

TRUTH & RIGHT

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THE PERFECT PROVEN WORD

Sometimes people who visit our services or begin a Bible study with us are struck by our unwavering focus on the Scriptures for everything we believe, teach, and practice. We hear people say, “The Bible is important, but it’s not all there is to a relationship with God.”

It’s certainly true that our relationship with God cannot be limited exclusively to book knowledge, even if that book is the Bible. It’s imperative that we take what we read in the Scriptures and make those words the foundation and blueprint of an active life in Christ. The Bible itself says that it is the

“*implanted word*” that is able to save the soul (James 1:21), not merely the “read and understood word.” The doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in the inspired Scriptures are intended to complete us as servants of God, and equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Discipleship, therefore, is not merely an educational exercise — it is the process of allowing God’s word to transform us into the likeness of Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). It is infinitely more than studying as though for an academic exam — it is being recreated into a “*new man who is renewed*

in knowledge,” by means of the instruction and direction of God’s word (Colossians 3:10).

Consider these words of David, recorded in 2 Samuel 22:31 and its parallel passage, Psalm 18:30: *“As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.”* Of whom else but God could it be said that *“His way is perfect”*?

We have all learned many valuable things from parents, teachers, and other persons of positive influence, but would we say of any of them that everything they taught was perfect? I am continually grateful for the many vital lessons I learned from my mother and father, but they — though usually right — were not always correct. I have benefited from the study of many learned brothers in Christ, both through their preaching and teaching and through their writings, but I have never met a

gospel preacher who was right about everything — myself included. Many times I’ve been compelled to go back to the Bible and restudy some issue, once I realized that what I had previously believed and taught on the matter was wrong.

When we follow God’s word — unlike the frail, self-serving words of humankind — we can be 100% certain that what He says is so. *“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* (Numbers 23:19). As Moses said, *“He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He”* (Deuteronomy 32:4).

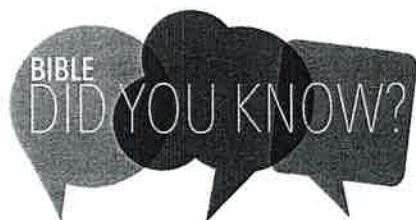
Moreover, God’s word has been proven: *“The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times”* (Psalm 12:6).

No one who ever relied on God's word in humble faith and right understanding has ever been disappointed by it. Yes, many have suffered from unreal expectations and false interpretations, but the true word of God has been tested time after time and never been found wanting. The Bible withstands every onslaught of skeptics and infidels who've come and gone, while that which they assail remains steadfast long after they have turned to dust: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33).

We can choose to place our confidence in many things: our own feelings, which change from moment to moment; the theories and ideas of other people, who are as prone to error as we are; or God's perfect, proven word, delivered through His Son: "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). It shouldn't take us a great

deal of thought to determine which way is wisest and best.

— Michael D. Rankins



We may bear personal responsibility for the condition of lost souls if we fail to be busy about the Great Commission.

"When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself."
Ezek. 3:18-19



MONTHLY CHALLENGE

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) Bible Study Challenge

Col. 1:9-10 "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Growing in a walk that pleases God more every day is directly linked to how much I am growing in knowledge, spiritual wisdom and understanding. I can't please the Lord without increased Bible knowledge and therefore can't have one without the other. Many times we assume that personal growth is simply a matter of willing ourselves by our own strength and ability to developing a stronger level of faithful living. We amp up discipline and motivation and often fail to feel a need to increase our depth of understanding of the Word as the means to reach this end. Pick a section from Col. 1:13-23 and dedicate this month to a personal study of the glory of Christ expressed in this letter.

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

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

Philippians 2:1-11

"Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."