

Making God's Word Void

Psalm 119:126: *"It is time for You to act, O LORD, For they have regarded Your law as void."*

Matthew 15:6: *"...ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition."*

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** The Word of God has great power to save men (Rom. 1:16; **Jas. 1:21:** *"...receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your soul."*).
2. God's Word also has the power to keep men from sin (Matt. 4:1-11; **Psa. 119:11:** *"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."*).
3. It alone can build us up spiritually (**Acts 20:32:** *"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."*; **1 Pet. 2:2:** *"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,"*).
4. The Word is *"quick and powerful"* (**Heb. 4:12:** *"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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*).
5. There is ample power in God's Word to save the soul of every person (Mk. 16:15-16; 1 Tim. 2:4).
6. But, since we know every person is not being saved, there must be something hindering their salvation.
7. This is what our text says – The Word can be made void (ineffectual) in the lives of men by certain things.
8. **3** Let's study some of the things that make the Word void (ineffectual) in the lives of men.

II. DISCUSSION:

God's Word is made void by...

I. **4** Lawless conduct:

- A. Jesus described those who did not *"doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"* as *"ye that work iniquity"* (Matt. 7:21-23).
 - (1) The NKJV calls these people as those *"who practice lawlessness."*
 - (2) The NIV just bluntly calls them *"evildoers."*
 - (3) The point is that they put on a show of religion, but it is vain and empty because they've made God's Word ineffectual in their lives by not obeying it.
- B. Our lawless society hates the Word of God and makes it void in a variety of ways: For example, it ignores God's Word on...
 - (1) Marriage & divorce: Matt. 19:1-12; 5:32; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18
 - (a) God's rule is: one man, one woman, for life with only one exception (Matt. 19:9).
 - (b) But all 50 states have some form of *"no fault divorce laws"*; so you can get a divorce just by declaring you want one! You no longer have to prove your spouse caused the breakup.
 - (c) Our society ignores the fact that:
 - (i) The one who divorces without the cause of fornication, and remarries, commits adultery (Matt. 19:9; Lk. 16:18; Mk. 10:12).

- (ii) The one who is put away commits adultery when they remarry (Matt. 5: 32).
- (iii) The one who marries a put away person commits adultery (Matt. 5:32; Lk. 16:18; Matt. 19:9).
- (d) Our society, with the sanction of our government, has totally redefined marriage (i.e., same-sex marriage; can plural marriage be far behind? Soon I'll be able to marry my dog or cat!).
- (2) Homosexuality: **Rom. 1:26-27**: "For this reason God gave them up to **vile passions**. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is **against nature**. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is **shameful**, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their **error** which was due."; 1 Cor. 6: 9-11
- (3) Lasciviousness & immodest dress: Gal. 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:9-10
- (4) Pornography: Matt. 5:27-28 (It is present everywhere – quick stop markets, TV, etc.; globally porn is a \$97 billion industry!).
- (5) Crime: **Isa. 1:4**: "A brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord." All kinds of crime is found on every hand – drugs, etc.; e.g., stealing packages off your front porch!
- (6) Lawless conduct: Matt. 7:21-23; permeates our society from top to bottom! (e.g., corruption in our government).

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2. 5 Denying the inspiration of the Bible:

- A. We expect atheists to deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible; e.g., the famous atheist/agnostic Robert G. Ingersoll: "The inspiration of the bible depends on the ignorance of the person who reads it."
- B. But many who claim to be religious teachers deny the inspiration of the Bible; they treat the Bible as if it were just written by ordinary men (no different than the works of Shakespeare, Dickens or Hemingway).
- C. Modernists, who deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible, have made it void. For example, even among the Disciples of Christ (i.e., Christian Church), many of their leaders deny:
 - (1) Verbal inspiration of the Scriptures,
 - (2) Virgin birth of Christ (Isa. 7:14),
 - (3) Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:30-31; Rom. 1:4).
- D. Well did Paul (by inspiration!) describe them: **2 Tim. 3:5**: "having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"
- E. The Word of God is verbally inspired (**1 Cor. 2:9-13**; 2 Pet. 1:21: "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.").
2 Tim. 3:16-17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."
- F. Denying God's Word is verbally inspired fits right in with the "postmodern" philosophical mindset.

