

3. Learning Why We Can Depend on the Word of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to develop a godly life. We saw that the Lord is the One who gives us our faith as a gift. However, the Lord wants each Christian to add seven things to that faith as we grow in our spiritual lives. Then, we will be able to look forward to eternal rewards. In our topic today, we are going to see how to help our children understand why we can depend on the Word of God to guide and lead us in our lives.

In 2 Peter 1:12-15, we read, “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” The word translated “I will be negligent” means to be careless of or to neglect. Peter did not want to be careless and fail to remind the Christians of the things that they had learned. Here, we see the importance to regularly remind one another of the things that the Lord has taught us so that we will not begin to neglect those things in our lives.

As Peter pointed out as he wrote this letter, these were things that the Christians knew and the things that had helped them to become established in their understanding. Here, we see that Peter knew that the Christians knew these things but he wanted to them be strengthened and made firm in that knowledge. Peter was actually following the specific instructions that had been given to him by Christ. On the night before His crucifixion, Christ told Peter in Luke 22:31-32, “And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.” Peter said that he was ready to die with Christ. Yet, a few hours later, he acted out of fear and denied Christ three times. That is why the Lord told Peter specifically to strengthen the brethren even though they already knew certain things. That is also a part of our ministry to our physical and spiritual children.

Peter knew that he would soon die. However, he wanted to be obedient to the Lord right up to the moment of his death. That is why he said that as long as he was alive that he wanted to remind the Christians of how the Lord had taught him so that he would be able to be strengthened in his own life. The word translated “to stir up” means *to awaken or to stir up the mind*. Paul wanted to stir up their minds by reminding them. In fact, this was such a great concern that he repeated the same thought in 2 Peter 3:1-2 which says, “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of which* I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.” Peter certainly did not want to neglect the instructions that the Lord had given him. In the same way, we want to continue to remind our children of what the Lord said.

Peter wrote this letter so that all Christians would continue to be reminded of these things because he knew that he would soon put off his tent (die). Paul shared a similar thought to describe our earthly body when he said, in 2 Corinthians 5:1, “For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Growing Godly Family Series – Helping Our Children Learn to Understand the Last Days 3. “Learning Why We Can Depend on the Word of God”

Updated July 2023

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Our earthly body is like a tent that is temporary. In contrast, our new body will be eternal and will last forever. Like Peter, we want to remind our physical and spiritual children that they have the Word of God to lead them and guide them after the Lord takes us to heaven.

In 2 Peter 1:16-18, we read, “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.” The word translated “cunningly devised” means *to make wise, to gain understanding or to invent*. The only other place this form of the word is used in the New Testament is 2 Timothy 3:15, where we read, “And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” In Timothy, the word means to make wise. In 2 Peter, it means to invent “fables”. The word translated “fables” means *a story that is made up or invented*. Peter had not heard stories that had been invented or made up. Peter made it clear that what he taught about the power and the future coming of Christ had been learned directly from Christ.

When Peter spoke about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, he spoke as a person that was an eyewitness of the life and teachings of Christ. He was there and saw the things that Christ did and heard the words that He spoke. In fact, Peter was with Christ on the mountain when the Father spoke to Christ from heaven. Matthew 17:1 and 5 say, “Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves... While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” Peter did not hear a fable that someone else had invented. Instead, he had been an eyewitness of the actual event. Peter heard the Father give glory and honor to Christ.

As a result of being an eyewitness of the things that Christ had done and taught, Peter went on to give a key statement about the entire Word of God. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” Peter said that Christ had also confirmed the words that had been spoken by the prophets. Luke 24:44-45 says, “Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Peter knew it was even more important to focus on the things that Christ taught from the whole Old Testament and not just his personal experience when he was with Christ.

The word translated “to heed” means *to pay attention to or turn your mind to*. Hebrews 2:1 says, “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.” Peter wanted all Christians to learn to pay attention to the Word of God because the Word is a light that shines in a dark place. The world is a place that is filled with spiritual darkness. However,

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Psalms 119:105 says, “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” The Word of God will lead us and guide us as we live in a world that is filled with spiritual darkness. John the Baptist prepared the way for the first coming of Christ. Luke 1:78-79 says, “Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” In the same way, the Word of God prepares us for the return of Christ when we will see Christ face to face.

Verse 20 begins, “Knowing this first.” The word translated “knowing” means *to come to know or understand*. The word translated “first” means *something that is first in time, place or rank*. We see that the Word of God has total priority over our words because it is first in rank. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Here, we are reminded that all Scripture comes from God and is first in rank over any words of humans. We see that the words of the false teachers that will be described in the next chapter cannot be compared to the Word of God because their teachings came from their own words and ideas instead of coming from God.

In fact, verse 21 says that prophecy never came by the will of man. Nothing that is written in the Word of God was written to teach the ideas of mankind. Instead, all that is written in the Scriptures has its source in God. Hebrews 4:12 says, “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.” Only the Word of God can reveal what is in our hearts.

In 1 Corinthians 14:24-25, we read, “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.” “To prophesy” means *to speak forth what is already written in the Word of God*. The Word of God is able to reveal the secrets of the heart because the author of the Word of God is the Holy Spirit. Peter said that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The word translated “came” and “moved” is translated “came” in both verse 17 and 18 where it spoke of God speaking from heaven. This makes it clear prophecy did not come by the will of man. Instead, this verse says that the Holy Spirit moved men to write what they wrote. Here, we see that the real writer of the entire Word of God is God. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that God used various men with their different gifts and personalities to communicate His message exactly as He wanted it written. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why we can depend on the Word of God.