

CHURCH CHECKERS

Have you ever wondered why people in the same city seem to fellowship together at some point or another in their Christian walk? No matter how large the place, it is common to find either people who used to go to your church or were with your Pastor at some other point in his ministry. We seem like oddly recycled tires that seem to have simply rolled all over the place from temple to chapel seeking somebody who can satisfy our level of need or thirst for more. Saints seem to out grow churches every two years and are complaining about not being fed consistently. What is the problem?? Churches are popping up on every corner and in every crack and crevice known to man.

Televangelists are on many stations and ministries are buying stations of their own so what is the problem? Why aren't we ever satisfied with any teacher or leader? How can ministries burn in our hearts as answers to our prayers one day and then burn out as suddenly as they came? The answer is simple...*itching ears*. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 says, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having ITCHING EARS; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”** Sound doctrine is extremely unpopular today and people are faithful to the church as long as they are not offended by the doctrine.

Sound doctrine simply means that the Spirit and foundation of the teaching has proven merits and can be followed in any situation or circumstance. In this case, the confirmer is God. Sound doctrine is another word for truth. Many people move from church to church and aisle to pew because the true doctrine of Christ actually wars with their flesh and personal sense of righteousness. The unexpected side effect of truth is conviction and it often makes us out to be liars while God is true. This is victory for those who came to Jesus for change. It is a declaration of war and a need for fleeing for those who wanted to serve God and not really worship Him with a renewed mind. Sound words cause us to examine our hearts and motives in a way that may expose our weaknesses and deceit and for many, it is the first in a long while that they have submitted to any teaching other than what they controlled or bought. Sadly, many saints can't endure being a student without controlling the curriculum. Like Martha, many would prefer to do the gospel work than to sit at Jesus' feet and become like Christ.

So what is the end result? 2 Timothy 3:7 describes them this way, **“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”**. People will go on a hunt for teachers who will soothe the aggravating itch in their spiritual ears that confirms what they already thought was *“their”* truth in the first place. This is selected even if it completely contradicts the doctrine of Christ. These people are led by their “gut” and not from the Living Word. If they are convicted about sin, they will just find someone that doesn't preach about personal accountability for our own soul. If they are homosexual or operating in illegal relationships, they will seek teachers who seem successful and well balanced while operating in the lifestyle that the Bible calls *immoral*. They seek friends who will never speak God's truth but offer cute life lessons and world philosophies that will not alert their spirits and therefore cause no discomfort. Worst of all, these saints are not led to their teachers by the spirit but now heap these teachers to themselves and pay dearly for what is free. People are sowing into lies and they are happy about the poverty. They, in essence, have snatched their growth controls from the Holy Spirit and have decided that they know what is best. Church, we need to wake up and realize that the church is a hospital and the patients must let the doctors be doctors! All the medicine is not going to feel good and all the treatments may not be understood but they must be endured by those who want healing.

THERE IS NO PERFECT CHURCH BUT WE SERVE A PERFECT GOD. IF YOU LEAVE YOUR CHURCH MAKE SURE THAT YOU HEAR “OUT” INSTEAD OF JUST “OUCH”!!