

## **'He Preached Right At Me'**

I have heard this statement made many times by individuals who have just heard a sermon presented which exposed some wrong in their lives. Did you ever wonder why anyone would feel that the preacher had "preached right at" him?

Suppose the preacher has just preached against lying. Who in the audience will feel that he has preached right at him? It could only be one who is guilty of lying. The same would hold true on any other subject.

What we need to do is examine the things taught in the light of God's word. If we find them to be true we should accept them. If they expose some wrong in our life we need to change and thank God that there is someone concerned enough about our soul to teach us what we need to hear.

**-by James Hahn**

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## **Do You Want Bible Knowledge?**

I once heard an aged gospel preacher refer to a comment he received from a person who appreciated his sermons: "I wish I knew as much about the Bible as you." His reply was, "Lady, if you study the Bible for as many years as I have you would know as much or more!" Bible knowledge was prized, desired and gained in the diligence of study.

Today, it is very sad to realize that there are many people who have allowed themselves to be convinced that the Bible cannot be understood. Many others hold the view that the Bible is very difficult to understand and for that reason they do not investigate it for themselves. How dreadful and dishonorable it is for people to not know what God has spoken! The Apostle Paul said people could have the knowledge he had by reading what he had written (Eph. 3:4; cf. 5:17).

In many cases, people who do not study the Bible for themselves have come to rely upon preachers to provide answers to their questions. Many preachers are very happy to help as many people as possible in gaining an understanding of what God has said. It is the mission of those who preach and teach God's word to "make all men see" or "bring to light" the wisdom of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3:1-ff). But we must heed the warning that Christ gave with regard to relying on men as a source of truth. Of the religious leaders of His day, He said, "...they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:14). People should study the Bible for themselves. If they do not, they become so easily deceived. (1 John 4:1).

Studying the Bible is not nearly as difficult as some would lead you to believe. Being a worthy Bible student is simple if you will follow these three basic principles:

**1. Recognize that the Bible is the word of God.** This amazing book is unique; no other book compares to it. The writers were men, but they wrote what the ultimate author commanded: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a *matter* of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pet. 1:20-21). This incredible one-of-a-kind book reveals where man came from, why he is here and where he is going. Paul said, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Jesus Christ respected the Scriptures and regarded them as the word of God (John 17:17). You are in good company when you so regard the Bible.

**2. Hunger and thirst for righteousness.** Following the Lord's directive in Matt. 5:6, if we have an intense desire to obtain "the righteousness of God" (2 Pet. 1:1; Rom. 3:22; 10:3), with the same fervor we seek food and drink when hungry, we will obtain it! When we develop an appetite for regular servings of spiritual food, we will indeed grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2). These are the ones who take advantage of every opportunity to discuss and learn from God's word.

**3. Pay the price.** Paul admonished, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." (2Tim. 2:15). Study is work. It is careful examination, analysis, seeking answers to questions with the specific purpose or intent to understand and learn. There is no "easy" button to push and no knowledge pill to take. This price is far more than most are willing to pay. The price of that filet mignon

causes me to lose my desire for it and choose chicken. The price for knowing the Scriptures causes many to allow others to tell them about their religious views rather than going to the source of truth. Any who are unwilling to do what it takes to know the Scriptures will never know and understand them as they could or should.

Yes, friend, you can obtain a great deal of Bible knowledge, if you remember and apply these simple basic principles. If you have the proper respect for the Bible as the word of God, a burning desire for the righteousness it contains and a willingness to pay the price for success, you can understand and know what God has spoken! And with that knowledge you can enjoy all the spiritual blessings that God has for man, which are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3). May we help you today?

**- by Gary Smalley**

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## ***Tolerance***

New York governor Andrew Cuomo recently made news headlines by saying that conservatives are not really welcome in his state. He said: “. . . these extreme conservatives, who are right-to-life, pro-assault-weapon, anti-gay . . . they have no place in the state of New York.” This is just the latest example of the extreme intolerance of social liberals in our culture who hypocritically claim tolerance while intolerantly condemning others who disagree with them.

The problem seems to be that there has been a shift in the meaning of tolerance. Historically, it has meant a respect for a person's right to choose. Today, it has come to mean a required acceptance and approval of another's conduct. The Bible acknowledges the first, but denies the latter.

God grants each individual the right to choose their course of action. Moses, God's great law-giver of the Old Testament, stated this plainly when he said: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). Notice God allowed their freedom to choose, but He warned that He could not accept their bad choices. This is the consistent pattern of God's tolerance.

Jesus also allowed choice (“. . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not” – Matthew 23:37), but He openly condemned sin and wickedness, and He warned of the eternal consequences (Matthew 25:31-46)

The apostle Paul consistently presented sinners with the choice to obey God or not, but when evil men were in error his patience and tolerance endured “no, not for an hour” (Galatians 2:5).

Christians today are instructed to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). In doing so we are presenting our fellow men with the choice to serve God or reject Him. We tolerate their right to choose, but we can offer no endorsement of religious error and moral depravity.

**- by Greg Gwin**