

“Bring Something To Put It In!”

by Wayne Goff

Growing up listening to my father preach the first eighteen years of my life, I learned a great deal of practical truths. One particular lesson I remember learning from my dad was based on his words to his audience: **“If you didn’t get something out of the lesson, then bring something to put it in!”**

I don’t know that I understood what he meant the first few times I heard that admonition, but I certainly do know what it means **now!** The more you study God’s Word *personally*, then the more you will get out of the church’s Bible classes and sermons. If you do not study God’s Word *habitually*, then coming to church once a week and being “fed”(?) by the teacher or preacher likely will do little good. It takes time with God’s Word to study it, understand it and then apply it for it to do any good. The Bible is full of admonitions along the same line, if only we would heed what it says!

For the new convert we read, *“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,”* (1 Peter 2:1–2). There are the basics (“milk”) Christians are to learn so that they will have a foundation upon which to build their faith further.

For the Christian who has been one for some time, we read, *“But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does”* (James 1:25). You cannot just “read” God’s Word and expect to develop, you must let the Word of God transform your life by looking into it, continuing in it, and not forgetting it!

There are those who love to hear a good sermon on Sunday, but it never makes it home with them! It was just like that in Ezekiel’s day, and God said to him, *“So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain”* (Ezekiel 33:31). Jesus illustrated this problem in His parable of the Sower and the thorny ground. People are too busy with this life, caught up in the things of this world, and have no time to study, learn and apply God’s Word.

So in case you missed the point, **“bringing something to put the sermon in”** means you bring a *prepared* heart to hear, learn, understand and apply God’s Word to yourself (2 Corinthians 13:5). So if you come *mentally unprepared*, you can’t really blame the preacher or Bible class teacher! “Getting ready for church” means more than putting on your nice, Sunday clothes. It means studying your Bible class lesson in advance, pondering those points which you may not understand, or those new things which you have just learned, and then making the application by asking yourself, “Now what does this mean to me?” Diligent Bible students rarely get bored with a sermon or class lesson, and **if they do**, it’s because nothing new has been learned — a rare thing.

Dear reader, do you have the **fundamentals** down in your mind and life? *“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,”* (Hebrews 6:1). Have you forgotten what you once knew? *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food”* (Hebrews 5:12). The Christian’s life and faith is **never** “static” (unchanged, fixed, stable), but it is a *living, breathing thing* which needs daily nourishment and exercise. *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17).

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