

SUNDAY MORNING (December 9th) • Counterfeit Gospels

The Social Gospel

Social is defined “as pertaining to, devoted to, or characterized by friendly companionship or relations”: *a social club*; “seeking or enjoying the companionship of others; pertaining to, connected with, or suited to polite or fashionable society”: *a social event*.

To *socialize* is “to associate or mingle sociably with others”: *to socialize with one’s fellow workers*.

There is by no means anything wrong with the social aspect of human relationships or socializing with others. But history documents a number of attempts to fuse the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16) with appeals, opportunities, and gimmicks centered on the social needs and wants of men and women, young and old. Examples abound—gymnasiums and physical fitness opportunities, therapy and recovery programs, community recreation, political activism, the entertainment of teenagers, dramatic presentations, the providing of handy conveniences, etc.

Why is the “social gospel” so attractive and, as a result, so popular?

Should churches organize programs to serve social needs, finance social causes, and use social programs as a means of community outreach? If so, why? If not, why not?

Should Jesus’ words in John 18:36 play any role in this discussion?

Is it important for brothers and sisters in Christ to spend social time together? If so, why? If not, why not?