

The Bible: God's Word for Man

In 1983, President Reagan extolled the Bible and its influence on American life. He said, "Of the many influences that have shaped the United States of America into a distinctive nation and people, none may be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible." It is important to recognize the power and influence of the Bible. We need the principles of God's word to guide our nation and us. How can we give the Bible the proper place in our lives and hearts?

First, read the Bible. Paul told us, "Give diligence to present yourself approved unto God . . . handling aright the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15)." According to Luke, those in Berea accomplished this: "Now these were more noble . . . in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so (Acts 17:11)." The Bible is not just a storage place for family records and documents. God commands all men to study His holy word. It is not enough to read books about the Bible, watch movies about the Bible, or listen to what other people say about the Bible. We must spend our own personal time and thoughts studying the scriptures daily. Each of us must make our own investigation.

Second, recognize that the Bible is God's inspired word. The Bible is complete and furnishes us completely, "Every scripture inspired of God . . . That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17)." Paul teaches that the apostles received the word from God: "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Spirit teaches; combining spiritual things with spiritual *words* (1 Cor. 2:12-13)." Paul also taught that when we read what he wrote, we can understand it as the word of God: "How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:3-4)." God reveals His mind in the scriptures. We cannot neglect God's revelation of the mystery of Christ.

Third, recognize that the Bible is God's complete will. The scriptures furnish us "completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:17)" on our journey from earth to heaven. Jude wrote, ". . . contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3)." Both John and Paul warn that we are not to add anything or take away anything (Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9). Plagues and curses (anathema) come to those who do.

The Bible is God's word for man. Let us take it as our guide.