



STUCK

Have you ever felt that you were stuck in your Christian life? Not going forward, not going backwards, just stuck? God has asked you to do something and it terrifies you, or just makes you a little bit uncomfortable to the point that you find yourself habitually shoving it to the back burner.

It's very common in the Christian walk. If you are serious about following Jesus and doing what He asks you to do, you will come to this place. It is inevitable. Some Christians arrive here and never move past. They remain stuck for the rest of their lives. I know some of these, and if you look hard enough, you will discover that you probably do, too.

The same thing happens to the church. Once, at the annual convention of the *German Assemblies of God*, I was talking to the Director. With great alarm in his eyes, he said to me, "The church is stuck!" There is no doubt in my mind that the traditional church of America is stuck. She gets entrenched in tradition, and can't seem to move past it. *Warren Wiersby*, in his book *God Isn't In A Hurry* writes, "A church on the move is not afraid of change. Someone has said the 'seven last words of the church' are 'But we've always done it this way!'"

There is a simple, yet sometimes very hard way to get past STUCK. Do what Jesus is asking you to do, no matter how hard or terrifying it seems . . . and you will get unstuck! The faster you do it, the better. When you have breakthrough in this area, you get past stuck and you say, "I wish I would have done this a long time ago."

Confrontation has been my Achilles heel. Numerous times the Lord has told me to confront an individual. I stall and I stall and I stall . . . you know the drill. Most likely, you have been there. At one point God was asking me to confront the pastor of a large church. God gave me a revelation in the service that was so clear and powerful, I had absolutely no doubt

of the authenticity of the message. This was one of the most difficult things I would ever do in my life.

When I finally worked up the courage and met him in his office, I hemmed and hawed and looked around the room at the pictures on the wall . . . then graciously but firmly, he asked, "What's on your mind?"

So I spilled it out. He gasped and nearly literally fell out of his chair. My words were very hard for him to hear. When he recovered, he was very gracious and he thanked me.

There is a window to be obedient. God is long suffering, loving and patient, but if you are not obedient, at some point the window closes and the opportunity is gone.

The wife of a prominent Christian leader in America was telling of a time when she was praying and asking God about direction. He didn't say anything, and she became very frustrated. Finally He said to her, "You haven't done the thing I asked you to do a while back. Why are you asking me what to do?" The message was obvious. God isn't going to give you new things to do until you have done what He already told you to do.



If you are stuck, go back and look closely. There may be something God asked you to do a while back and you haven't done it. When you do it, it will unlock your stuck condition, so that you can move forward.



Recently, Lorraine and I visited the small church I attended growing up in Waskish, Minnesota. We performed a special music number for them, the old hymn *Softly and Tenderly*. They are always enthusiastic about our music. Pastor Dave was away and in his absence, he assigned various members of the congregation to run the service. Stephanie, a "twenty-something," led the song service for the first time. Three other individuals, Wyatt, Jesse, and Dawn, who had never spoken for a service before, brought messages that ranged from a couple minutes to 10. Everyone was excited. I thought the concept

was brilliant! It was a truly fun service, with plenty of solid Bible based material presented.



Pastor Dave came to the church of about 15, a year and a half ago. The first thing he did was to start everyone reading the Bible through in a year, using the yearly Bibles that give you about 5 chapters a day to read. Nearly everyone is participating. Pastor Dave brings a short message each Sunday, based on something they have read that week. People come with a sense of expectation, wondering what scripture he will speak on. Things have changed. There is excitement and enthusiasm, and the church has gained some new attendees.

Where Are They?



There is confusion, especially on the part of the 50 and over segment of today's Christians. They are not aware of how low, church attendance is by the Millennials. When you tell them, they don't want to believe you.

Total regular church attendance to an evangelical or charismatic church in America is 9.1 percent. Roughly 6 percent of that figure is people over 50, which leaves just 3 percent under 50. About 2 percent of those are of the 34 to 50 age group, which leaves just 1 percent in the under 34 group. These figures come from *The American Church in Crisis*, written by David T. Olson.

Olson monitored a data base of 200,000 churches over a 20-year period. He compiled his figures from actual attendance reports from the churches.

George Barna's figures for church attendance were much higher and the Gallup Poll reported higher numbers still.

Why the discrepancy between Olson's figures and the other two? Because people lie.

When people are asked if they go to church, they want to appear better than they are, so they say yes. They may be only going twice a year on Easter or Christmas, or going once in a while. It's called the "halo effect," which originated with the polling of voters during political elections. It was found that when people are asked if they voted, many of them lie. They say they did when they didn't because they want to appear to be good citizens.

The same trend appears in the polling of churchgoers. They want to appear to be good people so they say they went to church when they didn't.

Olson's question was, "Did you happen to go to church last Sunday?" The numbers then were much lower than to the question, "Do you go to church?"

The actual regular church attendance of the Millennials to an evangelical or charismatic church is quite likely less than 1 percent.

Don't Forget

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