

Studying the Sermon

by Wayne Goff

It is always a privilege of mine to hear other sound Gospel preachers. But like most people, I have to **concentrate** and **focus** on the message. How do you prepare your mind to hear and absorb a sermon?

The way I do it is by **taking notes**. I think the habit stems from my school days, especially in college, where I had several classes that really didn't interest me but I had to take in order to obtain a degree. So now I take notes in Bible classes and in sermons so that I can **retain** what is being taught. After the lesson, I will look over my notes and if I need to keep them, then I will file them away. If I need to study the message further, then I leave them on my desk to study. If I have a question, or a concern, then I do some Bible research. Many of the things I have been concerned about turned out to be a new truth that I had not discerned before.

But the bottom line for every one of us is that it is **our own responsibility** to hear carefully God's Word as it is presented to us by preachers and teachers. If we *casually, haphazardly* listen to a sermon, then we will not benefit from it as much. If we determine to listen to understand God's Word, then our hearts are in better condition to receive the truth.

Some people – including brethren – sit back and **“judge”** each sermon. Then they tell others “Well, I didn't like that one very much” or “That sermon was kind of boring” or “The preacher offended me.” **It never dawns on them to listen for the purpose of learning God's Word!** Yes, we all will judge the sermon in one way or another. But we need to go beyond that and ask ourselves: (1) Is the sermon the truth? (2) What proof texts were used? (3) Did I understand the point or points being made? (4) How does this apply to me?

Every sermon we hear is *presented* as God's Word. We need to search the Scriptures to be sure that it **IS** God's Word. And if it is, then we to obey it whether we like it or not, whether it is boring or not, and whether it offended me or not.

Jesus offended a massive crowd (**John 6:61**) and many of them left Jesus never to return again (**John 6:66**)! Now who was to blame for that? Jesus, or the offended listeners? Sometimes the truth hurts! But we need to get over our painful hurt and make an application to save our eternal souls. Are **YOU** listening?

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