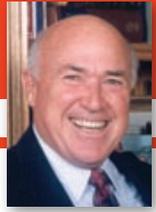


A Word from Pastor Chuck

C A L V A R Y C H A P E L D I S T I N C T I V E S



VENTURES OF FAITH—PART 5

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

In the 1960s, a book called *The Gospel Blimp* was published, which looked satirically at the church's attempts to evangelize. It typifies the church programs devised by men to try to build a church's attendance. In one fictional anecdote, someone put an invitation to attend the church on a blimp, put it on a cable, and let it fly above the church. Then people would know the church was there. They even put the message "Jesus Loves You" on the blimp.

The story continued that problems arose in keeping the blimp up. Finally, a storm came, and the men were trying to hold it. They got into a big fight with each other, and it ultimately split the church. Half the people left, angry with the other half. That's so true of man's efforts! Rather than bringing gain to the church, loss is often incurred. Early on, when it was evident the blimp wasn't working, they should have admitted their mistake and let the thing blow away in the wind. We, too, should never hold on to what God wants to blow away.

Several years ago, I went to Lubbock, TX, to speak at a Southern Baptist church. The pastor said they had decided that they weren't going to keep any program alive in the church by artificial means. In other words, they weren't going to try to keep alive through "life support" things that were dying.

"Look at what God did, and how God used this person. Look at how God has blessed that man!" Be careful. When you have to remind yourself of what God did in the past, it indicates that you likely are not experiencing the work of God fresh in your own life today.

There was a time when God was using the Saturday Night Concerts at Calvary Chapel in a glorious way. These concerts were the greatest evangelistic tool that we had going. The place was packed. We had a lot of bands and hundreds of kids coming forward to accept Jesus Christ every Saturday night. Then that time passed. A couple of years ago, there were some who said that they wanted to try Saturday Night Concerts again. So, I said, "Okay, go for it." But the time had passed. For a while, they tried to keep them going, but it was as if God had said, "No, that era is over." Now that doesn't mean it won't come again; but rather than going on and seeing the thing slowly lose its life, we cancelled it. We let it go. We let it die. We didn't try to keep it going.

Be led by the Spirit and don't be afraid to follow. And having begun in the Spirit, don't seek to be made perfect in the flesh. I see this as a problem, even among some of the guys that were with us at the beginning. God has blessed their ministry, but unfortunately they've gotten much more organized. They're now beginning to

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The church has so frequently made this mistake. God might use a particular program for a time, but then that time passes. Unfortunately, it's become a tradition for people to try to keep it alive. They put it on life-support systems in an attempt to keep it going. With God's help, we learn to let things die a natural death instead of trying to keep things going by artificial means.

It's always a sign of degeneration when you have to go back to the past to say what God has done, rather than being able to say, "Look at what God is doing today." Instead of just hearing what God has done, it's important that we become a vital part of the work. We need to experience and see the work of God for ourselves. Otherwise, it won't go on. We need to make each succeeding generation a first generation, as far as the experience of the work of God is concerned. In that way, it's being continued. But when we start saying,

direct the program, and with it, they're losing something that's vital. Having begun in the Spirit, don't seek to be perfected in the flesh. It's always a mistake.

I thank God that He has given us many pastors who caught this vision of simply venturing out in faith. It's a thrill to see how God blesses when we dare to step out and allow Him to do what He wants to do, giving ourselves over as instruments through which He can work if He so desires. The key is being available. So, who knows? The eyes of the Lord are still going to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. Discover the will of God and then jump into it. Get your heart in harmony with His, and you will be amazed at what God will do and how He will bless. ↻