Introduction: "Dumbing down" is an expression used almost exclusively with education. The deliberate and intentional effort to reduce standards of achievement. In other words --- make it easier for the students. don't ask them to meet the challenge of learning, simply minimize the standards. It assumes the bar has been too high so let's lower the bar. "Dumbing down" is contingent on an argument that says the kids can't handle the "higher bar" so we have to lower the bar. The hoped-for result is increase grade averages. However, here is the real curiosity, grade averages have not raised as supposed. They have either remained the same, or decreased.

There is also the tendency to "dumb down" religion.

**Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. 7 "The more they increased, The more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame. 8 They eat up the sin of My people; They set their heart on their iniquity. 9 And it shall be: like people, like priest. So I will punish them for their ways, And reward them for their deeds.**

**I) Problem**

**A) Book, chapter, and verse preaching is disdained**

1. People want motivational type preaching.

2. Smoothness of pop psychological.

3. Gospel Messages in "sound bites"

a. Accept Jesus as your personal Savior

b. Don't worry about commandments just have love.

c. It is not what you know but who you know. etc.

**B) Translations that are "easier to read'**

1. The "backing away" from essentially literal translations.

2. The eagerness for "dynamic equivalence" translations. Where the translator does not actually tell us what the original said but tells us what he thinks it means. NLT example:

3, Leland Ryken, in his book The Word of God in English, wrote on page 91, "*To put it bluntly, what good is readability if a translation does not accurately render what the Bible actually says."*

**C) Blurring of standards**

1. Lack of teaching -- hard, controversial, mundane

2. Lack of learning -- cannot learn what is not taught

3. Lack of application-- cannot apply what you have not learned

**II) Symptoms/Results**

**A) Continued weakness among Christians (Spiritually weak Christians)**

1. The Bible mentions weakness, **Romans 14.1**

2. This is not to be permanent (ok to be weak as a newborn Christian but not as a 30-year-old veteran).

3. There is no safety is continued weakness. I can't do this or that.

**B) Willingness to accept mediocrity,**

**He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Matthew 12:30**

1. Acceptance of occasional attendance-- prayer, Bible Study, etc

2. A refusal to make a decision.

**C) Compartmentalization, James 4.17**

1. In regards to commands -- Matthew 22.38-40 Greatest commandment?

2. In regard to worship -- most important?

**III) Solution**

**A) Preach the word,**

**2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**

1. All three aspects of preaching the word, reproving (convincing), rebuking and exhorting must be based on doctrine (teaching).

a. Exhorting a congregation to be "more like Christ" is fine as long as they know what Christ was like as revealed in the Bible.

b. Exhorting folks to do more work for the Lord is fine if they have been taught from the scriptures what the Lord's work is.

c. Exhorting people to love the Lord and one another is great if they have been taught the nature of Biblical love.

2. A failure to have a Scriptural foundation for what we do is prescription for disaster.

a. Paul refers to zeal without knowledge,

**Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.**

b. Zeal without knowledge is like a souped up car without a steering wheel.

**B) We ought to never feel comfortable in our weakness.**

1. The Hebrew writer rebukes this,

**Hebrews 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

2. Peter encourages growth, not weakness**,**

**1 Peter 2:2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,**

**2 Peter 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.**

3. Are we doing what we can to be stronger,

**2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;**

**C) We are not to settle for mediocrity**

1. We should desire excellence,

**Philippians 1:10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**

2. We to strive for maturity,

**Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.**

3. Be committed to spiritual growth. Pick an area of improvement, make a commitment, follow through.

**D) We are to do all, not some, of what God says**

1. The manifestation of love, **John 14.15**

2. He said all of them, **Matthew 28.20**

3. The wise man does them, **Matthew 7.24**

4. We are not supposed to pick and choose,

**Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.**

Conclusion: Are you doing all you can to please the Lord? A dumbed down religion will not help you to do that, it will actually prevent you from doing that. If you are a Christian, be all that you can be and do all that you can do. If you are not a Christian, then take matters into your own hands and obey the Gospel today!