

A shopping cart is shown in the center of the image, set against a dark, textured background. The cart is rendered in a dark, almost black color, making it blend into the background. The entire image is framed by a rough, hand-drawn border in a similar dark color. The text is overlaid on the cart and background in a bright white, bold font.

# **What Does the Bible Teach About Consumerism in Religion?**

**The Contemporary Practice of Church Shopping  
November 10, 2022 Indepth Bible Class of the  
Trilacoochee church of Christ**

# Church Shopping

- We live in a religiously pluralistic society steeped in relativism.
  - Americans advocate freedom of religion and toleration of all religions.
  - Truth is considered relative, affected by ones background and beliefs.
  - This has led to an attitude that it does not really matter what one believes or where one worships, including the choice to believe nothing and attend nowhere.

# Church Shopping

- Does it really matter if we assemble with others for religious purposes?
- Are there any real differences between churches?
- Why can't we just go to the church of our choice?
- Isn't what I need from the church service more important than where I go to church services?

# Is Assembling Necessary?

- Disillusionment
  - Weary of liturgical worship; uncomfortable with formality.
  - Hurt by hypocrisy and self-righteousness.
  - Infatuated with contemporary cultural influence on religion, generating fashionable faiths.

# Is Assembling Necessary?

- We assemble first to honor and worship God.
  - John 4:23 - “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”
  - Matt. 18:20 - “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”
  - Psalm 40:9-10 - “I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know. 10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly.”

# Is Assembling Necessary?

- Second, we assemble because God commanded it.
  - Heb. 10:25 - “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

# Is Assembling Necessary?

- Third, we assemble to edify and encourage others.
  - Heb. 10:24 - “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.”
  - 1Cor. 14:12, 26 - “Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel... 26 ...Let all things be done for edification.”

# Is Assembling Necessary?

- Lastly, we assemble to be edified and encouraged ourselves.
  - Psalm 122:1 - “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the LORD.’”
  - Isa. 2:3 - “Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’”



# Is Assembling Necessary?

- Mark 2:23-28
  - The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
  - We were not made for the assembly; the assembly was made for us.

# Are All Churches The Same?

- Most denominations, while having distinctive belief systems, have worked hard to “agree to disagree,” and to not only tolerate one another but also accept one another in fellowship.
- They reduce or eliminate any emphasis on doctrine and choose a set of core beliefs common to all.
- While many churches are similar, it is not true that all churches are the same.

# Are All Churches The Same?

- There is one faith and one Body.
  - Eph. 4:4 - “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.”
- The Body of Christ is the church.
  - Col. 1:18 - “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

# Are All Churches The Same?

- The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.
  - 1Tim. 3:15 - “I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
- The church is not to tolerate error or immorality.
  - 2John 9-10 - “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him.”

# Are All Churches The Same?

- Do all churches meet these Biblical criteria?  
Then not all churches are alike.

– Matt. 7:21-23 - “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

# Can One Attend The Church Of His Choice?

- Contemporary America has developed cafeteria Christianity.
  - Shop for churches like one would look for a car.
- The basis of that decision will be:
  - How entertaining the worship may be.
  - How many youth services are offered.
  - How big it is.
  - Less about its practice of what God has said.

# Can One Attend The Church Of His Choice?

- Religion is not about what we want, but rather what God authorized.
  - John 4:20-24 - “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. 21 Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

## Can One Attend The Church Of His Choice?

- In the end, the true criteria ought to be whether we are going to the church of God's choice.
- We should be seeking to associate with Christians who will help us in our walk with God.
- We should be seeking to associate with Christians who love God's word as much as we profess to love it.
- The focus is not on us, but on God.



# “What Do I Get Out Of It?”

- “What can the church do for me?”
  - That is often the reason why some members of the Lord’s church go “church hopping.”
  - In point of Biblical fact, their preferences and personal comfort are the last consideration in choosing a congregation.
  - Mature, unselfish Christians will seek to meet the needs of the Lord and His children.
  - Immature, selfish Christians will shop around for a congregation that meets their needs.

# “What Do I Get Out Of It?”

- 1Cor. 10:24 - “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.”
- Rom. 15:1 - “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”
- Phil. 2:3-4 - “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

# “What Do I Get Out Of It?”

- A critical aspect of Christian development is the need to no longer have our own desires satisfied, but to work for the well-being of others.
  - It takes maturity to grow into this attitude.
  - Some never grow into it.
  - Others don't want to.

# “What Do I Get Out Of It?”

- The question ought not be, “What can the church do for me” as much as, “What can I do for the church?”
- A true servant of the Lord will find happiness and fulfillment in the service he brings to the assembly.

# Church Shopping

- If we assemble with others who do not hold to God's truth, or whose interests are not God's priorities, then we run the risk of losing our souls and becoming disillusioned with religion.
- If worship is more about us and less about God, we will soon err from the faith and lose interest in our salvation.
- If we worship in a church of our choice rather than God's choice, we will not please Him, and we will be lost.