



CALVARY MONUMENT BIBLE CHURCH
LOVING, LIVING, LEADING FOR GOD'S GLORY

SURVIVING DAYS OF HYPERINFORMATION

Pastor Bob Reid | June 17, 2020

In these Covid-19 days I have been responding to Facebook notifications concerning “friends” birthdays with this statement to the birthday celebrants, “Birthday blessings! Eat an extra slice of birthday cake. It fights off viruses. It must be true. I read it on Facebook.” As you probably surmise, this is a rather tongue in cheek statement. Just in case someone missed the sarcasm, I end the statement with an emoji with a smiley face and a wink. I am expecting sometime soon I will be messaged back with the question, “Which flavor/kind of cake works best!”

Days of hyperinformation have produced people so overwhelmed with excessive information that they are paralyzed in their thinking with information overload. Such an overload becomes a black hole that consumes one’s time, faith, emotional energy, and general wellbeing. The Apostle Paul warns a spiritual leader, Timothy, about the last days where this preoccupation will be rampant as false teachers target a segment of Christians who are “always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7 NASB). Satan does not mind people gaining information and knowledge if it does not lead to truth. After all, Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). His greatest desire is to sidetrack people from the truth of God that can genuinely transform lives. He wants to redirect one’s attention so they “waste their time in endless discussion of myths... These things only lead to meaningless speculations, which don’t help people live a life of faith in God” (1 Timothy 1:4 NLT).

To counter Satan’s devices, Paul tells Timothy to encourage his brothers and sisters in Christ to “continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:14-17 NASB). The antidote to the paralysis of the preoccupation on trivia is to refocus upon eternal, unchanging, and divine truth. Such a focus will allow one to process and evaluate what a person hears and reads.

Solomon, the wisest of all men of his day, recorded and collected wisdom preserved for us in the book of Proverbs. He gives some key advice that can help us in the days of hyperinformation. He advises, “Only simpletons believe everything they’re told! The prudent carefully consider their steps. The wise are cautious and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence” (Proverbs 14:15-16 NLT). Too often well intended believers pass along articles and other information that they have read without verifying if what is said is reliable. In these days, people need the spirit of the Bereans. Paul commends them saying, “Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11). They were commended for being careful and for cross-checking what they heard with absolute truth in the Scriptures. Gullibility and faith are not synonyms. Mass media’s information too often is passed along without checking the facts. Doing so can be a form of lying and poorly reflects upon our God whose major attribute is truth. Do not pass along information just because it seems exciting or supports your position. Unless you know it is true, you should stay away from the “share” button on Facebook! Conspiracy theories abound when stories are unprocessed and falsehoods are circulated.

Solomon also advises, “A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash” (Proverbs 15:14 NLT). Be careful where you feed! What would happen if Christians spent as much time in the Word of God as they do on their technology devices? Perhaps we would see an amazing revival! The world around us provides many information garbage dumps. Mingled with the contents in these information dumps are a variety of substances. Information becomes toxic when mixed with pollutants of bitterness, anger, prejudice, hatred, arrogance, personal hurts, distortions, and personal agendas. These caldrons of corruption are no place to feed one’s mind and heart. Solomon also told his son, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (4:23). A healthy heart feeds on godly wisdom, not unwholesome distorted insights. Seek God’s wisdom to process data in this hyperinformation age. “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking” (James 1:5 NLT).