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# Words of Truth

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## **If You Were Gone, Would This Congregation Miss You?**

*By: Brian A. Yeager*

If you and I are faithfully doing the Lord's work we are then each vital to the work of the congregation here. It does not matter whether you are "strong" or "weak" in the faith (Romans 15:1-3). If you are faithful in whatever role you are capable of fulfilling, you are a significant part of the congregation. Notice how the Scriptures teach this: *"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular"* (I Corinthians 12:14-27).

Nothing more needs to be said than what has been quoted above to prove that every faithful member of the church is vital. We all work together for the spiritual good of the local body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16). This study is to make each of us think about where we individually fit into the collective unit of this local congregation of Christ. We must ask ourselves the question of, "what role do I fill in this congregation?" You do not have to have an "official office" (i.e. evangelists, elder, etc.) to have a significant role.

### **You Do Not Need To Be An Elder, Deacon, Evangelist, Etc. To Be Vital To The Body**

Common thinking, erringly influenced by the world (Romans 12:1-3), is that some roles in the church are more important than others. Elders, deacons, and evangelists are way too often set upon a pedestal. Such is not the thinking that Jesus has instilled in us (Matthew 23:1-12). Nor do we read in the Scriptures that we should think of ourselves as more important than others in the congregation (Matthew 20:26-28, Romans 12:10, Galatians 5:13, and Philippians 2:3-8). The church has a diverse membership that acts as one body in Christ (Romans 12:4-5 and I Corinthians 10:17). We are all capable of different things as God has given us our natural abilities (I Peter 4:11).

As a member of the body of Christ here, in El Paso, where do you fit in? How do you use your God given talents to help the authorized work of the congregation here? From the simple tasks of assembling together and provoking one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:22-25) to being teachers one toward another (Titus 2:1-8); where do you fit? Are you a faithful example for others (Philippians 2:14-16)? What is your place?

Jesus expects us, individually, to be fruitful in the kingdom (John 15:1-8, Galatians 5:22-23, Colossians 1:10, and Titus 3:14). What fruit are you bringing forth? Think about the terms we are talking about in this study. Think of “fruit”. What good is a tree if nothing is growing on it? Take that to the next step of thought. Imagine yourself owning an orange orchard. Let’s say that this orange orchard had a tree in the midst that did not produce any oranges. How would you feel if that tree fell over dead? Would you miss it?

Notice Jesus’ answer to the question we closed the last paragraph with: *“He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down”* (Luke 13:6-9).

The picture of the member of the body of Christ that serves no purpose is pretty clear. That should be motivation to us all. It should motivate us to think of our place in the body as well as seek authorized ways in which to be more productive. Now, let’s make this even more personal to us here locally.

### **At Sunrise...**

We have members that are young and old in the flesh and faith. We have talented members and limited members. We have stronger and weaker members. If you are strong, can you help carry some of the load of the weak (Galatians 6:2)? If you are weak, can you help the strong by letting them help you? Then, after a reasonable time, can you step up and carry more of your own weight (Galatians 6:4-5)? Physically, if you are capable of giving more (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) can you help this congregation by supporting the Lord’s work more? If you are limited in what you can do spiritually and physically, can you be part of the support structure we have here in giving phone calls or cards to those whom might need them? Can you help with the physical things that need done such as hospitality, visiting, maintaining our meeting place, etc.; so that those busy in spiritual work do not have to? There is something more you can do. Do it!

### **Conclusion**

Make it so that you are important in the congregation assembling at Sunrise Acres. Make it so that if you were missing, that you’d be a noticeable absence. Sadly, we have some members that wouldn’t be missed so much if gone. Are you one of them? This is an important question in the present and for our future. Are you fruitful or fruitless (Philippians 1:11)?

## Milkshakes

### Repentance From Dead Works

By: Brian A. Yeager

Repentance is a simple, yet oft misunderstood subject matter. Repentance is simply turning away from sin (II Chronicles 7:14, Ezekiel 33:14-16, and II Timothy 2:19) and bringing forth fruit that shows your changes (Matthew 3:8 and Acts 26:18-20). Repentance involves sorrow, but is not just being sorry (II Corinthians 7:8-10). The process of repentance also includes confessing your faults to the Lord, but does not stop there (Proverbs 28:13).

Repentance sometimes involves other people. If you are to sin against another and that person rebukes you for that sin, you must repent to be forgiven by that person (Luke 17:3-4). Repentance can also include others if we need their help to make things right (James 5:19-20).

Now, what are dead works? Consider something you may not think of as the application today is not nearly as relevant as it once was. Think of this: *“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience from dead works** to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth”* (Hebrews 9:11-17).

From what we just read, and the context continues to bear out (Hebrews 9:11-10:22), the dead works are those relative to the Law of Moses. Thus, the first principle called “repentance from dead works” (Hebrews 6:1) applies much more then than now. Jewish Christians constantly struggled in the first century with moving away from the Law of Moses to completely serving Christ under the New Covenant (i.e. Galatians 1:1-6:18).

So, you might be thinking that you are not at all applicable from struggling with serving the Law of Moses. Yet, there are applications for us today. Let’s say you walk away from any religious error and enter into Christ. Any “religious work” that is not authorized by Christ is a dead work. Meaning, it is fruitless (Matthew 7:21-23). Thus, for us to repent from dead works, that would mean that we’d leave behind any practice we associate with the Lord that really did not originate with the Lord (i.e. Colossians 2:18-23).

Jesus told a man looking for a miracle and an adulterous woman the very same thing. He told them to “sin no more” (John 5:1-14 and John 8:1-11). True repentance is the kind of change that leaves sin behind (I Corinthians 15:34). Repentance from any sin, including dead works, is about becoming a new person (Romans 6:1-23, Ephesians 4:17-5:11, and Colossians 3:1-17). Dead works bring forth nothing good. Thus, repentance is the only solution (Luke 13:1-5).