

Tuning Out

by Wayne Goff

Bob and Jim, a couple of elderly men in a retirement center, were having a heated discussion about religion and politics. Both were fervently defending their differing views but were talking at the same time. Finally, Bob said, "Jim, we cannot accomplish anything while we are both talking. Let's take turns. You go first." Jim agreed, and proceeded to argue his case long and loud. Finally, after some time, he finished. Then as Bob was about to begin his defense, Jim reached up and turned off his hearing aid!

Some people come to the church service and patiently sit through each sermon. But they never really hear the sermon. Five minutes after the sermon ends, they couldn't tell you what it was about. It is as though they thought that just sitting through the sermon is equal to benefitting from it. God does not dole out credit for **enduring** a sermon; it is meant to teach, instruct, and sometimes rebuke and chastise. But it must be **heard** and **taken to heart** before it can do any good!

Keep in mind, brethren, that the **sermon** is *God's invention*, not man's, not the church's and certainly not the preacher's! The Divine charge to gospel preachers is found in 2 Timothy 4:2 — *"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."* So when the preacher is doing what God told him to do, and you — the listener — are essentially ignoring the sermon, then that is something for which you will have to give answer to God. It is a serious matter! God is watching, and He knows and sees everything you think, say and do.

"Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil" (Ecclesiastes 5:1).

The preacher sees when some in the audience **rudely** dismiss themselves to go to the restroom (every sermon), or when they play with the baby, or sit at the back to watch everyone else during the sermon, or even clip their fingernails. Perhaps they think they are fooling someone, but not only does the preacher see these things, God sees and knows *the lack of sincerity* with which some people sit through a sermon. I admonish you to listen to the sermon, search the Scriptures, and receive the truth into your heart. God's Word does not return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11). It accomplishes His purpose. What is His Word doing for you?

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