

An Appeal to Return to the Word of God

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The first thing that is ever recorded about the devil in the Word of God is that he came to man with the question “**Has God said?**” As soon as man begins to *doubt God’s Word* he becomes vulnerable to the *next* thing the enemy wants him to do. The devil wants to *diminish God’s character* in our belief and thereby cause us to lose sight of the glorious God that He really is. “God is holding out on you and doesn’t have your best interests at heart. He is not good.” Then, as we lose sight of God’s character, the devil deceives us one step further. We become prone to *dismiss God’s holiness and His judgment*, and therefore we become extremely susceptible to temptation and the solicitations of the devil to “go our own way.” We do not fear the consequences of sin. “You shall not surely die.” There is no fear of God.

Today the devil comes to each of us the same way, “Has God said?” He may come with a smile or even a comforting hug, and he may have impressive “credentials” and even have a Bible in his hand. He may offer us many things that are appealing to us, from activities to music, but *the voice is the same*, “Has God said?” He may come as “an angel of light” or a “minister of righteousness,” offering us many things that appear good and right, but are not according to God’s Word. We may be beguiled through “enticing words of man’s wisdom” or “fair speeches” that tickle our ears. “Smooth words” the devil uses may even draw us to the deadly place where we actually *feel* better about ourselves while we are disregarding the very Word of God!

The Bible is the very Word of God! It is a supernatural book, absolutely unique! Over two thousand times the Bible claims to be words directly from God! It was the first book ever written, and it will be the only book that will last. Just think of it: 66 books written by more than forty authors, over a timeframe of about 1600 years! This miracle was penned by kings, commoners, peasants, poets, philosophers, physicians, prophets, fishermen, farmers, generals, tax collectors, scholars, shepherds, scribes, unknown and well known, etc. From at least two continents, in three languages, from tents, palaces, dungeons, cities, caves, deserts...they wrote God’s very words! In joy and in trouble, in blessings and in buffetings, in ecstasy and in exile...they wrote! They represented different cultures and many ethnic groups. God selected them in His infinite wisdom and grace to be entrusted with His revelation, and they were moved by the Holy Spirit as they wrote! Most of them never met each other, and there were no committee meetings! And yet there is utter harmony throughout all the books and singular witness to the Lord Jesus Christ in His passion and glory! The ONLY explanation for this is an omniscient Author. You may be sure of it...the One Who gave His Word will watch over it with a holy vigilance to guard and perform it. Heaven and earth will pass away, but not one stroke of the words He has penned will pass away. The Bible tells us that all Scripture is “God breathed.” (2 Tim. 3:16). This is an absolute!

Jesus Christ our Lord regarded the Scriptures as total truth! Dare we think we are more wise than He? This is a completely arresting thought if you meditate on it. In John 10:35 Jesus said “the Scripture cannot be broken.” The entire Law and the prophets were placed in the very highest regard by our Lord in Matthew 5:17-19 where He said that ALL that had been written would be absolutely fulfilled. Heaven and Earth would pass away...but not God’s Word. It is settled forever in Heaven! Jesus made reference to more than 20 Old Testament characters and quoted from 19 OT books. It is so important to note that when the devil came to Jesus in the wilderness temptation, our Lord defeated him three times *with Scripture!* Jesus Christ firmly stated as total truth those Scripture passages about creation, Noah’s flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses writing the first five books, manna given from heaven, and Jonah and the whale. He cited as authoritative these and many other “sticky” passages that have

sparked endless discussion and debate among those with thimble hearts! Our Lord rebuked the skeptics of His day with words like “Have you not read...?” and “It is written...,” and “You do err, not knowing the Scriptures” and “Have you not read that which was spoken to you by God..?”. I wonder what He would say to the skeptics of our day? Just before the Cross, in John 17:17, He prayed for the Church that the Father would “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.” What a testimony to the power of the Word! It is the Word of God that the Father uses to sanctify the church and make her holy. Three of the seven utterances that Jesus spoke from the cross were Scripture. **So if you totally believe that the Word is God’s Word you are in good company!** After He was raised from the dead, He appeared to His own in Luke 24:25-48 (Good to read it again!) and “opened the Scriptures” and “disentangled their minds,” giving them understanding that **the whole Old Testament was written to teach about Him** and the Gospel. What a glorious testimony to the veracity of the Word!! How dangerous it is to question what He has made so abundantly clear!

