

WHY BIBLE CLASSES by Carl McMurray

Along with Sunday evening services, midweek Bible studies in many places have been going out of style. They have been replaced with choir practice, youth meetings, or singles dating. And it's not just midweek studies. Even the soundest, most scripturally conservative congregations seem to have a faithful contingent of folks that arrive dutifully on Sunday morning for the worship hour...after class!

Excluding those medically hindered, consistently late or absentee folk speak loudly in their actions. They make the statement, "although worship to my Lord is important, I don't need Bible classes." Is it true? Are Bible classes just a useless tradition?

I know that in times past one service of worship per week is all that many rural, far-flung Christians had access to. Midweek meetings were unheard of. Didn't those Christians grow spiritually and didn't they have the hope of heaven when they died? I'm sure they did, but let's consider "the rest of the story," Paul Harvey.

First, it is certainly not my place to judge the spirituality of others, but ask yourself not how many of those one-service-per-week Christians stayed faithful, but how many of their children are faithful today. I will testify that even though I was not raised in that setting, as I travel and visit with people, fully 60-80% of my age group, raised up in the church, are not faithful to the Lord today. The dedication of a zealous convert from denominationalism MAY be well-watered by one weekly worship service, but seemingly that is not enough for the next generation.

Second, the fact is that we are no longer far-flung Christians living out separated lives. Even those living in the country have had to awaken to the realities of drugs, gangs, crime, and immorality. How often have you heard it said, or perhaps said it yourself, "It's a different world today!" In our cable TV, movies,

and internet we have given Satan multitudes of opportunities to deceive and tempt us. I can only speak for myself, but I believe I need all the training, encouragement, exhortation, teaching, and wisdom I can get. I need fellowship and association with Christians to keep up the struggle to keep my life pure and holy. Don't you? Don't your children?

If you haven't been availing yourself of these opportunities, let me encourage you to rededicate yourself to walking in the light of God's word. For yourself, your family, your children. Make the decision to use this tool that can help your spiritual growth. Determine that you will be timely, prepared, and present at every opportunity to worship and study. 2 Timothy 2:15