible studies, and those I invited were not believers, but unbelievers. I learned early in my Christian life that witnessing was awesome!

More dangers:

When a church is full of kind, loving, yet baby Christians (verse 13 “for he is a babe”), because they are simple or unable to see right and wrong (“...to discern both good and evil.”), soon that church will allow all kinds of music and social activities. They will say things such as, “I don’t see anything wrong with that.” Their children will be in wrong schools; their youth department will be worldly; the young people will date lost or worldly people; and the preacher will soon be unable to teach anything specific about right and wrong.

All this and more are the result of a church in which people sit and listen rather than witness and serve.

We need to develop an environment in which witnessing is normal, accepted, and promoted. We need to train people to work on buses and in Sunday school classes.

In summary, holiness in personal living and in preaching requires that the general population of the church be actively using their knowledge of the Word of God. Accumulating knowledge without using it condemns the church to having a shallow, childlike existence without the ability to discern between good and evil — not a really good prospect.

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