

## The Gospel or Gimmicks?

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by Joshua Welch

In today's religious world, many churches will try nearly any means to get people through the church doors. They argue, "the ends justifies the means."

So, some will try to **fun you into the doors**. If it takes petting zoos, festivals, egg hunts, daddy-daughter dances, musicals and comedians to get people into the building lots of churches will try it. After all, people really like to be entertained and have fun, so why not give them the glitz and glitter they want? One reason this may not be a wise method is it tends to create a culture of takers looking for quick, cheap thrills rather than servants carved out to endure trials for the long haul. Christianity is the religion of self-denial and the "cross," not self-indulgence and the Colosseum (Matthew 16:24).

Others will **food you into their buildings**. They imagine if they can offer Chicken Noodles, Ice Cream Socials, Peeps buffets at Easter and Coffee and Donuts year-round they will get people inside their walls. After all, people like to eat, so why not bait them in with what they already enjoy? Maybe because Paul wrote, "*the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Romans 14:17). Jesus rebuked those just coming for the "loaves" (John 6:26-27).

Many use **fear as a tactic to gain an audience**. So, they look for "signs" to scare you into thinking the end of the world is moments away and claim to be "End-Times" experts claiming secret knowledge of the Lord's return. It works sometimes. Until one of those scared seekers reads: "*of that day and hour no one knows...for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming*" (Matthew 24:36, 42).

Instead of all of these tactics founded in "*the wisdom of men*" let us consider "*the power of God*" for winning people to Christ (cp. 1 Corinthians 2:5). Paul wrote, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...*" (Romans 1:16). To Paul, the death of Jesus for our sins and the risen Jesus as a basis of our hope is at the very core of why people need to come to Jesus and be part of His church. In Jesus, there is nothing to be ashamed of but there is every reason to proclaim Him! When we truly understand the power of the gospel, there are no need for gimmicks – the blood of Jesus is the means and the risen Jesus is the ends of our hope!

— via Laurel Canyon Church of Christ  
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