

Too Lite to Be Light?

A Lo-Carb brand of personal religion is disastrous to the world.

Have you been to a grocery store lately? Seems like everywhere you go for food—supermarkets, restaurants, wherever—you see advertising that promises Lo-Carb, Less Fat, Lite, Reduced Calorie or NonFat on an increasing number of products we eat or drink every day.

Actually, with these new types of foods (and I've tried my share) I have not been full in a while. Much of this stuff leaves me wanting something else—like a New York sausage-and-pepper pizza.

Before you start wondering if I've overindulged in a health-food craze, I'll zero in on my point. The apostle Paul said to believers, "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27, NKJV).

Physically speaking, yes, eating the right food is without question essential for good health. But spiritually speaking, having a Lo-Carb, less-filling, Christianity-Lite brand of personal religion is hazardous to you and disastrous to the world.

If Christianity Lite were packaged and carried an ingredients label, the list might read: minimal church attendance; spiritual psychobabble; no turning from or forgiveness of sin; passionless preaching; microscopic mention of the blood, cross and supernatural power of Jesus Christ; no altar calls; and absolutely no witnessing.

This easily could be called the Pablum-Driven Life.

All of it takes us another step backward when it comes to reaching our world with the gospel. The weight-reducing spin on spirituality today possesses only enough power to give one a temporary sense of acceptance and well-being. It does not have enough Holy Ghost oomph! to sustain a full-blown commitment to Jesus Christ that not only can weather the storms of adversity but also advance this cause worldwide.

Paul held nothing back in communicating all the truth of God's Word to believers. The reason seems incredibly obvious: We need everything God can give us to live in today's world with any degree of spiritual victory.

We need peace in our hearts, power to resist temptation, strength to overcome sin, and an active and contagious spirituality. There is a very real place on the table of 21st century life for more of "the whole counsel of God."

Paul knew the full power of the good news firsthand because he had been transformed by it. He also knew that people who have allowed themselves to be drastically changed by the entirety of the gospel were more likely to reach beyond themselves to touch others with the love of Jesus.

Effective evangelism has never been merely about programs, materials, machinery or clever presentation, although these are tools we'll continue to use. In fact, isn't it marvelous that God went outside the established church box to create The Passion of the Christ, an evangelistic tool that witnesses to Him?

Nonetheless, this doesn't take away from the fact that effective, contemporary evangelism is about men and women personally and practically committed to the Great Commission, yielded to and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and spreading the message through whatever means possible.

If we present the whole gospel for the whole person, then we might begin to see the Holy Spirit work in our families, lives, businesses and ministries in a much greater way than before. The baptism of the Holy Spirit gives a believer a full measure for full power.

The clearly stated, primary purpose of the charismatic distinctive—the baptism of the Holy Spirit—is not simply to manifest spiritual gifts. It is to empower the church to evangelize the world through word and deed. “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8).

When I gave my life to Jesus as a young, unchurched, Jewish heroin addict, I wanted everything God had for me—a new life, healing, deliverance and tongues. If it was from God, I wanted it. How about you?

Let's not fall short.

If we want to make a difference, let's ask the Holy Spirit for all that He can give us and then get busy living and telling His message.