

# Are You Dissatisfied with Your Religion?

Jeremiah 6:16

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## INTRODUCTION:

- A. We live in an advertising and marketing world where the promise of “Satisfaction Guaranteed” sells products and services.”
- B. Are you dissatisfied with your religion? Millions of people are, and with good reason. In this lesson I want to take a close look at some of the reasons why.
- C. Today we are witnessing a gathering storm of dissent among religious bodies throughout our country and the world. So many people resent diluted dogma and the steady retreat from godliness that characterize so many religious bodies today.
- D. The growth of liberal denominational churches is at a near standstill. Meanwhile, those religious bodies which have a deep reverence for the Word of God and attempt to obey its teachings, are growing in an impressive manner.
- E. The words of Jeremiah seem especially appropriate for our time. **Jeremiah 6:16** - “Thus says the LORD: “Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’”
- F. Just what is happening in the religious world of our day? I should like to present to you a great deal of factual information of what is actually happening. I will be careful to delete names and other identifying marks, for my purpose is not to be critical of any individual or group, but rather to analyze impersonally some of the destructive trends which are all about us today.
- G. My ultimate purpose is to make some constructive, helpful suggestions toward a more meaningful religion for all of us.
- H. I should like to present these destructive trends on two levels.
  - 1. What is happening on a large, universal level throughout our nation and the world.
  - 2. What is happening on a more local scale.

## DESTRUCTIVE TRENDS ON A LARGE LEVEL

- A. There was the New York church which announced that it was changing its weekly worship services from Sunday to Wednesday evenings, so that members of that church might have more freedom on week-ends to travel for their personal enjoyment.

- B. Then, there was the California church which moved its Sunday worship to an open-air drive-in theater, and then invited its members to sit in their cars on Sunday morning, dressed for the beach.
- OBSERVATION:** One wonders, after the novelty wore off, just how many parishioners would bother to come at all. It is my guess that both the New York church and the California church which made these compromising moves soon found themselves without congregations at all.
- C. Another item in the news tells of “Religion 209,?? a course in religion taught at one of the Ivy League universities in the east, which offered its students open pot smoking accompanied by “freakish, repulsive dress and deportment and obscene chanting to rock music.” The course was describe in the college catalog as: “Religious ideas and Literature - a study of various expressions of meaning and meaninglessness in literature. Works by authors such as Kafka, Camus, Blake, and Baudelaire will be examined. Attention will focus on the questions of loneliness, suffering and temporality.”
1. Some students described the class as “sickening” and said, “We are desperate over what is going on.”
  2. How distant this brand of religion is from the religious instruction offered by the founding fathers of that university some 200 years ago. Incidentally, that university was founded by religious leaders for religious purposes, primarily. It is not difficult to imagine what their reaction would be to “Religion 209.”
- D. Another item in the news tells of the 8,667 congregations of one of the large American churches which are now wrestling with what some of the members have called “an anything goes” liberalized view of human sexuality. The issue centers around the landmark report prepared by a committee of leading churchmen after two and one half years of discussion. The report really liberalizes the church’s teachings concerning sex, both before and after marriage.
- E. From Norwich, England comes a report of a rector who has appointed an atheist as a part—time verger of his church. The 30 year old Royal Air Force Corporal has been appointed to wear a cassock in church, to lead processions and to take other religious roles in the regular activities of the church. The rector says, “He is the ideal man for the job. There is a cultural division between the secular world and the church which I hope this appointment will bridge.”
- OBSERVATION:** It is not difficult to imagine what the attitude of the apostles of the first century would be concerning such a modern compromise arrangement.
- F. The news also tells of an eighteen year Old girl who has been appointed the first teenager to be elected an elder in a certain prominent United States Church. Her comment was simple, “I think they wanted more ideas from the

youth of the congregation and felt youth should have a say in the activities of the church.”

**OBSERVATION:** When one remembers the qualifications for elders as I Timothy 3:1—7 clearly indicates, it is a bit difficult to understand how an 18 year old girl could be named to be an elder of any church that purports to follow in the Christian tradition. 1

