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## *The Sacrifice Of Quality*

The digital age has provided us with the ability to store large amounts of information on devices that are relatively small. One such technology is the ability to reduce the size of music files so that a player that fits in one's pocket can hold hundreds of songs. A popular format for doing this is a compression technology known as MP3. MP3 music files however can accomplish this by narrowing the range of sounds that are recorded. I remember years ago when this first started that there were debates about the quality of the music being converted to this format. Audiophiles argued that the overall quality of the music suffered as a result of this but the ability to have access to larger numbers of songs won out due to the convenience it offered. Pictures that are stored in other formats do the same thing but offer compromised resolutions on some devices. Today one can purchase a smartphone that can make and receive calls, access the internet and store music. Many of them can also record video and take pictures but again this is with a loss of quality. The ability to do so much with a device that fits in a pocket has resulted in the acceptance of diminished quality and convenience. The marketplace has made some improvements in this area but there are still compromises that were made and accepted. Some still reject newer technologies or turn to more sophisticated devices at the cost of convenience to achieve greater satisfaction. In religion the same mentality has prevailed. There are many who are satisfied with the convenience and availability of religious services and doctrines that fit their thinking and schedules. While we can offer to study the Bible with some, their reaction many times is to turn away from this in favor of simpler, and what they see as more effective means of worshipping God. The idea that some doctrines in the world, that claim to represent the word of God are fine and we really don't need to dwell on the details is commonplace. If we propose that one needs to accept only the doctrine of the scriptures, we are met with an agreement that this is true, but in practice we find that many are not willing to invest the time and energy in finding out what the Bible actually says. Religious groups

that draw larger followings are doing so by replacing the authority of the Bible with good will and great deeds, not to mention a personal appeal to everything from daycare for children to aerobic exercise classes. Others search for organizations that they can be a part of that accomplish more "social" good through outreach programs and other things designed to meet physical needs rather than the spiritual. It is argued that one cannot be more spiritual if they are poor or afflicted with limited opportunities in life. While all of these things achieve much good the Lord's church has not been charged to eradicate the ills or social woes of the world . That sounds very unappealing to some. As Christians we are told "***As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.***" (Gal 6.10). Some are appalled to find that the Lord's church is not engaged in social or political activities and seek to teach and practice the word. We are sometimes labeled as uncaring when it comes to a comparison with other groups and may even be seen as a cult instead of a spiritual group. Christ spoke of this type of thinking while he was on the Earth. "***Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.***" (Matt 7.21-23). Unfortunately, many groups have sacrificed the quality of doctrine for the abundance of "good" works. Is it really a good work if the sacrifice of quality also results in the sacrifice of one's soul?

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