



## **Combating the Culture of Bored**

*By Ryan French*

This post will likely not go viral or attract more than a few clicks. There's no hook. No catch. No gimmick to draw our overloaded minds into a brief moment of introspection. And therein lies a glimpse of our cultural dilemma. We have become shallow, narcissistic, and just plain bored.

We have more gadgets and gizmos than a Cold War spy, and yet we are listless. Yes. Technology has enabled us to spread the Gospel with the click of a mouse, and yet, who's paying attention? The blessing is also a curse. The very instrument that can send truth around the globe in an instant has deadened our senses. We are reduced to Twitterbites, and soundbites, clever little memes, and silly little quotations. Those things are well and good. They have their place, but by themselves they are empty and meaningless.

Like it or not, the Bible is a voluminous catalogue of God's very words. Simplify it as we might, it is not compatible with our national, self-inflicted, attention deficit disorder. We are all like kids in a candy store running from one jar of candy to another with zero tolerance for self control. That might be fine for kids in a candy store, but it spells disaster when it comes to spiritual things.

Preachers can't speak longer than 20 minutes before people start staring like freshly turned zombies. Teachers can't expound the Word for more than a few minutes before eyes glaze over and fidgety hands reach for smart phones like withdrawing addicts. Everyone rushes from entertainment to entertainment, and from distraction to distraction. We can't focus. We can't think clearly. We can't dig into the gems below the surface because we are riddled with restlessness.

We want the preacher to get to the point, but theology is not a sitcom; the plot doesn't always work itself out in 20 minutes or less. We want our books to be thin because we don't have time to read anything substantial (although our time spent on social media proves otherwise). We want the Cliff Notes version of the Bible. As the apostle Paul would probably say, "we want milk not meat."

It's bad enough that our pews struggle with this modern problem, but our pulpits are struggling as well. I know this because I am the chief of sinners in this area. As I write, my cell phone rings, my iPad beeps, my laptop whirs, and my watch keeps the beat. I find myself



giving in to the pressure to oversimplify weighty matters of theological discourse. I find myself avoiding important sermons that I know will induce unjustified boredom.

And our ministry model does little to resist this disturbing trend. We promote ministries like celebrities rather than by examining their depth of knowledge. We do little iron sharpening these days. We're all so busy trying to get in the last word that we rarely listen and we can only learn when we listen.

Young preachers spend more time crafting their image than working out their salvation with fear and trembling. Beware of an image driven Gospel with no genuine apostolic authority.

This never-ending rant does contain a word of hope. God's spirit is still drawing the hearts and minds of people. I am convinced, that although the challenges are great, we can cut through the clutter and return to critical thinking and anointed preaching. There is little room for error or mediocrity. We are competing with a fast paced marketing saturated society. We must bring the Word to life with clarity and intensity. We must be:

- Creative yet systematic
- Fun but serious-minded
- Humble yet dogmatic
- Deep yet understandable
- Anointed yet approachable.

Bottom line, preachers and teachers must work harder than ever before. Not only to engage easily distracted hearers but to guard ourselves from the temptation to settle for MTV style theology. The Bible can't be rushed, edited, manipulated, tamed, trimmed, or air brushed. All the skinny jean wearing hipster preachers in the world can't change Truth. Truth simply is, just as God simply is.

And so, as we mindlessly scroll our way around social media, let's pause as often as possible to meditate on the deep things of God's word. Let's encourage our spiritual leaders to actually be spiritual and not cater to our carnal desire for less meat and more milk. Let's push past the clutter and the buzzing and seek God for who He really is and not just what we want Him to be. Only then can we be impacted by the transforming Word of God. God's Word has not changed, have we?