

On Pursuing Quality

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer warns against the emphasis on quantity in Christian circles, arguing that it leads to a superficial and external focus, neglecting the spiritual growth and value of individual souls.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7, Matthew 7:13

Topics: "Spiritual Quality", "True Success in Ministry"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the critical distinction between quantity and quality in the church, arguing that contemporary Christian circles often prioritize numerical growth over spiritual depth. He critiques the obsession with statistics, such as attendance and financial reports, which he believes leads to a superficial understanding of success in ministry. Tozer warns that this focus on external measures undermines the true value of the soul and the essence of spiritual growth, which cannot be quantified. He calls for a return to scriptural judgment that values the eternal over the temporal, urging believers to recognize the dangers of this prevalent mindset. Ultimately, Tozer challenges the church to seek genuine spiritual quality rather than mere numerical success.

Transcript

The emphasis today in Christian circles appears to be on quantity, with a corresponding lack of emphasis on quality. Numbers, size and amount seem to be very nearly all that matters even among evangelicals. The size of the crowd, the number of converts, the size of the budget, the amount of the weekly collections: if these look good the church is prospering and the pastor is thought to be a success. The church that can show an impressive quantitative growth is frankly envied and imitated by other ambitious churches.

This is the age of the Laodiceans. The great goddess Numbers is worshiped with fervent devotion and all things religious are brought before her for examination. Her Old Testament is the financial report and her New Testament is the membership roll. To these she appeals as arbiters of all questions, the test of spiritual growth and the proof of success or failure in every Christian endeavor.

A little acquaintance with the Bible should show this up for the heresy it is. To judge anything spiritual by statistics is to judge by another than scriptural judgment. It is to admit the validity of externalism and to deny the value our Lord places upon the soul as over against the body. It is to mistake the old creation for the new and to confuse things eternal with things temporal. Yet it is being done every day by ministers, church boards and denominational leaders. And hardly anyone notices the deep and dangerous error.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/on-pursuing-quality/>

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