

LOTTERY THINKING DISEASE

There's a debilitating disease that is spreading rapidly throughout our nation. It has infected choirs, Praise Teams and Music Ministries all over this land. It may have reached the level of an epidemic. And if it hasn't infected your choir, be on guard because this rapidly spreading virus is determined to steal, kill, and destroy your ministry (John 10:10a). This highly infectious disease is caused by what I call the L.T.D. virus. It's the virus that causes Lottery Thinking Disease.



You're familiar with how the lottery works. All you have to do is put in a couple of measly bucks and you stand a chance of winning multiple millions of dollars. It's a highly improbable chance but you actually bank your future on that slim chance. The odds are so staggeringly stacked against you that most financially astute individuals will tell you that thinking the lottery will bring you financial success is nothing short of foolish and utterly ridiculous. That type of thinking - invest a little bit and believe you'll reap an abundant harvest - is what I call Lottery Thinking Disease.

But that Lottery Thinking Disease virus has infected some choir members. What are some of the symptoms? Thinking your choir will sound like a million dollars, while only putting in a couple of measly bucks worth of effort. Thinking the choir will sound like *Donald Lawrence and The Tri-City Singers* while only putting in 30 minutes of rehearsal time once and only once on the week before you sing. They've been deceived. They really think they'll achieve maximum results with minimum effort. Lottery Thinking Disease. They think the choir will give a Grammy Award winning presentation on Sunday morning even when they just put in a few minutes of lackadaisical choir preparation and no personal practice away from rehearsal. Lottery Thinking Disease. With an acute infection of L.T.D., they may even be under the delusion that they can produce a juicy, tender, flavor-filled, mouth-watering, succulent, tongue-tantalizing smoked brisket that will make the taste buds shout with unspeakable joy with just a quick zap in the microwave. Yuck! (What is that strange taste in my mouth? Revelation 3:16b comes to mind!)

No. That just won't work. Someone said if you want that kind of brisket, you gotta cook it "low and slow". It takes time. It takes effort. There are absolutely no short cuts. The L.T.D. virus causes a malfunction in the circuit of the brain that calculates the amount of effort required to produce an expected result.

If you or someone in your choir has been infected with this virus, I have some good news. We serve a God who is not only able to protect you from this virus, but he is well able to heal those who have contracted Lottery Thinking Disease. Here's his prescribed treatment plan. Start with the daily antibiotic of Romans 12:2 to transform your thinking. You see, your brain is a computer, and it needs an operating system overhaul. You need to sincerely ask The Great Physician to transform you, to renew your mind and the minds of each member of your choir. Begin each rehearsal with an injection of Romans 12:11. "*Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.*" You'll need a transfusion so that Colossians 3:23 - 24 is flowing freely through your veins and providing healthy nutrients to every inch of your being. "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*"

And the Holy Spirit will serve as your Physical Therapist. Just like faith without works is dead (James 2:26), Lottery Thinking Disease will only be cured when you work out the new thinking you've been praying for. How do you do that? Start by giving your choir your maximum effort. Come to every rehearsal with a mind to work. (Nehemiah 4:6) Quench that spirit of laziness. Rehearse with focus: with all your heart as rehearsing for the Lord. Take notes during rehearsal. Study the lyrics away from rehearsal until you become "lyric-certain." (You know the lyrics. You don't always need the director to spoon feed you every single word of the song. You have internalized the lyrics so you can effectively connect with and communicate the message of the song to the congregation.) Record your vocal part at rehearsal. Practice with your recording away from rehearsal until you become "vocally-confident." (You know your part. You don't need the pianist to always pound out your part during Morning Worship.) Strive for God-honoring excellence. (The type of excellence that brings glory and honor to the excellent God we serve.) Philippians 3:14 urges us to "*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" Rev. Dr. D. James Kennedy, Ph.D. puts it this way: Press "means to pursue, to go after something in an intense way. In addition to eagerness of spirit, we need to exert great effort to reach our goals ... We need to exert energy to meet our goals and not let anything get in the way of reaching them." No more mediocrity. No more doing just enough to get by. No more minimum effort. No more excuses. No more explanations.

Don't you allow Lottery Thinking Disease to destroy your choir. God has prescribed a treatment plan. He guarantees its efficacy. His plan is available to you and it's free of charge. Will you follow his treatment plan?

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