

MAN'S RESEARCH AND GOD'S WORD

There are numerous articles that appear in **religious** magazines nowadays that are full of man's learning from fields like psychology and sociology. But these religious articles may tell us nothing about God's desire for his people. In fact, several articles I have read relied solely on secular learning without referring even once to a sacred word from God. And yet, these religious articles purport to tell us how people should live so as to please God!

Do you make religious decisions based on how many people believe something? If a majority believes one way or the other, does it make a difference with you? What we learn from other fields may or may not help us to live as God would have us live. But how can we know unless we research first God's principles and precepts revealed in His Book, the Bible? Christians are told to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess 5:21.) And Christians are warned that "there are many false prophets gone out into the world...." So what is a Christian to do? John says we are to "test the spirits, whether or not they are of God." (1 John 4:1.) Now, how would we know whether a teaching is from God or not unless we have God's word with which to compare the teaching we have heard? So you see, there must be a benchmark, or John doesn't make sense. Well, John does make sense because we have a standard by which we can judge whether some teaching comes from God or not. Remember that John prefaced these remarks by saying that many false prophets have gone out into the world. That was true in his day near the end of the first century; it is even more true today! That's right!

But we do have God's standard by which we can evaluate all teaching that comes our way. It makes no difference how it comes to us. It may come by radio, television, literature, or in person. If we are equipped with the rightly divided Word of God then we can cross swords with any false teaching and lay it bare for the world to see its contradictions.

When we are confronted with the "latest findings" in any field, we might ask ourselves the following questions: (1) what are the details of the research; how

was the research carried out? That could make a difference in what conclusions are drawn. (2) What are the conclusions and do they necessarily follow from the data? There are numerous ways for research to be invalid, that is, the conclusions drawn are not really supported by the evidence. (3) Do the conclusions collide with the expressed will and knowledge of God? If something contradicts God's word then it is false.

Furthermore, we might ask ourselves these questions: (4) have we deceived ourselves into thinking we are wise by measuring ourselves by ourselves without regard to God's measuring stick? Have we lost sight of God's standards? (5) If the research does present truths revealed already by God, do we present the results without mentioning God's word on it, as if man has discovered it? Do we think a man's research adds more credibility to our article than God's Word?

Friends, much can be learned by valid research projects. They can offer insight into people's behavior, and there is a lot of research that bears out what God has said. However, we must never allow a man's research to determine or qualify what God has taught through the men He chose to write it down. And neither should we think that a man's discovery is of more importance than God's revelation! Only by diligent research in God's book can we learn what God has said! We should not change our minds about homosexuality because 70% of the people believe it's an acceptable lifestyle! We should not change our minds about what constitutes marriage, just because a certain percentage of gay people want to change God's definition.

Let us say like Hannah of old, "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." (1 Sam 2:3.) Since the Lord will weigh every thought and deed, let us learn what He knows and has revealed, and let us do what He commands. We live in a day in which the Lord's goodness is well received, His mercy extolled and longed for; but we also live in a day in which God's Truth is trampled on! That's right!

In Deuteronomy 32 we read a passage that is called the "Song of Moses." "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

² May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb. ³ For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! ⁴ The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.” (Deut 32:1-4 (ESV).) Of course, Moses is speaking about the Word of God when he talks about the “teaching” that drops like rain. Just as surely as God is “The Rock”, God’s truth [God’s message] withstands all assaults upon it. God’s truth is as refreshing as a gentle rain upon the grass. The great thing about God and His message is that it is so steady! God is faithful and without iniquity; he has no ulterior motives that might harm the hearers of His Word; just and upright is he; God always decides justly.

This song also reveals God’s people. They are an unfaithful people. Their faith has evaporated. Therefore God will have to turn these people loose so they can see what a bad decision it is to pay no attention to God. God said, “I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness.” (Deut 32:20 (ESV).)

Faith is the connecting link between God’s truth and your daily life. That’s right! I like the NIV’s translation of Hebrews 11:1, “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” The Greek word that is translated as “certain” in the NIV, or by the word “evidence” in the KJV, was found in an excavated ancient garbage dump in Egypt. This word was found on an old piece of papyri [an ancient paper from the 1st century]. It was discovered that the paper was a Title Deed to a piece of property. That paper was someone’s evidence that he owned the property. Likewise, **faith** is the Christian’s property deed. It is our Title Deed to the eternal life to come. The Hebrew writer continued by saying, “without faith it is impossible to please him [God], for he that comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.” (Heb 11:6.) When you obediently take God at his word you possess something that money cannot buy. You possess the ONLY thing that can connect you with God. That’s right! In John 6:44 Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’

Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” Notice how the Father draws you. You shall be taught by God. And how will He teach you? Jesus said that it is “Not that any man hath seen the Father, except he which is of God, he hath seen the Father...[but] verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believes on me hath everlasting life.” Do you see the difference in that passage between “seeing” and “believing”? God does not “touch” you; he teaches you. God does not cause you to “feel” something in some miraculous way; he teaches you with His written Word, and then you “feel” something; your conscience begins to move you. Those on the day of Pentecost who heard and believed the word of Peter were “pricked in their hearts.” (Acts 2:37.) A better translation says that they were “cut” to the heart! Friends, God’s word is sharper than a two-edged sword. It pricks at hardened hearts...it cuts all the way to the joints and marrow of the bones. The word of God produces faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17.) Man’s research may shed some light on some things, but the authoritative Word of God should be the resting of our faith. Friends, the Word of God is the foundation upon which you can build your life here, and get ready for the life to come. May God bless you and me as we seek eternal life in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.