

The Importance of God's Word

Matthew 5:17-20

July 6, 2014

DAY 1: God's word and guidance

1. All of us live by a set of unwritten criteria. Sometimes, we are driven by temptation. Sometimes we are driven by our feelings. Sometimes we do something that just "seems right." The bible tells us that these are all mistakes! Below are several important verses. Jot down the warnings!

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

John 7:24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

(Note: Jesus uses the word "judge" in the sense of using your head--making judgments about right and wrong).

Job 31:7 ...if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes... may my crops be uprooted.

2. Instead, God tells us to build our decisions on His wisdom, His truth about Himself, His purposes, life, human nature and relationships.

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

3. The phrase, "the Law and the Prophets" related to the entire Old Testament. What was Jesus' attitude toward the bible?

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

4. To what did Jesus equate the bible?

5. What does the psalmist have to say about God's word (His precepts)?

Psalms 111:7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

6. How does your attitude toward the bible compare with Jesus' and the psalmist's?

DAY 2: God's word--timeless

Matthew 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

1. You sometimes hear people say of the bible:

- "The bible is full of errors."
- "The bible is full of contradictions."
- "How can you take the bible literally?"
- "The bible was written by a bunch of old men sitting around a table."

2. Have you ever thought one of those? What changed your views of scripture?

3. Jesus illustrates the thoroughness of the scripture by saying that even the pen strokes of *individual letters* are important! ("Not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen..."). Is there any part of God's word that is unimportant?

4. What is amusing to me is that the people I hear utter these things in Question #1, have rarely spent any time doing personal research of their own. They hear an accusation like one of these and suddenly it is their conviction that it is true.

5. The bible is eternal, and timeless. Underneath each of the following verses, jot down what strikes you about the timelessness of the scriptures.

Psalms 119:89 Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. [90] Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

1 Peter 1:24 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,

²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

6. What is your biggest take away about God's word?

DAY 3: God's word--commandments to be obeyed.

Matthew 5:19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

1. One of the aspects of God's word is the aspect of "commandment." What does "commandment" mean?
2. In the following verses, jot down what is important regarding God's word as "commandments."

Psalms 119:2 Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.

Job 23:12 I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.*

³⁹ *And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

⁴⁰ *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

1 John 3:22 ... and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

3. Look back at Matt. 5:19 at the top of today's study. Jesus gives us two pictures of the magnitude of learning the commandments and obeying them. Put what He taught in your own words.

DAY 4: God's word, key to transformation

1. God's word is essential to His transforming process in us. Under each of the following verses, write down what God's word has the potential to do in you.

2 Timothy 3:15 ... and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*

¹⁷ *so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Psalms 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

¹⁰ *I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.*

¹¹ *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Psalms 119:29 Keep me from deceitful ways; be gracious to me through your law.

2. Which of these verses struck you the most?
3. Why?
4. What has impressed you this week about God's word?

DAY 5: Salvation?

Matt. 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

1. At the time of Jesus, the Pharisees were considered by virtually everyone to be the height of righteousness. How do you think "Average Joe" would have responded to Jesus' statement?

2. Our pride loves to believe that we will be in heaven one day because:

- a. "We are basically good."
- b. "Our good outweighs our bad."
- c. "We're not an ax-murderer."
- d. "We're sincere."

3. What would Jesus have to say to each of these beliefs?

- a. Is it enough to be "basically good?"
- b. Is it enough that "our good outweighs our bad?"
- c. Does the fact that we've never committed murder with an ax hold any weight with Jesus?
- d. Does sincerity have anything to do with salvation?

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

4. How do the Pharisee's attitudes compare with how our human pride thinks?

Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'"

5. What differences do you see between the tax collector and the Pharisee?

Luke 18:14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

6. What is Jesus' conclusion about these two men?