

Misunderstanding God's Word

IT'S ONE THING TO FAIL to understand something in God's word. But it's another thing to misunderstand God's word. That is, to get something out of it that isn't taught there. It's a dangerous thing to understand God's word improperly—to err concerning the scriptures (Matthew 22:29)—to twist something out of it that isn't there (2 Peter 3:16). There is a gross misunderstanding of God's word in religion today. Here are some reasons why...

Improper Leadership. I am speaking of those who are teachers of the word of God; whether it's the preacher, the Bible class teacher, an elder or a deacon, a televangelist, a college professor, etc. Millions of people misunderstand the word of God because of the teachers they respect and listen to. False teachers have always been around (2 Peter 2:1-3) and they are abundant in our day and time. Those who distort the Gospel will be accursed regardless of how educated they are, how popular they are, how nice they are, how good-looking they are, how quick-witted they are, how well they speak, or how much "Good" they do (Galatians 1:6-9; Romans 16:17-18). We must test all religious teaching to assure it accords with the Gospel (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11) ...

Inappropriate Loyalty. Some misunderstand God's word because their loyalty lies somewhere else. If we truly want to understand God's word, we must approach it with an attitude that says, "Regardless of what this says, I'm going to do it because I want to do God's will" (John 7:17). To properly understand God's word, one must be willing to do God's will. But many would rather do the will of the family religion (Galatians 1:14). They cry, "If it was good enough for my parents and grandparents then it's good enough for me." Some are more loyal to their favorite preacher, or to their favorite sins. When they read where the Bible condemns a practice of theirs, they look for an "Alternate" understanding of that passage...

Inexcusable Laziness. To be frank, some people are just too lazy, or too preoccupied with other endeavors (whether good or bad) to really sit down and regularly study the word of God. Some passages are difficult and require serious mental labor (2 Peter 3:16). Do the work or you'll be "*Led away with the error of the wicked*" (2 Peter 3:17). Study daily (Acts 17:11).

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Discerning Good From Evil

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

-1 John 4:1

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

-Romans 12:2

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good."

-Romans 12:9

*"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"*

-Isaiah 5:20

"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

-Hebrews 5:12-14

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

-James 1:5

"Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."

-1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."

-Philippians 1:9-10

"finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."

-Ephesians 5:10-11

*"Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,
If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God."*

-Proverbs 2:3-5