

Message

of the Open Bible

www.
openbible.org

In Spirit and in Truth



ANDREA JOHNSON/Editor

Our Sunday school teacher, Pastor Rich Kopp, held up a Bible and asked the class, "Be really honest, who in this class does not really believe this book?"

Cindy,* an older lady, raised her hand and said, "Honestly, I don't really believe in the God of the Old Testament. I get so tired of all the judgment and the idea of mortal sin...."

Other students defended the "God of the Old Testament." One noted that people in the Bible needed discipline and correction, just like our children do. Then Rich gently stated the bottom line: "Cindy, we don't get to choose the kind of God we want. We get the God who is."

Cindy admitted she has never read through the entire Bible. She follows teachings that agree with her. How many of us do the same thing? We choose to follow the "god" we understand, the one who conforms to our mindset, our values, rather than forming our mindset and values from whom God is. Sadly, much of this is the result of not disciplining ourselves to know who God really is...not taking the time to study His biography, the Bible, for ourselves.

Recently a dear friend, wondering where she and her husband had "gone wrong" as parents, wrote:

From the moment we both were saved we never failed to be at church and we served the Lord with all of our hearts. But now, 32 years later we see our failures. We had no prerequisite for how to be a Christian. We were first-generation Christians. We went straight into the '70s Pentecostal movement, which drew us in with its ambience.

Not until recently did reality hit. My husband and I

didn't get the fundamental foundation in Jesus before plunging into His Presence heart first. We were saved and ushered into deep worship without ever learning "how" we got saved. [Thus] we did not know how to teach our daughters. We thought that by bringing them to church three times a week and being deep into ministry, it would take care of itself.

[Our grandchildren] are the third generation of Christians, living like the seeds that fell on shallow ground.

If we could go back in time, I would want to set ourselves in a little community church whose major goal was to bring everyone to salvation on a one-to-one basis. Then, when we all found our footing in Jesus, go and graduate to a Pentecostal church.

My heart broke for my friend as I remembered the same feeling after seeing someone close to me "fall" time and time again. I felt part of his problem was not having a secure footing. He knew how to experience the joy – even the anointing – of the Holy Spirit, but lacked discipline in his spiritual life. I wanted my kids to follow God because it was right, not just for the euphoria they might feel during a worship service. For that they needed well-rounded biblical teaching. Thankfully, we landed at First Church of the Open Bible in Des Moines, Iowa, a Pentecostal church with a solid Christian education program that included an in-depth doctrines class.

We shouldn't have to be either/or. A good "full" gospel church should be Spirit-led and biblically sound. "True worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

Andrea

Andrea Johnson,
Managing Editor

Contents:

4 READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE

By Dr. Nick Venditti

Discover the greatest apologetic argument we can share with anyone.

6 EMERGING DECEPTION

By Spencer Keroff

"Christian" teachings and materials abound. Nonetheless, according to this author, it is more critical than ever to be certain these ideas align with the Word of God.

7 CUTTING THROUGH THE CONFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY

By Josh and Sean McDowell

Drawn from their newly released book, *The Unshakable Truth*, Josh McDowell and his son Sean present apologetics relationally; focusing on how right believing affects not only believers but also the people they encounter.

8 MISSIONARY COMPOSITE

Our Open Bible International Ministries team ministers in 46 countries. Let's cover these faithful laborers with our full prayer and financial support.

12 THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

By John Freeman

Even pastors can wonder if "God is there," especially when dealing with advanced cancer. This pastor was in for the experience of his life.

Plus Much More!

*Not her real name