

When in doubt, check it out

Dan Nelson – pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

When in doubt, check it out! Scientists use this principle, so do doctors, law enforcement personnel, and investigative news reporters. Since our earliest of school days we have been taught to explore, discover and learn new things. As we got older, we were introduced to research papers. Yikes! Enter bibliographies, footnotes, and lots and lots of reading. Business people invest tremendous resources into product development, manufacturing processes, and marketing research. Sports coaches scout, study and even annotate performance statistics of players in order to maximize their competitive edge. Even musicians and artists often develop their craft through the examination and analysis of the achievement of others, employing subsequent practice, trial, experimentation and creativity of their own. In other words: applied research.

I find it interesting that while just about every facet of life, both professionally and recreationally, is approached through diligence and examination; Christians tend to take a much more dulled-down approach to their faith. What they say is the most important thing, in reality, tends to take backseat to just about everything else. Don't believe me? Challenge yourself. If you know more John Lennon lyrics than memorized Scripture, why is that? Chances are, you can recite full bios on 12 Hollywood celebrities, but not even the names of the 12 apostles. You might know sports scores and batting averages on teams and players that you don't even like, but have no idea how many books there are in the Bible. You probably can recount 10 media or business scandals from the past year, but could you narrate the Ten Commandments if your life depended upon it?

When Shelley and I got married in 1989, we had long been out of the habit of bringing Bibles to church, because you barely needed one and they provided them anyway. We really didn't even know what we were missing. You know, there are children in this world who have never tasted ice cream. The statistics are accurate; none of those children ever crave ice cream. But me, I've tasted it, and I like it, and I want more of it. I think the same is true of coming into contact with the things of God. We experience him, we like it, we want more. But how can we truly experience him the way he desires for us and avoid the Bible so audaciously?

The Bible says, "All scripture and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16). There is a group of people called the Bereans who were commended for their diligence because they didn't just listen to preaching, they searched the Scriptures to see if the things that were taught were true (Acts 17:11).

Would you like to see more spiritual fruit in your own life? Read your Bible diligently, bring it to church, look up every reference that is made, follow up, check things out, and seek to apply it. You will benefit doubly from your pastor's message and you might find that this was the beginning of something exciting in your life.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:45am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View