

First Things First (Physical Life)

David Halbrook

God did not make “first things” complex—error is the source of confusion. Understanding the truth of any subject begins with the basics. Consider the basics of physical life.

Something cannot come from nothing All life must have a source, and all true science agrees. God is the source of physical human life which requires the union of body and spirit (Genesis 1:27; 2:7; James 2:26).

Life cannot come from non-life Millions of hours and dollars have been wasted trying to prove that human life has evolved from non-life. Genesis 1 is full of physical facts, including the statements that plant, animal, and human life can reproduce themselves—life only comes from life. The *living* God is the original source of all life on earth.

The life is in the blood Why is “bloodletting” no longer a medical practice? By sight, doctors have learned that life is in the blood, but this was already known by faith (Gen. 9:4).

As our society increasingly excludes God you need to understand these “first things” about physical life. These lessons can help us understand first things of spiritual life, the topic of next week’s article posted today at our website.

Editor’s Note: A little at a time, even our community is losing this basic knowledge concerning physical life. Reinforcing these truths, reinforces the Bible as the source of truth. Use our *Arkansas Weekly* article to teach or remind someone of these “first things.”

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Ed & Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, new Christians among us, and Ben Calderon (with our help, he preaches among Spanish-speaking people in Conway) who requests our prayers due to a hernia surgery Wednesday, May 27.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and 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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What Do You Think?

Steve Klein

I saw a sign that just said, "THINK!" Of course, most people think anytime they're awake -- at least I think they do. But, judging by some of the bone-headed stunts we all pull, it makes one wonder what we are thinking. How many children have been scolded with the words, "What were you thinking?!?"

People who are not spiritual, not morally good, or not saved, still think. Their problem isn't a lack of thinking, their problem is with what they think. The wicked man does a lot of thinking. "He devises wickedness on his bed; He sets himself in a way that is not good; He does not abhor evil." (Psalm 36:4). In Psalm 64:6 we learn that even for a wicked man, "Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep." But the problem is that while he does a lot of thinking, "God is in none of his thoughts" (Psalm 10:4).

Christians are challenged to have the same mind in them that was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5). We are to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We are to think like Jesus.

How can we accomplish this? If we are honest, most of us would probably admit that we find our thoughts difficult to control; we sometimes think things that we should not. How can we train ourselves to think like Christ? Here are three suggestions from Scripture:

(1) Learn what the Lord thinks by studying His word. Our ideas about right and wrong or good and evil should be directed by God's word. "Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path" (Psalm 119:104-105).

(continued inside)

(2) Meditate on good things. Meditation is directed thinking. It is certain that if we let our minds wander freely, our thoughts will not be what they should. And so, some time must be spent intentionally directing our thoughts to things that are good. In Philippians 4:8 we read, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy- meditate on these things."

(3) Do what is right. We often say that actions follow thoughts, and often they do. But actions can also influence thoughts. When we, in obedience to God, do what is right, our minds will be directed to think what is right. "Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established" (Proverbs 16:3). In practical terms, this might mean helping someone else, not because we've been thinking about being charitable, but because it's simply the right thing to do. But when we do it, we just might start thinking more about being charitable!

Every Christian needs to work at disciplining the mind to bring every thought into captivity to Christ.

Can We Understand The Bible Alike? Jesse Flowers

1. WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE. Some may suggest otherwise, yet God tells us that His inspired words (2 Timothy 3:16) can be understood by man. The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:3-4: "how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)." Also consider Ephesians 5:17. "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Paul fully expected his readers to understand the will of the Lord. During Jesus' earthly ministry He addressed the multitude and said: "Hear Me, everyone, and understand" (Mark 7:14). You see, the Lord didn't just expect people to hear His voice when He spoke, but He expected the multitude to understand the things He taught them. Thus we read of how "the common people heard Him gladly" (Mark 12:37).

2. WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE. Now this may seem like a strange claim to make when you think of how many different churches exist today that teach so many conflicting doctrines. However, we can understand the Bible, and we can understand it alike. Paul penned the following to the church in Corinth: "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10). The

KEY to understanding the Bible alike is when all agree to rely upon the Scriptures as our sole source of authority. Then, "if anyone speaks" they will only "speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). And no one will "think beyond what is written" (I Cor. 4:6). No changes whatsoever will be made to the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-10).

3. PROOF THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE. Think about this. God "desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4). If God desires the salvation of everyone (and He does), then what sense would it make for Him to give mankind a revelation they cannot understand? After all, to be saved we have to "come to the knowledge of the truth." Which makes perfect sense, since Jesus declared: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Jude wrote about "our common salvation" (v. 3). Paul said: "There is...one hope...one faith" (Eph. 4:4-5). And Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6). The Lord said that: "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). All will be judged by the words of Christ. But how unfair that judgment will be, if we cannot understand Jesus' words and understand them alike!

Friends, examine the evidence and I believe you will agree that we can ALL understand the Bible, and we can understand it alike.

"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect." (1 Corinthians 1:17)

Many interpret Paul's statement to mean baptism is not essential for salvation. By doing so they set Scripture against itself. Jesus said, *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved"* (Mk. 16:16). Peter said baptism is *"for the remission of sins"*, and that baptism *"saves us"* (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). Ananias told Saul to *"arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16). There was division in the Corinthian church. Although Paul had baptized Crispus, Gaius and the household of Stephanas, he was glad he had not personally baptized more, *"lest anyone should say they I had baptized in my own name"* (1 Cor. 1:14-16). Did Paul violate verse 17 by baptizing these people? Not at all. As an apostle, Paul's work was especially to preach the gospel. Others could baptize the sinners who responded to the gospel call to be saved. Who baptizes you is inconsequential. What is crucial is unity in Christ and His gospel, not division over men. Unity in Christ includes the gospel truth that water baptism is essential for salvation.

Joe R. Price; Sword Tips #410 (March 10, 2015)