



bits from bob....

Choices

February 22, 2021

I regularly receive articles produced by the Joel Comiskey Group. While the primary intent is to provide resources for cell churches, many principles in the articles can be applied more broadly.

Rob Campbell recently pointed me toward a book by Al Reis, a recognized writer in the world of marketing. Reis's book, *Focal Point*, provides a simply perspective to help organize life for efficiency and productive. Reis writes that there are really only four things that most people and organizations do to improve the quality of life and work.

- Do more of certain things. A common approach to life is to do more of the things that are deemed to be of greater value or more capable of bringing increased rewards and satisfaction.
- Do less of certain things. Another option is to deliberately reduce activities or behaviors, giving more time and energy for those activities that most effectively move us toward our goal.
- Add activities. Do things that are not currently being done. Make new choices, add options, learn new skills, begin new projects and activities. Some may change the entire focus of work or life.
- Stop activities. Stop doing certain things altogether. A fourth option is to stand back and evaluate life with new eyes. Such an evaluation often makes clear that best course of action is to discontinue those activities and behaviors that do not contribute significantly to what you want and where you want to go.

Campbell had apparently become aware of Reis's book as he was reading Dave Browning, *Deliberate Simplicity*. Campbell cites Browning's comment on the four options: "While the traditional church tends to choose doors 1 and 3, the *Deliberately Simple* church looks at what is behind doors 2 and 4. By doing less of certain things, and stopping other things altogether, energy and resources can be reinvested in the few things really worth doing."

Browning asks, "What is the simplest thing that could possibly work?" He then suggests that we "jettison other elements even if they have traditionally been associated with progress."

Christians and churches today must make choices. Despite Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 9, it is not likely that many of us will successfully be "all things to all people." We cannot effectively respond to every felt or real need. We cannot please everyone. We cannot do everything, be everything.

We must ask, "What matters?" What matters to God? What will matter for eternity? When we see what matters, do everything possible to move toward that goal. And cast off the multiplied weights that so easily hinder us. For most of us, that means we must intentionally choose door 2 and door 4, even though those are most often unpopular and difficult choices.