

How not to be an ITCHING EAR Christian
Unfortunately, many Christians want to hear what they like, NOT what God says!

The Bible is an essential part of our Christian walk - 2 Tim 3:16-17 - 16 **All Scripture** is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be **thoroughly equipped** for every good work.

We experience Itching ears from the beginning - Gen 3:1-6 - Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but **God did say**, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" 4 "**You will not surely die,**" the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 **WHEN THE WOMAN SAW** that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

God warned that there would be a time where MEN WOULD SWAY from sound doctrine, that time is now - 2 Tim 4:3-4 - 3 For the time will come when **MEN WILL NOT PUT UP with sound doctrine.** Instead, to **SUIT THEIR OWN DESIRES, they will gather** around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears **WANT TO HEAR.** 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

When your Christianity is corrupt, then you are corrupt - Titus 1:15-16 - 15 **To the pure, all things are pure,** but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, NOTHING IS PURE. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but **BY THEIR ACTIONS THEY DENY HIM.** They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

How can we eliminate being an itching ear Christian?

1. We MUST Deny self! (See James 1:13-15)

All Christians must first consciously reject self - Matt 16:24-26 - 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, **HE MUST deny himself** and take up his cross and **follow me.** 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses **his life for me** will find it. 26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, **yet forfeits his soul?** Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

We must consciously reject our personal values - Phil 3:7-11 - 7 But whatever was to **my profit** I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider **everything** a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I **consider them rubbish,** that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the **righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.** 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

2. Get our focus right

We must TOTALLY trust in God, NEVER on self- Prov 3:5-7 - 5 **Trust in the Lord with all your heart** and **LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING;** 6 **IN ALL YOUR WAYS acknowledge him,** and he will make your paths straight. 7 **Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.**

We must be Heavenly focused - Col 3:2-4 - 2 **Set your minds on things above, NOT ON earthly things.** 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, **WHO IS YOUR LIFE,** appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Our purpose for going to church is to receive HIS Word - Eccl 5:1 - Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. **GO NEAR TO LISTEN** rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

3. Utilize the Word correctly

Do not take away or add to the Word - 1 Cor 4:6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "**Do not go beyond what is written.**" Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

Make sure all teaching is sound - Titus 2:1 - You **MUST TEACH** what is in accord with **SOUND DOCTRINE.**

The Bible is meant to complement itself not contradict itself - Matt 4:5-7 - 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. **For it is written:** "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus answered him, "**IT IS ALSO WRITTEN:** 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

4. Test, test, test!!!

We are **NEVER** to take anyone's word for it concerning the **Word** - Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and **EXAMINED THE SCRIPTURES EVERY DAY** to see if what Paul said was true.

It is our responsibility as Christians to test everything - 1 Thess 5:21-22 - 21 **TEST EVERYTHING**. Hold on to the good. 22 Avoid every kind of evil. (Use the only **TRUE** measurement (Jn 14:6))

Test **ALL ministers and ministries** - 1 John 4:1-3 - Dear friends, **DO NOT BELIEVE EVERY SPIRIT**, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 **This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God**: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

5. Faith!

The Word builds our Faith - Rom 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

When receiving the Word we must apply Faith - Heb 4:2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard **DID NOT combine it with faith**.

Then we must live by Faith - Heb 10:37-38 - 37 For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay". 38 But my righteous one WILL LIVE BY FAITH. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."

6. Because God Said So

Recognize HE is GOD Almighty! -Rom 9:14-17 - 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? **Not at all!** 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on MAN'S DESIRE OR EFFORT, but ON GOD'S MERCY.

We have NO room to question HIM - Rom 9:19-21 - 19 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" 20 But **WHO ARE YOU, O MAN, TO TALK BACK TO GOD?** "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

His Word is Perfect

Ps 12:6 And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.

Prov 30:5-6 - 5 "**Every word of God is flawless**; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. 6 **Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar**.