

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Preacher 101

If your preacher were to stand before you one day and ask for a show of hands as to how many people know and understand completely, everything there is to know and understand correctly, about the bible in its entirety, I doubt seriously that one, single, solitary hand would go up – and certainly no sincerely honest person (including your preacher) would dare raise one. And so, what does that mean? It means that none of us completely and correctly understand everything there is to know both within, and about, the holy and sacred, God-given scripture. (Please file that point away in your mind for just a moment.)

Secondly; it is that evangelist's God-given duty, directive, and divinely-delivered responsibility to also study endlessly (because he doesn't know it all either!) – to: "Be diligent to present [him]self approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15) – and then to deliver that full word of God

faithfully to God's faithful people (2 Tim. 2:2) – to: "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2).

So what should these two points put together reveal to us? That sooner or later, because no one knows or understands absolutely everything in the bible, absolutely and completely correctly, that if, by the grace of God, any preacher is blessed to stay in one congregation long enough, sooner or later he is going to challenge every single saint in that assembly, no matter who they are or how long they've been there, in one area of their biblical understanding or another. It can simply be no other way if he is truly and faithfully preaching the "full counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), as God requires His faithful servant must do. And again, if a preacher is faithfully studying, seeking to understand, and then truly preaching the word of God which he has delved

into on a deep and daily basis, sooner or later he is going to challenge every saint's conclusions and/or convictions in one area or another, in order to help them to learn something new and grow on into the God-required maturity that we all must (Eph. 4:11-16). That is his job (2 Tim. 4:1-5)! As I have heard appropriately observed in the immediate aftermath of an occasionally hard-hitting sermon or two in the past by a good brother: "If he (the preacher) stepped on your toes with that sermon, it's only because he's a bad shot. He was aiming for your heart." Amen!

If a preacher has been blessed enough to be in the same location for a period of years, and has not at the very least, slightly offended, upset, corrected, rebuked, or otherwise challenged each individual saint in some area or another of their biblical knowledge, understanding, and/or convictions (**study** John 6:60-69), then he should probably apologize because he's not truly doing his job. He should humbly ask the saints' forgiveness for apparently slacking in his duties as theirs' and God's evangelist and promise to seek to do better from now on to fulfill his God-given commission to more aptly assist the congregation's God-required growth in Christ.

One reason some preachers fail to preach the full council of God on such a constant and continual basis is because they fear the potential reprisals of their biblically-offended brethren. Let's face it... many saints brotherhood-wide – not all, but a sizable amount nonetheless – have their own dearly beloved "pet projects," agendas, and/or understandings and perspectives of

particular religious ideas, which NO ONE had better challenge or mess with "if they know what's good for them." These understandings and perspectives may have come from "dear old mom and dad," a beloved Christian teacher or preacher who has long since passed on to their reward, or some other treasured and "protected at all cost" source... And therefore, "God help the Christian preacher or teacher who even dares suggest re-examining and/or re-assessing those conclusions." But if those pet perspectives are even remotely biblically faulty, or even somewhat scripturally errant, then they need to be biblically challenged and re-examined for the soul's sake. And this is what preachers, teachers, and true Christian disciples who truly love their Lord, His word and His people, will ultimately and unendingly do – despite whatever the cost or consequences. And mark my words; sometimes the consequences can be pretty severe. Better yet, mark His. One need look no further than the story of Jesus near the end of the gospel accounts; the story of Stephen as recorded in Acts 7; or the story of the apostle Paul as seen throughout the book of Acts to encounter this. In all three of these biblical accounts, deeply pious and religious people with centuries-old convictions and conclusions that could not stand in the light of true biblical scrutiny, both sought to, and then eventually successfully, silenced those who dared challenge them to re-examine their convictions in the all-authoritative light of God's word (Psalm 119).

While no elder, preacher, or teacher in the Lord's church today (at least in America) will likely be crucified as was Jesus, stoned as was Stephen, or beheaded as the apostle Paul is believed to have

been, all for merely seeking to get people to examine, acknowledge, and dispose of some of their biblically faulty, previously held religious convictions and conclusions so that they might spiritually mature, grow closer to, and get right with almighty God, still, consequences for challenging somewhat popular but yet biblically erroneous conclusions today do still exist. It is unfortunately but yet not uncommonly known today, for some preachers to have to move on because they dared teach the biblical truth regarding such things as "marriage, divorce, and remarriage," disfellowship, so-called "social drinking," and/or a whole plethora of other biblical truths even on 'lesser' topics, to those few power-and-influence-wielding brethren who did not wish to have their self-justified but biblically-unsupportable conclusions challenged in the light of God's word and it's common-sense application.

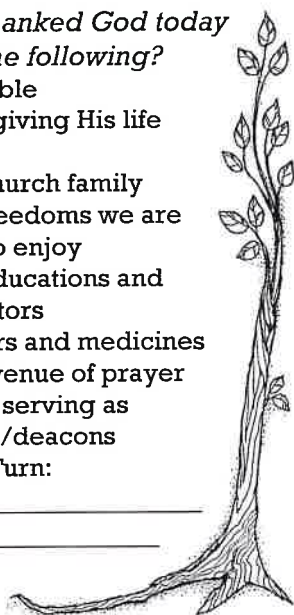
Let us determine as a congregation to always remain totally determined to be the kind of faithful Christians who want to continue to have our convictions and conclusions constantly biblically challenged, in order that we might become the mature children our heavenly Father desires (II Cor. 3:17-18). As long as our leaders present the black and white, "book, chapter, and verse" biblical truth, let us determine to always be ready to re-examine our personal opinions and beliefs, not relax our guard, and to remain a Hebrews 13:17 people who: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

Doug Dingley

**DEAR GOD,
I WANNA TAKE A
MINUTE, NOT TO ASK
FOR ANYTHING FROM
YOU, BUT SIMPLY TO
SAY THANK YOU,
FOR ALL I HAVE.**

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The freedoms we are able to enjoy
- Our educations and educators
- Doctors and medicines
- The avenue of prayer
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:



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Monthly Challenges

DIRECTIONS: *Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.*

1) CREATE A PROSPECTIVE CHRISTIAN LIST

Mark 16:15 *"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'"*

Write down names of anyone you think might be open to contact and hand it to the elders, and provide contact information (e-mail, address, phone number, etc.), if available. Some of these interested people might be:

- a) church members' spouses who may not belong to our church
- b) people who have visited in the last 18 months
- c) people who have demonstrated any interest in our congregation
- d) parents of children who attend Sunday School
- e) people you work with or go to school with
- f) people at businesses you deal with on a day-to-day basis
- g) someone new to the neighborhood/new to work or school
- h) teammates
- i) people with similar hobbies as you
- j) members of other congregations (you would be surprised here, especially write down those who talk about God freely and proudly)
- k) anyone and everyone else you can think of

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Luke 18:9-14

9 "He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: **10** 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get." **13** But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" **14** I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."