

Fellowship of the Word

problem:

we are an individualistic, private society, personal autonomy is valued in the extreme

- In American we do not see ourselves as free from tyranny but free from one another.

so, when we say freedom we often really mean personal autonomy: Our motto has essentially changed from give me liberty (freedom from tyranny) or give me death, to give me personal autonomy or give me death.

we are also a society that increasingly doesn't like to read, we love to be entertained instead-
one blogger -had this to say after analyzing the stats -

Indeed, most Americans haven't read a book since they left high school. 42% of college graduates have not read another book after graduating, 80% of US families did not buy or read a book last year, 70% of US adults have not been in a bookstore in the last five years, 57% of new books are not read to completion, and most "readers" (to use the term loosely) do not get past page **18 in the last book they purchased...**

So, what does the average American do with their time since they don't spend it reading? In short, the general public works, eats, play with their kids for 10 minutes a day, watches television 10 or 12 hours a week, and surfs the web for porn or cute one-liners to post on their Facebook pages. But they do not read. - Jim Karger
<https://www.dollarvigilante.com/blog/2012/9/3/why-most-americans-are-fools.html>

rather than be aliens in this world - we conform the church to be individualistic, personal and largely consumeristic (read selfish). Since we don't want to read we focus on a mystical experience - largely through music - people come to church for a worship experience rather than for the Word

it even is done with the gospel:

God has a plan and purpose for your life - individualistic and mystically experiential

Christian, God really does have a purpose and plan for your life - but it is not individualistic and it is not a mystical experience.

Text:

A New Family

1Pet. 1:22 ¶ Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love (philadelphia), **love one (agape) another** earnestly from a pure heart,

1Pet. 1:23 **since you have been born again, (have been born again = perfect passive participle)**

*Love one another- John 13:35 - unity not uniformity
definition of love - not for spouse - 1 Cor 13*

A New Desire

not of perishable seed but of imperishable, **through the living and abiding word of God;**

1Pet. 1:24 for

“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers,
and the flower falls,

1Pet. 1:25 but **the word of the Lord remains forever.”**

¶ And **this word is the good news that was preached to you.**

1Pet. 2:1 ¶ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

1Pet. 2:2 Like newborn infants, **long for the pure spiritual milk**, that by it you may **grow up into salvation—**

1Pet. 2:3 if indeed (since) you have tasted that the Lord is good.

*(1-2) Long for the Word - do not long for milk but long for the Word the same way a baby longs for milk
this longing is hindered by your individualistic tendencies; col 3:5-16 (let the word dwell in you plural
since you have tasted - this desire is a real proof of God's saving work in you*

A New Goal

1Pet. 2:4 ¶ As you come to him, **a living stone** rejected by men but in the sight of God **chosen and precious**,

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1Pet. 2:5 you yourselves **like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

1Pet. 2:6 For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

1Pet. 2:7 ¶ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

1Pet. 2:8 ¶ and

“A stone of stumbling.
and a rock of offense.”

¶ **They stumble because they disobey the word**, as they were destined to do.

1Pet. 2:9 ¶ **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession**, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1Pet. 2:10 **Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people**; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Grow together through the Word - corporate maturity through the Word

(4) spiritual house - 1 Cor 3:10-16 - you people are a temple

(4-5) spiritual worship Rom 12:1-3

- spiritual growth is not a mystical process but a rational one -> Eph 4:11-16

through the sufficient Word - 2 Tim 2:15; 3:12-4:5; (also superior 2 Peter 1:21)

(6-8a) Chief cornerstone/ builders - rejected Christ - Acts 4:10-11,

(8b) to reject Christ is to reject the Word - Jn 1:1 (Luke 16:19-31; matt 15:1-9; 22:23-32)

Main Idea:

God's purpose and plan for you life is that you grow up into corporate maturity through the Word.

Implication:

you cannot live the Christian life outside of a church family so

app: do you treat these people as family? unity is not uniformity

you cannot live the Christian life without longing for the Word

app: do you exchange Christian entertainment for the actual Word?

you cannot live the Christian life without pursuing corporate maturity through the Word of God as the goal

app: is our maturity together in the Word a real and actual goal in your life? if someone were to follow you around do your habits indicate this? - have you substituted this goal with another good goal? evangelism and worship? All of our evangelism crusades and all of our calls for a radical life of worship is to be done in the context of this goal- corporate maturity through the Word

Action:

the radical Christian life is really simple made up of non-mystical, mundane things

commit to one another warts and all - 242 groups

make it your ambition to know the Word front to back, cover to cover

be part of things even if they are not your thing - commit to regular disciplined involvement in the church God sacrificed everything for.

here are some articles for further discussion/study:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2013/august/how-seeker-sensitive-consumer-church-is-failing-generation.html?paging=off>

<http://www.gty.org/resources/questions/QA121/what-should-i-look-for-when-choosing-a-new-church-home>

http://www.reformationtheology.com/2009/01/nine_marks_of_a_healthy_church.php