

## We Want, But We Don't Want

*John Isaac Edwards*

Remember Naaman? He wanted to be recovered of his leprosy, but he didn't want to do what was necessary to make it happen, until his servants came and spake unto him (2 Ki. 5:1-14). Sometimes we are like the Syrian captain — we want, but we don't want. Let me give us some examples:

1) ***We Want To Be Saved, But We Don't Want To Obey.*** God's blessings have always been extended to the obedient (Dt. 11:26-28). It's still so! “And being made perfect, he [Christ] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). If we want the forgiveness of our sins, then we must be willing to hear and believe the gospel (Rom. 10:14-15), repent of our sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Mt. 10:32), and be baptized (Mk. 16:16). There's no way around it!

2) ***We Want To Be Restored, But We Don't Want To Repent, Confess And Pray.*** God forgives the sins of His children conditionally. Simon was told, “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22). John revealed, “If we confess our

sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9). James noted, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed....” (Jas. 5:16). We want healing. We want cleansing. We want forgiveness. Are we willing to say as the prodigal, “...I have sinned...” (Lk. 15:21) and as Simon, “...Pray ye to the Lord for me...” (Acts 8:24)?

3) ***We Want To Go To Heaven, But We Don't Want To Be Faithful.*** There are no shortcuts or bypasses on the highway to heaven. There is no way of getting around being faithful to the Lord! The First and the Last says, “...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). The crown will only be given to those who are faithful. Are we?

4) ***We Want A Building To Worship In, But We Don't Want To Keep It Up.*** The command to assemble requires a place (Heb. 10:25). Wherever that assembling place is, certain preparations must be made. When the church owns the property, the church must maintain it. Some brethren will cry for a building, but then do

little to nothing to keep it up. It's about all many can seem to do to just be there when the doors are open! Volunteers are needed to clean it, to cut the grass and trim the shrubbery, remove snow, replace light bulbs, make repairs, and other things necessary to upkeep of the building. One family shouldn't have to do the bulk of that. Some want a bigger building, but do nothing to help take care of the one they have! A bigger meeting place may be nice and necessary, but who's going to take care of it? You might ask one if he'd take care of something and he say, “I'm awfully busy, could you just do it?” It's a case where we want, but we don't want.

5) ***We Want Elders And Deacons, But We Don't Want To Serve.*** Some place a lot of pressure on the preacher to appoint elders and deacons. They may assume that because the church doesn't have elders and deacons that the preacher must not want any or he's not doing anything to appoint them. The church needs elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5), but the work requires qualified men (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Many are often unaware of all that a preacher does behind the scenes to work toward the appointment

of elders and deacons in the local church. There's probably no one that wants them more than he does. Without elders and deacons, a lot of things end up on his plate. Sadly, it's often difficult to find men who have the desire and willingness to prove themselves qualified. Some members of a congregation kept saying, "We need elders. We need elders. Why is it that we don't have elders?" The preacher preached, "We need elders" and asked for the men who desire the office to stay after and meet with him. Three men stayed after. Only one was ready to serve. The other two said it would be a few years before they were ready. None of the men crying for elders stayed! So they wanted, but they didn't want!

**6) *We Want Bible Classes, But We Don't Want To Teach.*** Bible classes are a Scriptural way of helping us "...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." (2 Pet. 3:18). It's strange when a couple won't place membership with a local church unless there are classes for their young people, but

don't expect them to do any of the teaching! Hebrews 5:12 records, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers..." It's kindly hard to have a Bible class without a Bible teacher, isn't it?

**7) *We Want To See Folks Baptized And The Church Grow, But We Don't Want To Setup Home Bible Studies.*** Most folks are baptized as a result of having a Bible study in someone's home. We are commanded, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them..." (Mt. 28:19). Folks will not be moved to ask, "...what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36), unless we teach them. How long has it been since you invited your friends and family members and the preacher into your home for a Bible study? Remember Cornelius? He sent for Peter (Acts 10:22), "...had called together his kinsmen and near friends" (Acts 10:24), and they were all "...present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33). If we could get members of the church to do that today with their family and

friends, churches would increase in number daily!

**8) *We Want A Preacher, But We Don't Want To Take Care Of Him.*** The Scriptures place a high value on preachers and preaching (Rom. 10:14-15; 1 Cor. 1:21). Some brethren can't understand why they have difficulty getting or keeping a preacher. Some may not deserve one! They may be overly critical of him, take him for granted, saddle him with work they ought to be doing, be guilty of ox-muzzling, and so on. Read and apply Luke 10:7 and 1 Corinthians 9:14, if you want a preacher.

**9) *We Want Others To Treat Us Right, But We Don't Want To Treat Them Right.*** It goes both ways! Remember Matthew 7:12? You can't expect people to bend over backwards for you, if you don't do for them! Read Proverbs 18:24.

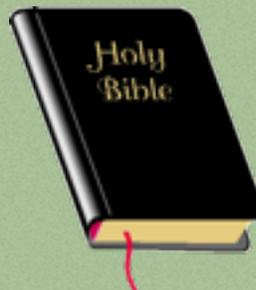
**10) *We Want A Lot Of Good Work Going On, But We Don't Want To Be Involved.*** What do 1 Corinthians 15:58 and Ephesians 4:16 say? Now, let's get to work!

**The Terre Haute **SPEAKER**** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

**Assembling At:**  
4017 E Margaret DR  
Terre Haute, IN 47803  
[Exit 11 (I-70) W on HWY 46,  
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