

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest Grandchild,

Recently I have been haunted by something Victor Knowles put in his monthly Knowlesletter. It was a quote from Mark Galli, the senior managing editor of Christianity Today. (It came via a blog by Albert Mohler.) The quote is: *“It is well and good for the preacher to base his sermon on the Bible, but he better get to something relevant pretty quickly, or we start mentally to check out. Don’t spend a lot of time in the Bible, we tell our preachers, but be sure to get to personal illustrations, example from daily life, and most importantly application that we can use”*.

The thought that the Bible is not relevant and that people “mentally check out” when the Bible is taught is disturbing. The Bible is the primary weapon God gives us to defeat the devil. It is the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17). It is a spiritual weapon designed by God to defeat a spiritual enemy.

When someone has an infection it is wise to do a laboratory study to determine what antibiotic is best suited to destroy that specific microbe. God Himself has conducted His study and concluded that the Scriptures defeat the devil every time they are used. As you know, when Jesus was tempted by the devil, every time he gained the victory by quoting Scripture. The person who does not know how to use the Sword of the Spirit is defenseless against the devil.

Even in my life time I have seen a constant and dangerous drift away from the Bible. Back in the 1930s, the late Archie Word held “protracted meetings” that featured an hour long Bible study before the meetings began. In 6 or 8 weeks he would often baptize hundreds of people.

When Grandpa began preaching back in 1955 evangelistic meetings routinely lasted two to three weeks, and hour long sermons were not unusual.

Today “revival meetings” last 2 - 3 days and sermons are routinely 20 minutes long.

More than 30 years ago I had a life changing experience in India.. It was after midnight, the preaching ended and people came forward to receive Christ. Two individuals began frothing at the mouth and writhing in agony. It seemed like the demon possession we read about in the Bible. The brethren began singing some monotonous refrain. After 15 - 20 minutes of this I found someone who could speak English and asked what they were singing about. I was told that they were singing about the blood of Jesus. After 30 - 40 minutes of spiritual warfare these tormented souls returned to their right minds and were baptized into Christ. On that night I began to see the blood of Jesus in an entirely different light. It doesn’t matter what you or I think about the blood of Jesus, it is what the devil thinks about it that makes the difference. The same is true with the Scriptures. The way that the Bible affects us is not nearly as important as the way it affects Satan. Remember! Our enemy is spiritual and physical weapons have no affect on him.

Your words and my words bounce off the devil like water off of a duck, but the Word of God **“is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Heb 4:12-13)**

Humans are different from animals. Animals have a physical body and physical life, but they do not have a spirit. Man, by contrast, is a three fold being. We have “spirit”, “soul”, and “body” (1 Thess 5:23). Animals do not have a spirit. Consequently, an animal can be controlled more easily than a man. Two dimensional creatures can be harnessed to work, or trained to perform in a circus, but man has the ability to rebel against authority and never be trained. The Israelites proved this in the desert by rebelling against God regardless of the consequences. Isaiah lamented this and wrote: **“The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” (Isa 1:3)** Zechariah expressed the same sentiments and wrote: **“But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets.” (Zech 7:11-12).** Remember! God had greater success with Balaam’s ass than He did with Balaam (See Numbers 22:21 ff.)

The Bible divides temptations into 3 categories: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16). In Eden the devil tempted Adam and Eve with these three temptations. The forbidden tree was good to look at, good for food, and desirous to make one wise. The devil used these same 3 temptation on Jesus in the wilderness: turn these stones into bread, worship me and I will give you all the kingdoms you see, leap from the temple and become famous. In each instance, as you know, Jesus quoted from the Bible and defeated the devil. With practice, we too can learn how to use the Sword of the Spirit and also defeat the devil.

The Latin word for sword is “gladius” from which we get our English word “gladiator”. Gladiators practiced for months with the sword before they went into the arena. Their skill with the sword was essential to their survival. So is ours.

Amos warned many years ago about a famine of the Word of God. (Amos 8:11). Famine and pestilence go hand in hand. Every time there is a famine there is also pestilence. Proper nutrition is essential to good health. This is not only true physically, but also spiritually. The lack of Bible study is an open invitation to the devil to do his devastating work.

We are not in an ordinary struggle, and the Bible is not an ordinary book. Please consider:

- It is the **“Sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17)**. It not only comes from the Spirit, but is especially designed by God to defeat a spiritual enemy.
- It is eternal! Jesus said: **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (Matt 24:35)**
- Jesus also said: **“The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.” , (John 6:63)**

- The Bible provides spiritual life: **“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” (1 Peter 1:23)**
- **“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb 4:12).**
- **“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:16-17)**
- **“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” (2 Tim 2:15-16)**

The Word of God is like a Seed that can grow in your life and produce wonderful fruit. To grow, however, that Seed must be able to take root. No roots, no fruit! So please read and study the Bible every day. It will not only bless you in this life, but also in the life which is to come. The Bible is not irrelevant, it is the key to your spiritual victory!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce