

FOCUS ON FINAL AUTHORITY

Messages in the “Focus on Final Authority” Series:

THE WORD OF GOD

THE WONDERFUL WORD OF GOD

GLORIFYING THE WORD OF GOD

THE WORD I PREACH

FOCUS ON FINAL AUTHORITY

The Word of God

More copies of the Bible were printed last year than in any previous year. Although it is the most outstanding piece of literature ever produced, many, “enlightened” Americans seem to know little or nothing about it.

A few years ago, a test of Bible knowledge was given to five classes of public high school seniors. Most of them failed the exam completely! Some were so confused that they thought Sodom and Gomorrah were lovers, or that the gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luther, and John. Others said that Eve was created from an apple, and that the stories Jesus used in teaching were called parodies. More than 80 percent of the pupils could not complete such familiar quotations as “Many are called but few are (chosen)” or “a soft answer turneth away (wrath).” How deplorable that such ignorance of the Bible is so widespread in a nation where the Judeo-Christian ethic has shaped the destiny of our land for more than 200 years.

A Gallup poll conducted some years ago revealed that 60 percent of Americans did not know what “the Holy Trinity” was. Sixty-six percent couldn’t say who delivered the Sermon on the Mount, and 79 percent were unable to name a single Old Testament prophet. When people are questioned about the Bible on radio or television, it is disturbing to see their complete lack of knowledge on the subject. Some are almost as confused as the little boy who wrote on his test paper that “the epistles were the wives of the apostles, and that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.”

We must be and we must teach our children to be Biblically literate!

The Apostle Paul warns against, “handling the Word of God deceitfully (dishonestly),” II Cor. 4:2. He further commands us in II Tim. 2:15 to “rightly divide” the Word of God. This is critical for proper interpretation.

Dr. R. A. Torrey, for many years the associate of the great evangelist Dwight L. Moody, was one of the great Christian leaders of his era. He wrote many books regarding the fundamentals of the Christian faith. He listed the following helps in understanding and interpreting the Bible:

1. Get absolutely right with God yourself by the absolute surrender of your will to Him.
2. Be determined to find what God intended to teach and not what you wish Him to teach.
3. Get the most accurate text (KJV 1611)
4. Find the most exact and literal meaning of the text.
5. Note the exact force of each word used.
6. Interpret the words used in any verse according to Bible usage.
7. Interpret the words of each author in the Bible with a regard to the particular usage of that author.
8. Interpret individual verses with a regard to the context.
9. Interpret individual passages in the light of parallel or related passages.
10. Interpret obscure passages in the light of passages that are perfectly plain.
11. Interpret passages in the Bible as those who were addressed would have understood it.
12. Interpret what belongs to the Christian as belonging to the Christian; what belongs to the Jew, as belonging to the Jew; what belongs to the Gentiles, as belonging to the Gentiles.
13. Interpret each writer with a view to the opinions the writer opposed.
14. Interpret poetry as poetry and interpret prose as prose.
15. The Holy Spirit is the best Interpreter of the Bible.

The Wonderful Word Of God

Read I Thess. 2:13. The message of the Gospel and the truths contained in the Bible are not the words of men but are surely the Word of God. Some folks minimize the importance of the Bible, but we who are saved maximize it. Why can it rightly be called the wonderful Word of God?

I. It Is Peculiar In Its Making

2 Pet.1:21. Though men were used as instruments to write down the Bible, the actual Word came from God Himself. It is firm as granite rock---immutable and immovable.

II. It Is Living In Its Essence

It is the germ seed through which eternal life is planted within the soul of a person. Romans 10:17 clearly states that faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

III. It Is Lasting In Its Nature

Glance at Psm. 119:89. The word of God is settled in heaven. Gold is always gold and cannot be anything else. So the word of God is as unchanging as God Himself.

IV. It Is Lovely In Its Structure

It is like the Empire state building beside a grass hut. That is because the architect of the Bible is God Himself. It has books of poetry, of history, genealogy, etc.

V. It is Lightning In Its Mission

Divine light by the Spirit of Life through the Word of God inflames man's nature with a new desire to love God and to love man. It is like the electricity that runs swiftly through our house wiring and quickly lights the light bulbs. See Isaiah 55:11 to be reminded of the effective work of the Bible.

VI. It Is Loving In Its Tone

There are words of judgment to come in the Bible, but even the warning of judgment is to woo the sinner in love to the Lord Jesus Christ. All you have to do is read John 3:16 and a host of other verses and this is easy to realize.

VII. It Is Liberating In Its Action

Through the Word of God the burden of sin is lifted—we are cut loose from the power of sin that would bind us. The burden of sin is lifted off of our soul through it. To establish that fact, read Psm. 119:11.

VIII. It Is Luring In Its Attraction

Because of the fact that God was the Originator of the Bible, it should be wonderfully alluring to us. See 2 Tim. 3:16. It charms and fascinates the soul.

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GLORIFYING THE WORD OF GOD

By Michael D. O'Neal, Gospel Light Baptist Church— Albany, Georgia

Of the prayer requests in the Bible, the one mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 - “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:” is often overlooked. The first part of the prayer request was “that the word of the Lord may have free course.” There are always many hindrances to the preaching of the word of God. Sometimes the national or local laws of the land are a hindrance.

The second part of the prayer request is that the word of the Lord may “be glorified.” This is a horrible thought to many liberal theologians, because it indicates that we should praise, lift up, and magnify the BIBLE! Let me point out some ways that we can magnify the word of the Lord:

I. WE GLORIFY GOD’S WORD BY OUR REVERENCE FOR IT

Psalms 56:4 “In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.”

- Study it) “Ain’t it amazing how much light dat de word of God do shine on da commentaries!”)
- Stand for it
- Show It in the way we live

II. WE GLORIFY GOD’S WORD BY OUR RELIANCE UPON IT

1 Thessalonians 2:13 – “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

- Rely on its Accuracy
- Rely on its Admonitions
- Rely on its Ability

III. WE GLORIFY GOD’S WORD BY OUR RECEPTION OF IT

Acts 17:11 - “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

THE WORD I PREACH

Dr. Tom Walker, Th.B, M.A, D.D.

Pastor: Zion Hill Baptist Church—Marion, NC 28752

There is nothing in the universe like the Word of God. It will work when nothing else will. The Bible will also be standing when everything else has fallen. I am going to say several things about this Word we teach, preach, believe and follow.

I. It is a Convicting Word

2 Tim. 3:16 tells us that the Word of God is profitable for and it says in the list-“reproof.” The word here means to “convict.” Nothing will bring conviction like the taught or preached Word of God.

II. It is a Converting Word

The Scripture says, “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Also compare Psm. 19:7 which says, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Lives are changed by the power of the Word of God.

III. It is a Consoling Word

Rom. 15:4 speaks of the “...comfort of the Scriptures.” Nothing will comfort the weary heart like a Word from God. Think about how many times you have been troubled about some matter and just a Word from God settled and consoled your heart.

IV. It is a Confident Word

In 2 Pet. 2:19, the Bible is referred to a “sure Word of prophecy.” The Bible is not ambiguous or vague, it is a sure Word from the Lord. We can rest confidently on what the Bible says for it is sure and true.

V. It is a Clarifying Word

If you want to know anything about any subject, get into the Bible. Although it was written many years ago, its truths endure to every generation (Psm.100:5). The entrance of truth gives light and understanding (Psm. 119:130).

VI. It is a Conquering Word

This is the very reason Jesus used the Word of God when confronted by the Devil in the wilderness. Three times Jesus said, “It is written” (Matt.4:4,6,7). There is power to conquer through the Word.