

## ***Balance: An On-Going Pursuit***

*“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”* (James 1:22)

At both an individual and congregational level we have the temptation to gravitate to one of two extremes. Some Christians see the need of deep Bible study and worship, possibly close to the point of not interacting with those who are not Christians. On the other hand, some Christians have a great awareness of the world and the need to make a positive impact on it and thus long for the church to reach out and be involved with people, sometimes to the exclusion of serious Bible study.

I am sure you can readily see the weakness of both extremes. I believe that you have also felt the desire to, at one point or another to gravitate toward one of these. We must keep in mind that we need to study the Bible AND reach out to others. Please consider the following points.

First, God wants us to know and worship him. A dedicated worshipper of God is beautiful to behold. Yet, if we just devote our time to the study of the Bible and worship of God, we become just a Bible study society. Jesus said to one group of his peers, *“You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God”* (Matthew 22:29). A lack of knowledge can set us adrift from God. Even though we may have good intentions and good feelings, those intentions and feelings alone will not draw us to God. Thus, a deep study of God’s word and worship of him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) are imperative if we are to be anchored in him.

Secondly, God wants us to win others to his cause. Paul wrote, *“I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some”* (1 Corinthians 9:22). It is encouraging to see Christians who want to share Jesus with others and who want to build meaningful relationships. However, in the zeal to win others, the truth may not be completely taught and the converts may not truly grounded in the word. As a result, there may be good feelings and good relationships, but the church may be made up of shallow Christians.

So, how can we bridge the gap between these two extremes? The answer is obvious: Concentrate equally on these two aspects of your life. Set aside daily time for study of the Scriptures and faithfully assemble for worship with your brethren. At the same time, remain fully aware that you are a messenger on God’s behalf to others. Live a life that points others to Jesus—a life of dignity, honesty, and purity—and build relationships through which you can share the gospel.

—Lance

**Cordle**