

Consider the Word of God

By David Phillips

Introduction

1. Many people understand that God's word is a profitable tool.
2. But many are not aware of the power God has given us through His word.
3. To help us understand this power, let us take a moment to consider the word of God.

Discussion

I. Consider The Power of God's Word.

- A. God's word has the ability to change lives.
 1. John, one of the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17) is now known as the apostle of love on account of his writings.
 2. Peter went from denying the Lord (Luke 22:59-62) to holding fast even while being beaten for Lord's sake (Acts 5:29, 40-42).
- B. God's word has the ability to save souls.
 1. It is described as the word of life in Phil. 2:16 because it offers life to those who obey it.
 2. By it we are reconciled to God according to 2 Cor. 5:19.
 3. By it we are sanctified and made clean (Eph. 5:26).
- C. How are these things possible?
 1. Because God's word is not the idle words of men. It is the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).
 2. Because God's word is not simply words on a page. It is the word of the living God and it has great power
 - a. By God's word all things were created (Gen. 1:3), for God spoke and it was done.
 - b. Therefore it is written in Psalms 33:6, "*By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.*"
 - c. By God's word all things continue to be upheld (Heb. 1:1-3). "Word of His power" literally means His powerful word or efficient word.
 - d. Therefore it is written in Hebrews 4:12-13, "*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*"
 3. This is the power that we come into contact with when we read the scriptures and take them to heart.
 4. When we consider God's word with a good and honest heart and with a desire to do all that it says, it has the ability to transform us in a way that we never thought possible.
 5. But, sadly, many do not experience this tremendous blessing.

II. Consider The Neglect Toward God's Word (Ezek. 33:30-33)

- A. In spite of the power of God's word, it is evident that the majority does not obey its commands.
 1. Speaking of the Jews, Paul wrote in Rom. 10:16-18, 21 that the gospel was preached but it was not received by the majority.
 2. This same truth applies to many who are in the world. God's word is preached, but it is not received into the hearts of men.

3. This is not to say that many people do not pay lip service to the word, for there are many who claim to follow it trust in it.
 4. Why then do so few people actually obey what it says?
 5. Because many people approach it in the same manner as Israel did in the days of Ezekiel.
- B. *“They hear your words, but do not do them” (Ezek. 33:31).*
1. The character of Israel as described in this passage depicts the attitude of most people who claim to follow God’s word.
 - a. They would speak of it as if it were a lovely song.
 - b. They would invite others to hear it.
 - c. They would praise the one who delivered it to them.
 - d. But in spite of all their lip service, they would not do what it says.
 2. We see this pattern very clearly in the denominations.
 - a. For they claim to follow the Bible, but many add their own creeds because they don’t want be limited by the Bible.
 - b. Even those who claim to have the Bible as their only source of authority go beyond the scriptures in their worship, the work of their churches, and in their way of life.
- C. This neglect is also much closer than we might think.
1. It is seen in the works (or lack thereof) in some churches of Christ.
 - a. They advertise to the world that they refer to the Bible as their only source of authority, yet they do not abide within God’s pattern for the work of the church.
 - b. They go beyond the authority of God’s word in order to do what they want.
 - c. They claim to be the “New Testament church,” yet they do not share with one another, do not care for one another, and in most cases really have nothing to do with one another outside of the assembly.
 - d. They claim to be the Lord’s church yet they do not serve the Lord wholeheartedly; they do not act as the *“pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).*
 2. It is also seen in the lives of individuals.
 - a. There are some Christians who are considered to be in the Lord’s church who do not devote themselves to learning and doing God’s word.
 - b. In James 1:22, James addresses those who have the same character as Israel; who are *“hearers only, deceiving themselves.”*
 - c. Many say, “Good sermon. I enjoyed that.” Many read their Bibles, but, like Israel, fail to apply it in their lives.
 - d. They claim to be Christians and Disciples of Christ, yet by their works people cannot tell that they love the Lord. Though they have been Christians for years they have not been transformed by God’s word (Rom. 12:2).
 3. These things are evident because the power of God’s word is not evident in their lives. They have neglected the word of God.
- D. What are we to do?
1. Paul’s exhortation to the church in Corinth in 2 Cor. 6:1 was that they avoid the neglect which we have just described. *“We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.”*
 2. We have seen that God’s word has great power to those who obey it, but how can we make sure that we do not neglect that power; that God’s grace does not become useless in our lives?
 3. How can we ensure that we do not become like Israel in the days of Ezekiel?

III. Consider the Urgency of the Gospel Call.

- A. We must give the more earnest heed (Heb. 2:1-4)

1. In the Old Testament angels were sent as ministering spirits to the people (1:14), and it was by them that the word was delivered.
 2. Every judgment of that word held fast and came to pass.
 3. But we have not received the word from these ministering spirits. Rather, we have received it from the Son of God Himself, the Creator of the universe (Heb. 1:1-2).
 4. How does this help us to answer our question? Because it illustrates for us the attitude we must have toward God's word.
 5. In the Old Testament they were expected to carefully follow every ordinance and every commandment and therefore prove their faith in the promises of God.
 6. Now that we are under the New Covenant with Christ our Lawgiver, King, and High priests we are commanded...
 - a. *"Therefore we must give the **more earnest heed** to the things we have heard"*: If Israel was given revelation from God we are given it more so. If they were judged for their disobedience to that revelation, we will be more so. Therefore we must give the more earnest heed.
 - b. If we do not give this earnest heed we will drift away.
 - c. Giving earnest heed requires much more than a casual reading once in a while. This requires **true devotion!**
 - d. Why? Read Heb. 2:2-4.
 7. That is why we must not neglect God's word nor think of its authority as a thing to be lightly considered. Our salvation depends on it.
- B. God's word must be more to us than a book.
1. In Rom. 12:2 God commands us saying, *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."*
 2. In order for God's word to be a living and powerful force in our lives as the scriptures say, we must commit our hearts to God in every way.
 3. We must desire change in our lives, search out those areas that need to be changed and then be transformed by conforming our hearts to God's every word.
 4. Only when we allow God's word to become a part of who we are will it begin to a powerful force in our lives.

Conclusion

1. Are you willing to allow the power of God to create change in your life?
2. Then heed God's instruction and consider His word. This is the only way. (John 12:48).

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