## DESTRUCTIVE TRENDS ON A MORE LOCAL LEVEL

- A. Uniting with other churches to combine one larger denomination.
  - 1. Extending fellowship where there use to be none. This may sound good. But the real problem is, that each group uniting must compromise many of its teachings and practices.
  - 2. In compromising beliefs and changing them, the church is saying that it really does not matter what you believe just as long as you believe something in the name of religion.
  - 3. It is another way of saying that some beliefs become old and outdated, therefore, they need changing.
  - 4. People begin to think that the beliefs that were given up in the compromise must not have been very important, and now they begin to wonder if some of the ones retained really are.
- B. Changing a church’s teaching on a particular subject.
  - 1. Something they once taught be wrong . . . They have decided is right.
  - 2. Something they once taught to be right . . . The have decided is wrong.
  - 3. Allowing women bishops . . . rectors . . . or priests.
  - 4. Allowing professed homosexual and lesbian peoples to be church leaders and clergy.
  - 5. Allowing women an active role in preaching and conducting the worship services.
  - 6. Etc.
- C. Condoning activities and practices that are forbidden in the Holy Scriptures.
- D. Catering to and satisfying the needs or desires of the people at the cost of disregarding the Scriptures in the matter.
- E. Teaching an emphasis on creeds, councils, and religious leaders rather than on what the Bible teaches.

**OBSERVATION:** Many people begin to see through these things and therefore become dissatisfied with their religion. People become confused and really don’t know what is permanent and can be held on to believe and follow because things seem to change so rapidly.

## CONSIDER THE REAL PROBLEM BEHIND IT ALL

- A. Nelson Bell, in an article entitled “More About Relevance,” has written, “Through the influence of some theological seminaries, as well as the Bible Departments of many church-related colleges and the official literature of certain denominations, the Bible is now regarded, not as the sword of the Spirit, but as a bent and rusty instrument that has lost its convicting and converting power. The church is proving ineffective and irrelevant because so many of its leaders show an appalling ignorance of the Word of God. There are those who . . . regard it more as the work of fallible men than as a divine revelation of God’s truth, given to men under the inspiration of his Spirit.”
- B. The problem is essentially a problem of religious liberalism. Liberalism indicates that God did not really mean what He said, therefore, we are at liberty to change His teachings or do as we desire.
- C. As a result of religious liberalism, there are in the minds of so many, no personal convictions that are important enough that a person would live for them, much less die for them. Expediency and compromise become the modern watchwords that replace such staunch words as steadfastness, sacrifice, devotion and commitment.
- D. The only hope for the future of any religion is the hope that has always been present — That hope lies in a return to the foundation upon which New Testament.
- D. The Bible reveals the warnings of the apostles, through inspiration:
1. **Acts 20:28-30** – “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.  
For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.  
Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves”
  2. **Galatians 1:8-9** – “Even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.  
9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”
  3. **2 Peter 2:1-2** – “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”

4. **1 John 4:1** – “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

5. **2 John 9** – “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”

F. Needless to say, there are literally millions of people who are disturbed by the many liberal trends in religion. They’re confused, upset, and even disillusioned by some of the things that are happening in our churches. Oftentimes they feel powerless to do anything about the things they see. They see no way to reverse the trend, so they either give up completely on religion, or else, they look for a change of churches. In their church search, they witness similar problems they are fleeing from. They often wonder if all churches are the same. The answer is a clear—cut **NO!**

G. The stand taken by New Testament Christians throughout the world is a solid one based on the Bible completely. For example:

1. We believe in a personal God, the God of the Bible, who created the universe.
2. We believe that Jesus Christ is His only begotten Son, fully divine, and the Redeemer and Savior of mankind.
3. We believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and that not only are they inspired, but they are our only authority in religion. We must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. We must have a “thus says the Lord” for everything that we do in our religious faith and practice.
4. We confidently believe, as the Scriptures teach, that the church is vitally important and that each of us must be a Christian actively working in the Lord’s Church.
5. We believe that Christ’s way of life is the only way of life that ultimately brings happiness here and salvation hereafter.

B. These are convictions for which we are willing to die if need be as a result of this solid faith in God, in Christ, in the Bible, and in the church, we are a happy people. We are secure in our hope for eternal life. We are confident of the way we should live here and now. Our hope is in the grace which comes to all men because God loves us. Our part is that of faith followed by obedience to the will of God.

C. We study the Scriptures in order to know God’s will for man. To do the very best that we can, we endeavor to follow the teachings of the Holy Scriptures in our daily living. We follow the New Testament pattern in the manner by which we become Christians. We follow the New Testament pattern in the way we

worship and the way the church is organized and operated. We claim no originality. Rather, we gladly submit to God’s will and to the very best of our ability are endeavoring to restore New Testament Christianity in all its strength and power in this twentieth century.

## CONCLUSION:

- A. Millions are dissatisfied with their religion. They are looking for the Truth.  
**John 8:32** – “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
- B. They would be happy in New Testament Christianity because not only is it truth, but also, it never changes, it is permanent.
- C. Do you want New Testament Christianity as I have briefly described it? If you have never become a Christian in the New Testament manner, that must be your beginning point.
- D. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**

