

The Last Word (3)

The Authority of the Word

(Matthew 4:4)

Introduction: Both the Bible and Jesus Christ are identified as the Word of God. The Bible is God's written Word; Jesus is God's personal Word. Our relationship to one determines our relationship to the other. In other words, if we really want to be rightly related to Jesus, we have to be rightly related to the Bible. We cannot be rightly related to Jesus but wrongly related to the Bible.

So, today I want to deal with the great importance of the authority of God's Word. Perhaps no spiritual disciple is more important than recognizing the authority of scripture in our lives. Jesus, when He was being tempted by the devil, declared "...man is to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." The level of authority we give God's Word in our lives will be determined by three things...

I. How we see the word:

We must see the Word of God for the authority it is, and it has.

A. The issue of authority-

1. We naturally don't like authority –
2. We naturally rebel against it, resist it.
3. The problem is we all have some authority over us.
4. God is the ultimate authority over all (Ps. 115:3; 2 Chor. 20:6; Jb. 42:2; Ps. 135:6; Isa. 14:27; Ps. 24:1-2; Rom. 9:19-21; Eph. 1:11)
5. The word authority comes from the word author.
6. It's the author who gives authority to whatever he produces. So, it is with the scriptures.

B. The identity of authority - So we need to know who is the author of the Bible, who is the author of scripture?

1. The Bible clearly answers this question in 2 Timothy 3:16.
 - a. The Greek word is "*God-breathed*."
 - b. And the word for breath and the word for spirit are identical. So, it means all Scripture is inbreathed by the Spirit of God.
 - c. In other words, the authority behind all scripture is the authority of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. He used many different channels (Heb. 1:1-2)
 - e. Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:20-21
 - f. Jesus Himself testified (Mt. 22:29, 31-32)
 - g. And Jesus spoke of scriptures as *the doctrine of God* (Jn. 7:16; 12:49)

So, when we confront scripture, we confront the authority of God Himself. This means the authority of scripture means every word and stroke of the Bible possesses the authority of God and the right to rule the hearts, minds, and bodies of every inhabitant of the earth.

So, how we see the Bible matters, not what we say, but how we really see it and what we really believe about it matters.

II. How we receive the Word:

Christ answered all the temptations of Satan with "*It is written*;" to set us an example, He appealed to what was written in the scriptures. This is the method we must take,

when at any time we are tempted to sin. But we can't do that unless we learn to take the word of God in... How can we do that? *We must discipline ourselves to...*

A. Hearing the word – We can receive God's word by simply listening to it.

1. Jesus said - (*Lk 11:28*)
2. Just hearing it is never the point – (Rom.10:17)

B. Reading the word – *Jesus said we are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God...*

1. Jesus often asked the question – "*Have you not read...?*"
2. Rev 1:3 tells us
3. Paul told us (2 Tim. 3:16)

C. Studying the word – *As author Jerry Bridges wrote, "Reading gives us breadth, studying it gives us depth."*

1. Far too many people, including Christians, have the Bible in their homes, but not in their hearts. *That is a tragedy.*
2. That is why we study the Word – to get it into our hearts!

D. Applying the word – (*Jn. 17:17*) To sanctify means to make us holy... this happens when we take God's principles, promises, and commands, and apply them to our lives.

III. How we treat the Word:

A. We should believe it – (*Jn 6:68; Lk 16:31*)

B. We should love it – Ps. 119:97

1. *The psalmist declared his love and devotion to the Law, which gave him more understanding and wisdom than his enemies... teachers, and elders (vv. 97-100).*
2. *By God's Word he had kept himself pure (vv. 101-102; cf. vv. 9, 104). We ought to love God's book because it has the power to do that for us.*

C. We should trust it.

1. When we see Jesus being tempted if all the devil were trying to do was to get Jesus to misuse His super-natural powers, Jesus' response would not be to the point.
2. But if the temptation was to doubt or bypass the Word of God, Jesus' answer is directly on point.
3. It wasn't God's word that was being tested – it was Jesus trusting and believing God's word that was on trial.
4. Let me assure you today – *We will face the same battle. We will have the same choice. We can have the same victory – if we will trust the Word of God!*

D. We should obey it.

1. Simply put – we should do what the Word says. (Jn. 14:15)
2. Persistent disobedience to God's word will result in divine discipline. (Heb. 12:10-11; 1 Jn. 5:16; Ac. 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:27-30)

The Bible is the authoritative word of God – *It is God's message to man, we need to see it as such, receive as such, and treat as such...*