

William MacDonald:

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” (James 1:22)

There is a subtle deception that attending meetings, conferences and seminars is doing the work of God. We listen to messages and talk about what we know we should be doing, and the delusion creeps over us that we are accomplishing His will. What we are actually doing is increasing our responsibility and deceiving ourselves. We deceive ourselves that we are spiritual when actually we might be quite carnal. We deceive ourselves that we are growing when the truth is that we are stagnant. We deceive ourselves that we are wise when we are pathetically foolish.

Jesus said that the wise man is the one who hears His words and does them. The foolish man also hears His words but does nothing about them.

It is not enough to listen to a sermon and walk away saying “What a marvelous message.” The true test is when we go away saying, “I will do something about what I heard.” Someone has said that a good sermon not only stretches the mind, warms the heart, and tans the hide but it also provokes the will to action.

In the middle of his message, a preacher once asked his audience the name of the first hymn they had sung. No one knew. He asked the text of Scripture that had been read. No one knew. He asked what announcements had been made. No one could remember. The people were playing church.

Before every meeting, we might well ask ourselves the following questions. Why did I come? Am I willing to have God speak to me personally? Will I obey Him if He does?

The Dead Sea justly earned its name by constant input without corresponding outflow. In our lives, information without application leads to stagnation. The Savior’s persistent question comes home to us, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things that I say?”