

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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Life's too short to live like this!!!

Has this thought ever penetrated your mind while you're in the midst of living your life? The other day I was hungry. In a fast-food kind of way. You know the instantly gratifying, and mostly satisfying, kind. Or maybe that's an advertising gimmick I've embraced as a fantasy. I had the thought that I would go to the McDonalds closest to my home and pulled into the drive-through lane. I placed my order into the speaker and then had to correct what I heard when repeated back to me. This particular restaurant enjoys the infamous reputation of being quite inefficient in its performance...at least according to local social media postings. And although this McDonalds has recently experienced a major makeover in exterior design, the end results seem to reveal that the problem may be internal and institutionally flawed as well.

I wonder what I was thinking.

A few years ago a book was introduced called the *McDonaldization of Society*. The author's premise around the turn of the 21st Century was that modern culture was being converted away from traditional ways of thinking into a process called rationalization. He explained that this was a new way of thinking that was evolving where ends and means analysis was based upon efficiency and formalized social control. Kind of like the McDonalds business philosophy I gather. Whether you eat at a McDonalds in South Korea or South Carolina, the delivery of your food experience is basically the same by design. So I exercised my freedom to choose where to buy my fast food. I was guided by my desire. I wanted it fast. And efficient. And satisfying. And gratifying. What could go wrong?

When I got to the pay window I had to correct the drink order...again. I didn't order a Diet Coke but a Diet Dr. Pepper. The young lady looked at the screen again as she corrected what was displayed. After tendering my currency, I proceeded to the next stage of human interaction in this institutional system. I was at the drive-through pickup window. This is where the gratification and satisfaction is experienced. Or maybe not. As I encountered the young man at the window he tried to give me a Diet Coke. I explained to him that I ordered a Diet Dr. Pepper. He looked at the screen and seemed quite puzzled. He didn't have just one Diet Coke ready for delivery, but two of them. I watched as he dumped both of them in the trash and filled another cup with Diet Dr. Pepper. As he handed me the drink, he asked about the rest of my order. I repeated my order. Then he checked the screen. A few seconds went by. As he opened the window again, I could see where this conversation was heading. And I wasn't too happy about it.

Pull up to the sign and we'll bring it out to you. Now this seems to be a typical experience at these fast food places. It's like they have a clock they have to beat ticking away at the drive through window. Now I understand from some sources they actually do! This is when I decided to challenge the system. *No, I don't think I will,* I replied. He didn't quite know what to do. Twice more, he implored me to comply. Then I began to explain my rational line of thought. Since at least three times before I got the food, my order was incorrectly received, then I must assume that when the food was finally delivered, it would require a visit inside to correct the order. This defeats the drive-through concept. I wasn't going to play by their rules and submit to their system. My final thought as I kept my vehicle in park was *Life's too short to live like this!!!*

As I received my order, the line behind me was beginning to form. The clock was no doubt ticking away. Someone inside had some explaining to do. Not my problem, I reasoned. Then as I drove away, I had another thought that revealed to me a different way to think...and do.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Galatians 5:16-17)

When I arrived home, I read that passage in full. In the same context I found the deeds of the flesh contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit. Instead of conforming to the Kingdom way of living, I was conforming to living according to this world's system. Our Good Lord has a way of driving home principles to live by...even in a drive-through experience. Driving through or driving by...*Life's too short to live like this!!!*

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam