

*"Habit is habit, and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed down-stairs one step at a time".* This famous quote is from Mark Twain. It is so true.



We develop habits over time and contrary to popular belief, we cannot undo bad habits by just saying we aren't going to do them anymore. They can't be *flung out the window* and forgotten. It is possible to be determined enough not to do a bad habit again, and but that habit is still in our mind for some time and we struggle with it until our mindset changes.

It is also true that it takes time to develop a good habit. It doesn't happen overnight. There is another saying that indicates that it takes 21 days to develop a new habit, but experts today point to it taking usually much longer. Getting rid of an old habit or developing a new one must as Mark Twain said, be "coaxed" or persuaded one step at a time.

That is the way wisdom works in the spiritual sense. We start with knowledge. We usually do not hear some new information and understand it enough to put it into practice in our own life immediately. It is strictly knowledge or us knowing something as a fact. As we hear the information again and again and we listen to more detail, we begin to understand the depth of the information or knowledge we have been given. We say that it makes more sense to us. Once we truly understand and Holy Spirit sears it in our spirit, we begin to get wisdom to apply it to our own life. What we now know and understand we can make a habit.

***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.***  
***Proverbs 9:10 (MEV)***

Notice how this proverb indicates this truth. When God begins to expand our knowledge, He brings understanding of what that knowledge means. When we understand the heart of God on a particular area of understanding and have the fear or reverence of God operating in our lives, that knowledge and understanding begins to turn into wisdom. Notice it says beginning. It takes time to turn into wisdom where the truth of what we know and understand begins to operate in our lives.

Over centuries we have formed doctrine and habits that have watered down what the Bible says. It still amazes me that God sent a flood and it wiped out most of civilization other than Noah and his family. God said that Noah was righteous. I don't believe he said that about his family. But, within four generations society had become so corrupt again, that Noah's great grandson, Nimrod, cooperated with satan to build the enemy's kingdom on earth. It would be the counterfeit to God's intended Kingdom on earth which was designed by God from before the beginning of time.

The question is, how far has the enemy gone to thwart the plan for the Ekklesia, to redefine it, to add counterfeit parts to it? Does it even look anything like what Jesus talked about with His disciples? Do we even want to know? Wisdom all begins with knowledge, but it takes time to fully understand the things we know, and then like habits, it takes time before it is deep in our spirit and becomes a way of life.

History tells us that in the first four centuries of the “church” it went through some heavy-duty changes. Were those changes all from God? Is it possible that within just a few generations from Jesus’ death and resurrection, our teaching on the Ekklesia had been mixed with the counterfeit? Are we sure that what we are building today is what Jesus said He would build? Do we even care? Or have our traditions taken over?

***So you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. You hypocrites, Isaiah well prophesied of you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain they do worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’***

***Matthew 15:6b-9 (MEV)***

Do we care what might be traditions versus the true word of God? Or are we blissfully willing to be ignorant? Do we ignore the knowledge that just might be Truth because in knowing truth, we realize we will probably have to change and change is hard? It takes time and like Mark Twain said, “Coaxed downstairs one step at a time”.

I, as well as some of my friends, have consistently said to others “we do not go to ‘church’, we are the ‘church’”, only to be greeted with blank stares or to be asked “what do you mean by that?” When you try to explain, they walk off shaking their heads.

To millions, the “church” is the building on the corner down the street. It is emphatically NOT! That is the first step of many steps to undo a lot of tradition that has built up over the centuries. The word used in the Greek to describe “church”, is Ekklesia. When Jesus talked about building His Ekklesia, it was not about building a bunch of different buildings in every little or big town and calling it a “church” or His Ekklesia.

This truth is a big step, but it is only one step in a long walkway of steps out of religion. We cannot go further until the knowledge of this becomes an understanding and has become wisdom in our spirits that actually determines our actions. If we are the Church or the Ekklesia, then wherever we go, whether to work or to play, school or shopping, we are the “church”. We are the Ekklesia.

Once this is solid in our spirits, we realize everything (and more) that we waited to do in the building, could be done anywhere we are. We can lay hands on the sick, cast out demons, decree and declare, change circumstances around us, and so much more anywhere we go. We don’t have to bring people into a building to get saved, healed and delivered. We don’t have to go into a building to talk to God, to learn from God, to get wisdom and understanding. All these can be done wherever we are.

If wisdom would capture our heart, our spirit, concerning this, we would turn our world upside down. Yes, we are told to meet with each other and to encourage each other and that is important. That can easily be done in any building not just a building that people label a “church”. but is our meeting together really the Ekklesia?

The Ekklesia is believers who are seeking the Father's heart, to be mature by living by the spirit, not their emotions, mind or flesh. They live out their lives every single day as a believer, as a part of the Ekklesia. Their goal is advancing the Kingdom of God in the earth wherever they go.

If the leaders would begin to see the truth of the Ekklesia, their roles would change. No longer would they be preparing people to take a position in the "church", but they would be preparing a people to take their place in society. They would no longer be preparing people to teach Bible studies, to be Sunday school teachers, to take care of the nursery during "church" services, to lead worship, to preach occasionally, to evangelize by getting people to come to "church" where they will hear the message of salvation and get "saved". We would no longer be preparing the majority to be spectators instead of participants.

We would be preparing people differently. We would no longer be raising up apostles and prophets to operate within the four walls of the building, but raising up an apostolic and prophetic people to change the world in which they live. We would be raising up leaders to hear God for themselves and to receive strategies and plans from Holy Spirit to change their places of employment, their businesses, their schools, everywhere they go.

The Ekklesia is not about a building, or even about a people who attend services in a building. It is God's people everywhere you find them, operating as the Body of Christ bringing His Kingdom of righteousness and justice wherever God places them on a daily basis. We hear it, but we do not yet understand it. And until we understand it and allow Jesus, the one who is truth and wisdom personified, to solidify it in our spirit one step at a time, we will never walk in it.

I have been preaching this message for twenty years now. We have made some progress, but it has been slow. I believe it is about to explode and people are going to be willing to evaluate their traditions to see what is from man and what is of God. The fire of God is coming. The fire destroys wood, hay and stubble, that which is born from the traditions of men and has no value. But the fire also purifies that which is gold and silver.

It is what Jeremiah would learn when God called him as a prophet.

***Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Now, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."***  
***Jeremiah 1:9,10 (MEV)***

There are things we need to have torn down and destroyed in our thinking before God can build what He wants to build in us. We have to be willing to let go of old habits and traditions in order to build on the pure Word of God, on Jesus as the foundation. Are we willing to ask God to show us where we need to develop some new mindsets, some new habits? Are we willing to look at our doctrine and see if it is coming from men instead of God?

We must prepare a people to live life, not prepare a people to stay behind four walls. We must prepare a people to hear the voice of God and to obey and follow Him, not us. We must prepare a people to affect every area of society with their steps into knowledge, into understanding, into wisdom concerning the gospel, not the gospel of salvation alone but the gospel of the Kingdom. If only it were as simple as throwing the old mindset and habits *out the window*, but it isn't. It takes time and persistence.

***Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.***  
***Psalm 139:23, 24 (NLT)***

If we are going to root out evil in our cities and in the world, in the nations, we must first apply the wisdom of God in our own lives. We must ask Father God to search our hearts for anything that offends Him and then let Him lead us down the path of life, making the necessary changes in our mindsets and our habits. Let us be willing to coax them down the stairs of life, one step at a time!

