

Equal Responsibility

Dub McClish

An esteemed brother, Hollis Miller, of Murray Kentucky, once wrote the following in the College Street Bulletin:

When one denies the faith, after all Biblical efforts of brotherly love to retain him have failed, Christians need to stop blaming the church, and start recognizing the existence of a force known in the Bible as sin. Christian, however, they are and whatever age they may be, do not drop out of the kingdom of Heaven because the church has let them down. They drop out because Satan has devoured them (1 Pet. 5:8).

It is a warped concept that tried to shift all blame for spiritual failings in the individual to the only institution on the face of the earth that is solely dedicated to the spiritual upbuilding of mankind. Once I was teaching a class for teenagers on Sundays before the evening worship hour. It became obvious that one girl was being delivered to the building by her parents, but she was not coming to the class. I thought her parents would want to know that she was both deceiving them and missing what might be gained from the class. The mother's reaction? "If you would make the class interesting, she would come." It did not seem to occur to the woman that her girl just might not be interested in the right things!

Granted, those who teach and preach are subject to inadequacies and failures. We who are teachers must labor to make our lessons as interesting as possible. We who preach should work at preaching with all the power and effectiveness we can develop. God will judge us for doing less than our best.

But pardon me if I do not take too kindly to the idea that it is always the teacher's fault if the class is "uninteresting." Nor do I admit that it is always the fault of a "dull" sermon when someone falls asleep in the pew. It is strange how many experts there are on preaching and teaching who have never done any of either one. As some would have it, it was all Paul's fault (a dry, dull, lengthy sermon, no doubt) that a fine teenager like Eutychus went to sleep in the assembly (Acts 20:9)! Until proof to the contrary is shown, I will insist that the hearer has equal responsibility with the speaker when the Gospel is presented.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in the September 18, 1975, edition of *the Granbury Gospel*, weekly bulletin of the Granbury Church of Christ, Granbury, Texas, of which I was editor.

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