

## How to Listen to a Sermon

These days many people simply don't like to hear sermons preached that are directly derived from the truth of the Bible. Instead, they routinely listen to preachers who tell them what they *want* to hear rather than what they *need* to hear.

The Bible itself predicted this would be true:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

-2 Timothy 4:3-4

I read a fascinating book recently by Dave Shiflett entitled, *EXODUS, Why Americans Are Fleeing Liberal Churches for Conservative Christianity*. Shiflett gives lots of stats about which denominations are growing and which ones are in decline. His research showed that conservative, Bible believing churches that have full confidence in the Word of God are growing.

This was his conclusion about why more liberal churches are not growing:

“The progressive forces have ousted their traditionalist pewmates and taken over their denomination, albeit a denomination that is shrinking toward oblivion. Which brings up my position: the progressive clerics are talking themselves out of a job. Their admonitions that we should all be nice to one another- be accepting, tolerant, hospitable, and open- are welcome enough in a harsh world. Yet they are not giving the world anything it cannot get from television chat shows, movies, op ed pieces, and the other soapboxes where contemporary sages gather. Their advice is much the same, if not identical, and sofas are much more comfortable than pews.” -Shiflett, Page 25

And so men like me study every week to preach the Word of God to people, knowing that in a day when everyone is doing what's right in their own eyes, we need to hear afresh from God's Word. And as a preacher I have seen powerful things happen in people's lives when they heard from God! I have seen salvation happen, dispositions changed, relationships restored, a sense of purpose born where there had been no hope previously.

With that in mind, let me give you some tips on listening to a sermon!

First, when you are going to church to hear a message, ALWAYS pray a prayer like this: “God please speak to me today- help me to hear it and apply it to my life by the power of your Holy Spirit.”

Second, in every sermon you hear, you should be listening for an action point. Bring paper or a preaching notebook, take notes, and then go back over them and write down at least one action point God gave you that day. Then apply it to your life.

Thirdly, Be a Berean! A BERE-WHAT? A Berean. Real quick, turn to Acts 17 and read verses 10-15. Now be like a Berean- always check out what a preacher says by the Word of God. Preachers can get it wrong sometimes- That's why they should always be preaching the Bible instead of what they think, and the listener should be checking it out by the Word!

Fourth, you should try to get to church early and sit as near the front as possible! The farther back you are, the more easily you are going to be distracted! Don't let it happen to you!

Finally, EXPECT God to speak to you. If you come expecting nothing, that's probably what you'll get! I decided as a young Christian always to take notes and always to apply something the preacher said- And God has blessed my Christian growth greatly!

As you pray today, ask God to give you a love for preaching. Ask forgiveness if you have had itching ears, wanting to have your felt needs met instead of the real needs that preaching shows you have. Commit now to being a hearer and doer of the Word!

Danny Campbell <><

### **You may be listening to the wrong TV preacher if...**

...they ask you to send money to the Lord but they give you their address!

...they wear a suit that was too loud for Michael Jackson!

...the people they heal in Houston bear a striking resemblance to the ones they healed in Los Angeles the week before!

...they lay on top of a pile full of letters and guarantee that God will answer each prayer!

...they utter the all-time most patronizing statement- "if you had had enough faith, your friend would have been healed"

...their hair takes a can of hairspray per show!

...they say the Spirit hasn't led them to disclose their financial reports just yet!