

Guided Into All Truth

Neil Girrard

One Bible teacher relates this experience and shares some gleaned wisdom and insight:

After [one] Sunday School I received a phone call from an upset father. “What do you mean teaching our son that all the demons will be saved?” I hurried to explain that I was teaching the young people how *not* to prove something about demons. I had put three “pieces” of Scripture together – all true in their proper setting – and thereby “proved” that all demons will be saved.

- “I know who You are – the Holy One of God!” (unclean spirit’s words in Mk. 1:24)
- “The demons also believe, and tremble.” (Jas. 2:19)
- “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.” (Acts 16:31)

Even the Scriptures themselves can be used to change us in a way that is contrary to God’s truth and His will if we don’t observe accurately what they say, all they say, and if in context. Accurately observing everything God says in a portion of Scripture is the opposite of teaching by the piecemeal method, where a teacher skips through the Bible, taking a verse or part of a verse to prove a point. (This may be an acceptable method if each section has been carefully studied in context and if the premise to be proved is scripturally accurate.) Isolated phrases and sentences put together at a teacher’s whim can be made to prove almost anything. [Another sister put it this way:] “If I took a bunch of letters from someone, cut out sentences here and there, and put them together the way I wanted, I could prove anything I cared to!” (“*Lord, Change Me!*”, Evelyn Christenson, 1977, p. 63-64)

Another classic example of Scripture abuse is the story of the guy who flips pages and points a finger and reads, “Judas went and hung himself.” (Mt. 27:5) He then flips and points and reads, “You go and do the same.” (Lk. 10:37) Anyone who obeys this kind of “Bible study” deserves whatever they get! Obviously, there are wrong ways to read the Scriptures. Peter warned long ago, “...untaught and unstable people twist [Paul’s writings] to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.” (2 Pet. 3:16) There are as many ways to twist and distort the intent and meaning of the Scriptures as there are false and deceived teachers!

How do we find the truth? Whole philosophies of this world have been diabolically engineered to cause us to doubt whether there even is such a thing as truth. These become easily recognizable as simply ideas *designed* to attack our faith (causing us to doubt rather than believe) and to keep us from the truth – a design which backhandedly confirms at least the existence of truth in the same way a counterfeit bill relies on the presence of genuine currency.

Jesus told His followers, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.” (Jn. 16:13) He had previously told them, “If you abide in My word, you are My

disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, the truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8:31-32) We gain truth when we stay within the framework of Jesus’ teachings and submit to the Spirit of truth as He guides us into all truth. To be guided into all truth is not necessarily a scholarly pursuit. In fact, if one relies only on intellectual study methods (hermeneutics, homiletics, exegesis, etc.), one can indeed concoct messages that are “Christocentric” or “kerygmatic” but they are not truth. Since they are not truth, they cannot free either their manufacturers nor their subscribers or consumers. Another consequence of over-relying on “context” and other intellectual tools is to dilute or even completely contradict the plain meaning of a text. Some have, as but one example, explained away all responsibilities for holy and righteous living by viewing all such requirements in “the context of” Romans 14!

The safety for the believer is to find what Paul called “the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27) It is interesting to note that the same people who speak so fervently about others being able to prove anything by piece-mealing (or “proof-texting”) from the Scriptures also rely on their own set of verses to back up what they say and do! Very few indeed seem to recognize their own inconsistency in this regard and there is no greater enemy of the whole counsel of God than our own preconceived notions and paradigms that stand in contradiction to the truth of God. And there is probably no more spiritually devastating paradigm than the “church” paradigm, a demonically conceived mindset that deludes us into thinking we already have God’s whole counsel on how “church” should be practiced. To be guided into all truth *requires* that we be guided away from all forms of deceit, deception and duplicity – many of which we have, over the course of our life, heavily invested ourselves into. Just as the Pharisees could not recognize how they had turned the word of God into a lethal bondage, so too do today’s “pastors,” “apostles” and preachers fail to see how they set a demonic snare for their listeners and most often keep their hearers from ever being able to come to Christ in spirit and in truth, and certainly not in spiritual maturity!

One method that can be used to find the whole counsel of God is to find every instance in the Scriptures that touches upon that issue. But even this method, if it is merely an intellectual exercise, will not produce the whole counsel of God. God still says, “On this one will I look [favorably]: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.” (Isa. 66:2) The Scriptures still say, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Mt. 4:4, Dt. 8:3) The words of men will never replace the words of God. And even when men merely repeat God’s words, it is not the same as having heard from God for ourselves. (1 Jn. 2:27, Jn. 10:27, etc.)

If one dares to desire to know the heart of God, He can be found. (Heb. 11:6) One way to be certain to contact His heart is to read the Scriptures *until* God speaks to you. But read *only until* He speaks. Write down whatever has “jumped out at you” and ask God *why* He stopped you at that point, *what needs changing* in your life, and then *what He wants you to do* about it. This method, which too must be kept from replacing God, is a tool one can use to find the God who still says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (Jas. 4:8) There are other similar tools available to the sincere seeker of God. Although there are “theologians” who will disagree with this statement, it really doesn’t matter what “tools” you use to approach the Scriptures – they can be viewed with the “naked eye,” a “microscope,” a “telescope,” a “magnifying glass” or a “wide-angle, panoramic lens.” So long as your study is led and aided by the Spirit of truth you will be guided into all truth. The wise student of Christ will learn to use *all* the tools well – and find that “all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” (2 Cor. 1:20)

Paul wrote, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15) The gospel worker who is approved by God and who will not stand ashamed on judgment day is the one who took the whole counsel of God and, by the aid of the Spirit of truth, rightly divided the word of truth into its appropriate areas of application. The one who seeks the approval of men (seminary degrees, denominational promotions, large congregations, etc.) will stand ashamed on judgment day as his every error and mis-statement of truth are rehearsed before him. The one who actually defiled God’s people by introducing lawlessness (whatever is right in one’s own eyes – Jdgs. 21:25, etc. – the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – Gen. 2:17) into the lives of Christ’s followers will be destroyed by God. (see 1 Cor. 3:9-17, Mt. 7:21-23)

One can view this article as merely yet another writer’s failed piece-meal attempt to prove something from the Scriptures – most who would do this will do so because this article contradicts their own preconceived notions and paradigms. Or one can view this article as an introduction (this article does not purport or pretend to be give the whole counsel of God on such a broad topic) to a deeper, richer life with God. The choice – as well as the rewards or consequences of that choice – is yours.

Let he who has ears hear.

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