

SCRIPTURE: GOD'S OFFICIAL TEACHINGS

David Halbrook

In Matthew 15:1-2, the scribes and Pharisees criticized Jesus' disciples for not following the tradition of the elders. Jesus said that those who included the tradition of the elders in their official teaching and practice were "teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" and thus were "blind leaders of the blind" (v9, 14).

Today, Scripture is the official teaching of God. It gives God's "official position" on marriage (Matt. 19:1-9), salvation (Mk. 16:16), worship (Jn. 4:24; Acts 2:42), the church (Acts 2:47), and everything that man needs to know. Thus, Scripture provides the "official teachings" of the church of Christ. The church's duty is to follow and spread God's official teachings, not create new ones.

The official teachings of the Methodist Church are in the Methodist Discipline. The Book of Concord contains the official teachings of the Lutheran Church. The official teachings of the Catholic Church are found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Since God already gave His official teachings, what purpose do these books serve? The disciplines, catechisms, and traditions of men will never unite men in Christ, but the Bible will. That is our appeal for religious unity. **WWW.QVCOC.COM**

-- *Editor's Note*: Each week when we give, remember that this bulletin and the *Arkansas Weekly* articles are provided by those funds. Let's use them accordingly. Find and clip our weekly articles, hand it to someone this weeks, explain that there is a new article each week in the paper, and invite their comments. The more involved you are in teaching, the more you will learn (read the article inside *How We Learn*).

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING THE OLD TESTAMENT

E.A. Elam (1855-1929)

Some say they regret when the lessons are in the Old Testament. This is a serious mistake. The writer indulges the hope that, having studied the lessons of these Notes, all will realize with him that it is a great mistake not to study the Old Testament.

The following reasons for studying the Old Testament are briefly given:

1. God would not have preserved it and so connected it with the New Testament if He had not intended for us to study it now. He exhorts us to study it. (See II Pet. 3:1-2)
2. The sacred writings which Timothy knew from childhood were the Old Testament Scriptures, which make *wise unto salvation*, in that they lead to faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God. (II Tim. 3:15-17).
3. Paul and Apollos reasoned from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. (See Acts 17:1-3, 18:27-28) These Scriptures testify of Jesus (Jn. 5:39-46).
4. We cannot understand various references in the New Testament to passages, principles, and facts of the Old Testament without studying the Old Testament.
5. Occasionally some will say that they have not time to study the Old Testament; if so, they have not time to obey God. Some others say they cannot become interested in it. That is because they are not interested in the works of God His dealings with the nations of the earth; the history of His people; His purposes, promises, and prophecies concerning the redemption of the race; and His evidences that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ; and it is because they do not read it enough to understand its characters and history.
6. The Bible is a unit, or one historic whole. Genesis opens with the beginning the creation of all things and states the cause of all that which follows; while Revelation gives the conclusion the grand and glorious consummation of all.

7. One cannot understand the New Testament without the Old Testament. The best way and the best time to study the Old Testament are other considerations, but it must be studied.

To become interested in its study, one should read it regularly and sufficiently to become familiar with its places, characters, histories, facts, and purposes. Consult the maps; learn what prophets, kings, and other prominent persons were contemporary; read both the Old Testament and the New Testament through consecutively, reading some in each every day; when reading the New Testament, look up all the references made to the Old Testament, for in this way the study of the Old Testament will soon become both interesting and profitable.

Above all, as David says, one should lay up the word of God in one's heart, that one may not sin against Him (Ps. 119:11); and, as Paul exhorts: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (Col. 3:16). (From: Elam's Notes, 1926, Vol. 5, p. 196)

AM I GROWING SPIRITUALLY?

John Smith

Spiritual growth is expected of every Christian. "...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pt. 3:18). The goal of every Christian should be to grow. Paul admonishes us to "grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ" (Eph. 4:15). When this happens the individual saint is not the only one to benefit. The congregation grows and is edified as well (Eph. 4:16). The simple truth is that we are either growing spiritually or we are dying spiritually. How then can I determine if I am growing spiritually?

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE GROWN SPIRITUALLY?

Spiritual growth is not as easy to determine as physical growth. To find out if I have grown physically all I need to do is to take a few measurements. Spiritual growth is not quite so easily measured. Outward signs are not always reliable.

Years and experience are not necessarily indicators of spiritual growth. The Hebrew writer speaks of some who by reason of time ought of have been teachers need to be taught the first principles of the Gospel (Heb. 5:12).

We can easily choose inappropriate standards. For instance, you might compare yourself to the person sitting just down the pew from you and think that you have excelled in growth. Paul declared such comparisons unwise (2 Cor. 10:12).

It is possible for a person to have a "form of godliness" and yet not be growing spiritually (2 Tim. 3:5). We cannot judge depth of growth by simple externals. We may appear to be pious, regular in attendance and a generous contributor and yet not be growing.

It is easy to deceive ourselves. It is easy to see ourselves as something that we are not. If we are not painfully honest with ourselves, we may never truly know ourselves. We are warned against deceiving ourselves (1 Cor. 3:18).

Spiritual growth involves all of these things, but goes far beyond the visible. We must reflect intently upon our heart, life and character. What are we living for--the flesh or the spirit (Rom. 8:5). We need to honestly compare what we are to what we have been and then judge the change by God's standard. It may be painful, but it will be profitable.

HOW WE LEARN

Kyle Campbell

I thought it would be interesting at the end of this week's bulletin to consider how we learn. Take a look at the following list of percentages defining our learning process:

- 10% of what we read.
- 20% of what we hear.
- 30% of what we see.
- 50% of what we both see and hear.
- 70% of what is discussed with others.
- 80% of what we experience personally.
- 95% of what we teach someone else.

Notice that two out of the three of the highest percentages involve what we either discuss with or teach someone else. If we can overcome our hindrances, we will learn more and convert people to Jesus Christ.

www.lawofliberty.com/articles/Resources/howwelearn.pdf

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. Col. 4:5-6

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise. Prov. 11:30