When you see a person who habitually questions the Word of God you can know that he is a person who will never be able to *really* trust God in a way that is pleasing to Him. That person must settle the issue of the authority of His Word! That dear soul will not enter or experience the life of TRUE victory as God intended until there is a genuine repentance towards God and a deep submission to His Word !! A double-minded person will be unstable in all his ways. 2 Peter 3:16 says that we wrestle with the Scriptures only to our own destruction. Unbelief is contagious and will soon negatively affect the other people around it. It is our God-given privilege to *trust the Lord Jesus*, submitting ourselves to Him and becoming a radiant testimony of one who believes that “every Word of God is true!” The just shall live by faith.

To know the Word of God we must be taught His Word by His Spirit. As we give ourselves to the Scriptures in total trust He will graciously reveal Himself to us. We are made wise only in the proportion that we are listening to Him in authentic prayer and meditation in His Holy Word and have surrendered to Him in obedience.

The Bible warns us clearly that many deceivers have gone out into the world. Many of these clothe themselves in “sheep’s clothing” while they “preach themselves” and a man-centered mixture of truth and error that is spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit. God warns us! Have you seen it? God’s Word is under attack today by many who *claim* to embrace it. Remember that Jesus was betrayed with a kiss and not a slap! The Bible says that “If they speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them” Isaiah 8:20. We must not ignore God’s Word, neglect it, or try to “change it into what we can understand.” One does not have to “try to make it relevant.” The most severe warnings in the Word of God are to those who would “take away” from the Word of God and change the Gospel message into something of man (see Galatians 1:7-9 and Rev. 22:18-19)!

Preachers, especially, must beware of this in a day when so many are watering down the truth.

Preaching that is not truly “Word-based” has telling characteristics and effects. Some of them are:

- Instead of calling out “Thus saith the Lord” you will hear more of “the best scholars say” and the giving of earthly “lessons” from sentimental stories and moving videos.
- “Thou art the man” (confrontation) becomes “Some of you may have a problem” (suggestion).
- Instead of calling the people to “the holiness of God,” the prevailing concern becomes securing “the happiness of man.”
- Instead of fervent God-consciousness and being God-centered, the services become “seeker-oriented” and man-centered.

- The desire to be salt and light gives way to a desire to be sugar and “loving.” They may look alike at first, but the results are as different as light and dark as they go on and motives become manifest.
- Instead of spiritual armor that enables believers to stand against the enemy there is a tendency to gravitate to the “camouflage” mentality; to blend in so we won’t “offend anyone” and gain a hearing.
- The obedience that overflows from genuine faith and is pleasing to God is overshadowed by “church activities,” and fleshly busyness and entertainment designed to bless man.
- Instead of preaching Christ and Him crucified (foolishness to those who are perishing) there is the tendency to try to bring the Gospel down to a natural thing that is logical, humanistic, and marketable.

We are in a life or death conflict! It is an awesome and wonderful thing that God has given His people the gifts of *prayer* and the *Word*. He has mightily empowered these two weapons, and through them He has enabled *His* church, throughout history, to triumph and walk in His sweet victory. Prayer, which is communion with God, enables us to lay hold of the Word of God in a living way and claim His precious promises in believing faith!! **The Word of God, which is “*the sword of the Spirit,*” is the weapon of choice of the Holy Spirit in the cosmic battle for the human soul.** In our day the devil is endeavoring to take God’s sword out of the hands of a prayerless church and deceive us with the same lies that he has used effectively on man since the beginning. Then we are left fighting a spiritual battle in our own wisdom and strength, and life becomes a shallow religious ego trip that is content to have a form of godliness that lacks real power.

