

VAIN THINGS TO AVOID

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"And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." Acts 14:15.

Paul in God's power, had just healed a crippled man who leaped and walked before the crowd that was amazed. They cried he was a God come down in the likeness of men. He ran in among them, saying he was a man like them, urging them to turn from vanities. Vanities or vain things have often been a stumbling block to mankind. I want to warn you of the vain things which can ruin your life today. I find at least ten in the Bible that we should seek to avoid. **(1). Vain Belief:** *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."* I Cor. 15: 1&2. It is very possible to say you believe, but not really follow up with a life of proof. You can say you believe the Bible, but until you accept it's teachings and follow its pattern, you have a vain belief, in that it is not for you. You believe in vain unless you allow it to change you to follow with Christlike living. True belief will give you a true Christian life to live, and an eternity to look forward to. **(2). Vain Prayers:** *"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."* Matt. 6:7. You can count prayer beads endlessly, and spin wordy prayer wheels, and recite required religious phrases to no avail. All of mans' prayer exercises are mere words which do not change the practicing sinner. They generate false hopes as they fall

short of heaven's switchboard above. **(3). Vain Worship:** *"But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* Matt. 15:9. There are lots of churches today that base their beliefs on man made commandments, and rehearsed prayers, but offer no sure salvation. Question what your worship means to you. Is it just words and recitations, mechanical sing - song routines and hopes with no guarantees? Do you come away from church with no difference or desire to live totally for Christ? This leads to mechanical manmade worship, and all of it is vain. **(4). Vain Words:** *"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."* Eph. 5:6. Beware lending your ears and giving your life to the vain words around you. There are great things to live for but it is not the idle words men often spew from their lips. God warns *"there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."* Titus 1: 10&11. Sometimes the vain words come from the false clergy that are blind leaders of the blind, teaching untruths. We must be careful with our own words that they be well spoken and acceptable before the Lord. **(5). Vain Labor:** *"For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labor be in vain."* I Thess 3:5. Paul wrote fearing that someone had diverted the church from that which was best, and pleasing to God. Many false religions urge their adherents to false labor, claiming the merits they are thought to give. There are millions of false professions today. Many will say they are Christians, but on what do they base that observation? Religious labors do not earn salvation in any way. Paul urged, *"Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast,*

unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." I Cor. 15:58. If you labor for the Lord in a God pleasing way it will never be in vain. **(6). Vain Running:** "And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, and privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." Gal 2:2. Again Paul is concerned that his labor for the Lord would reach the needy. He meant business and wanted them that likewise meant business, to hear and respond. Beware your service for God does not fall into a mechanical pattern of boring running, devoid of the joy of accomplishment for eternity. Keep your eyes on the goal, that of pleasing Christ in all that you do. **(7). Vain Grace:** "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." II Cor. 6:1. The song writer wrote, "Grace, grace, God's grace; grace that is greater than all our sin." The grace of God is something so great it cannot be measured, but all believers must reside and rejoice in it. It is vain to consider the death of Christ as a mere historical fact. It was the greatest thing ever to happen to cleans away your sin. Don't take such evidence of God's love for granted in a mechanical way. He didn't have to die for us, but He did. Bathe in His grace daily and rejoice in all the provision He has made for you. **(8). Vain Glory:** "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Gal. 5:26. Some religions are full of pomp and man made glory. Their leaders swish around like man made gods, waving their hands and crosses in vain repetition, in solemn processions before their followers. Many a leader in religious things has gone down, because they thought to gain great glory. True Christianity is a humble life style prompted by the humility of Jesus Christ. Don't try to push up to favored positions in church, seeking to rise above

others. God sets up leaders and takes them down. Seeking glory for one's self is a dead end street. True servants of God must know I am nothing, but my God is everything. **(9). Vain Religion:** "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." James 1:26. The leaders of false religion better consider what they are offering their followers. How does it affect the world so polluted by sin and evil. No where in the Bible does it urge converts to turn to some religion, with it's false proclamations. If what you follow offers no sure forgiveness for sin, nor sure occupancy in Heaven, then it is vain. There are many false, vain religions around us. They give a way of religious exercise, but no sure hope of eternity with God. There is only one way to Heaven. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6. There are not different ways that lead to God but only one. If your hope of heaven is based on anything but the simple faith in Christ who gave His all for your sin, you are being fooled by a vain religion. **(10). Vain Life:** "Holding forth the word of life: that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." Phil. 2:16. God's word is so very clear. Millions are fooled by these vain things I have mentioned. How sad it is to spend the whole life hoping for something man can give you, when God has already prepared the only true way of redemption. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." I Pet. 1: 18-20. Please turn from these vanities unto the living God. He only is worth following through life into eternity.