

It's Indispensable

Ephesians 3:1-12

I really didn't want to go in the first place. I had so many bad experiences in the past that I felt it simply wasn't worth the disappointment and pain. After all, I *have* gotten along pretty well without going. Of course, there were those few exceptions when I felt the need, but it always seemed like there was something more important to do; and I do appreciate having the time for myself. But I succumbed to the pressure and decided to try it again.

As I drove into the parking lot, I still felt the resistance based on past experience. I knew I was going to hear things I really didn't want to hear and be surrounded by people who were pretty much in their own world. As I walked into the room, the atmosphere had that familiar sense that could best be described as "sterile." Oh, they tried to make me feel comfortable, but I really didn't see the point. I could have gone on without it, but I would discover something that day that would change my whole attitude. Sound familiar?

As I was escorted to my seat and reclined, I looked up and saw the words, "Floss only the teeth you want to keep." Then the dentist explained in no uncertain terms the absolute necessity of consistent care and the flossing of my teeth if I wanted to prevent serious problems and even total loss in the future. It changed my whole attitude. Now I even look forward to those visits. Now I keep a brush and floss in my desk, in my briefcase; it's the first thing I do in the morning and the last thing I do at night. No longer are my visits on those occasions when I feel I need it to fix a problem. They have become a way of life to appreciate, care for, and protect what I have.

It's amazing, but most of us can readily relate to the first two paragraphs. But for most of us, in the back of our minds, our thoughts turned to "church." For far too many, going to church is not unlike what it used to be like for me to go to the dentist. There is still the mentality, "I'll go when I'm hurting enough or feel like I *need* to go to *the church* or when it's convenient." But more and more of us feel it's just not that important.

Although the attitude toward and the sense of importance of consistent dental care has changed significantly (my grandchildren love to go to the dentist), there has not been the same response to the church. Sadly, in well-intentioned efforts to change attitudes about the importance of the church, the focus has been on redefining the church rather than going to the core of why the church is vital to each life, each home, each culture if it is to survive.

For the next few weeks, we will focus on why the church exists and why it is indispensable to each of our lives.

LIFE RESPONSE:

1. This week **MEMORIZE** and **MEDITATE** on Ephesians 3:10-11, ". . . *so that the manifest wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, . . .*" (place in context of Ephesians 3:1-12).
2. Think for a moment about how you personally identify with the privilege of being part of a generation entrusted with the "mystery" and the call to make known "the wisdom of God" through the church.
 - (a) What does this mean for you personally?
 - (b) How does it define/clarify your purpose?
 - (c) What impact can this have on those around you?
3. As we focus on what the church is, perhaps more accurately *who* the church is, what does it say about the indispensable nature of the church in your personal life?
4. What do you believe has contributed to our culture's apathetic, take it or leave it, I don't have the time mentality toward the church? More importantly, what must happen to us to change this mentality?

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"The church is the center of God's plan to display His wisdom to the heavenly beings." - Mark Denver

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF THE CHURCH TODAY?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE CHURCH? Ephesians 3:1-12

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WHAT IS SO UNIQUE ABOUT THE CHURCH?

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WHY IS IT SO INDISPENSABLE TO MY LIFE?

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