Repeatedly and unapologetically the Apostles taught that they were speaking and writing the very Word of God (i.e. see 1 Thess. 2:13). The Bible is full of astounding revelations that prove that *only* God could have written it. The amazing scientific and medical knowledge that is clearly set forth before modern discoveries, the staggering mathematical witness within the texts, the irrefutable testimony of *hundreds* of fulfilled Bible prophecies, and *much more*....all shout to the one who has ears to hear that **“You can trust your life to the truth revealed in this book!”**

So why have I written all of this? Why am I asking you to read all this and hopefully be provoked as well as encouraged by it? Are you able to discern the aggressive movement away from the Word of God that is fast gaining momentum in many churches in our day? Do you sense the battle that is raging in the invisible for the souls of men and women? While the world’s books may be food for thought, the Word of God is “food for faith.” Unfortunately most people are treating the Bible like fast food, and a steady diet of fast artificial stuff is debilitating.

We live in a day of growing darkness, “man-made” light, and a militant ungodliness that loves to appear “religious.” Do you sense the danger of the hour? The only answer for the devil’s lie is God’s truth. But are God’s people *really* giving ourselves to the Scriptures? Are we listening to what HE is saying to the churches in this hour? Do you see the people of God hungering and thirsting to know HIM more, and to discover intimacy with HIM within the sacred pages? We are fast entering the day in which those who will not “receive a love of the truth” will fall easy prey to believe the devil’s lie. The stakes are infinitely high.

As God’s children, we are exhorted to “search the Scriptures.” We are told to meditate in them day and night, and to allow the word of Christ to dwell in us richly. We are to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and to give ourselves wholly to the Word of God. Like newborn babes, begotten to a living hope through the Word, we are to desire the sincere milk of the Word. By the exceeding precious promises of God’s Word we are to become partakers of the very divine nature. Our steps...and stops...are to be ordered in the Word. We are to live by every Word that has proceeded from the mouth of God....to esteem the words of His mouth more than our necessary food, give them more worth than fine gold. The entrance of

His word will give light, and when received as God's word it will work effectually in those who believe. His words are spirit and they are life. We cleanse our way and honor Him as we take heed to His Word. His Word memorized and known in the heart increases the vocabulary of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and it purifies us as we obey it's truth. The Bible is the fuel for authentic prayer...and it is irresistible to God when He hears believing, fervent hearts united and lifting His own Word and promises back to Him. We are to be diligent seekers of Him and not just casual inquirers after Him.

I want to make an appeal that God's people return to the Word of God! This starts with me...not somebody else! *And you!* Let us make sure to keep our lamps full with His oil. Sow His precious seed in your spirit. Let your food be that which the world cannot give you. May His glorious Word burn like a fire in our bones. **We talk about "giving out the Word of God", but are we "taking it in?"** How would we fare if our Bibles were taken away from us tomorrow? Do we really appreciate what it has cost others, and the sufferings of blood, sweat, and tears that have made it possible for us to hold in our hands the very Word of God? Did you know that the entire Word of God can be read aloud in about 75 hours? Yes...Alexander Scoby recorded it and that is the amount of time it took to read it aloud. The average American spends that much time in front of TV in less than three weeks.

Please allow me to set before us a few questions that we would do well to ask ourselves as we come to the end this brief exhortation:

- What is it that keeps me from the Word of God? (One day I will see that this is really my enemy!)
- Do I spend daily time reading, studying, meditating in the word? Am I acting on what I see?
- Do I find myself automatically "thinking Scripture" in life situations because my mind and heart are so saturated with it?
- Do temptations cause Scriptures to come to my mind, or are you "fighting with your own sword?"
- Are there lies in my mind now that I am believing? Is my mind being renewed by His Word?
- Do I know God's will for my life? Do I long to? Am I searching the Scriptures?
- Do I question His Word or get intimidated by the carnal thinking of the world?
- Is God's Word becoming more precious to me, or is it something that I approach like a tool?
- Am I intrigued...pulled into the Scripture by His Majesty and the mystery of His glorious will?
- Have I ever sacrificed for the Word of God?

John 20:31 "But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing you might have life through His Name.*"

Psalms 119: 25,37,40,50,88,93,107, 149,154,156,159.....eleven times David prayed for spiritual "quickenings" (life giving) through the faithfulness of God *in His word*. Let us join him in his request for such revival.

"It is time for Thee to work Lord; for they have made void Thy Law."



Al Whittinghill
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GOD'S WORD: Read it, sing it, memorize it, meditate in it, search it, study it, share it, discuss it, teach it, pray it, give it out !! BELIEVE IT !