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3. **6** Denominationalism/religious division:

- A. Jesus recognized this would be the effect of division (**Jn. 17:21**: “that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”).
- B. Religious division makes infidels.
- C. In denominationalism there are many things repulsive to any right-thinking person and especially to any intellectually honest Bible student.
 - (1) Division: **Rom. 16:17-18**: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”).
 - (2) Personal promotion: The power and position men claim for themselves (**1 Cor. 4:6**: “...not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”).
 - (3) Conflicting doctrines: **1 Cor. 1:10**: “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”; **2 Jn. 9-11**
 - (4) Different names and organizations: **Matt. 16:18**; **Acts 20:28**; **Rom. 16:16**
 - (5) Emphasis on the carnal man, not on the soul: **Jn. 18:36**; **Rom. 14:17**: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”
- D. Denominationalism is a major contributor to why the Word of God is ineffective in the lives of many today.

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4. **7** Hardened hearts:

- A. Not every person reacts to the preaching of the gospel the same (**2 Cor. 2:16**: “To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?”).
- B. In the book of Acts the gospel message affected people's hearts (i.e., “cut to the heart”):
 - (1) Positive: Three thousand of the people on Pentecost heard and obeyed (**Acts 2:37, 41**).
 - (2) Negative: Jews who stoned Stephen (**Acts 7:54-60**).
- C. The people of Antioch in Pisidia (**Acts 13:45-46**):
 - (1) Jews “were filled with envy” at Paul's preaching.
 - (2) They then began “contradicting and blaspheming.”
 - (3) They “opposed [i.e., rejected] the things spoken by Paul.”
 - (4) They put the Word of God from them, and
 - (5) Judged themselves “unworthy of everlasting life.”
- D. Felix heard the gospel and hardened his heart and told Paul to “go away for now; when I have a more convenient time I will call for you” (**Acts 24:25**) (i.e., feared and procrastinated).

- E. God rejected the Jewish nation due to their hardened hearts (**Matt. 23:37-38**: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate;”). It was the subject of prophecy: **Matt. 13:14-15**: “And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’”).
- F. Many people today have the ability to understand God’s Word and obey, but they will not (Lk. 8:11-15).
- G. These people make the Word of God void in their lives.

God’s Word is made void by...

5. 8 Following bad examples:

- A. Many give the hypocrisy of professing Christians as their excuse for not becoming Christians (**Rom. 2:24**: “For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ as it is written.”).
- B. Men hinder the truth in unrighteousness (**Rom. 1:18**: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,”).
- C. Jesus placed a curse on those who cause others to stumble (**Matt. 18:6**: “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”).
- D. Paul told Timothy to be an example (**1 Tim. 4:12**: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”).
- E. The moral failures of Christians are responsible for the failure of the Word to bear fruit in their own lives and, unfortunately, in the lives of others.
- F. The bad example of Christians makes God’s Word void.

God’s Word is made void by...

6. 9 Indifference:

- A. God spoke to give mankind a standard by which to live and be judged (Jn. 12:48).
- B. The same Word is given to save mankind from sin (Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:21).
- C. But if men treat the Word as if it were not given (i.e., indifferently), they make it void in their lives.
- D. Indifference toward God’s Word is the hallmark of American society.
- E. Americans are more interested in TV, recreation, eating in a fancy restaurant, sporting events, gambling, and a multitude of other things, than they are in the Word of God – making the Word void due to indifference.
- F. The Word is made void by Christians when they are indifferent to what God says about:
 - (1) Attendance (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 2:42).
 - (2) Giving (1 Cor. 16: 1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7).

- (3) Modesty (1 Tim. 2:9-10; Matt. 5:28).
- (4) Adultery and fornication (Gal. 5:19).
- (5) Teaching others (Matt. 28:19).

III. CONCLUSION:

- 1. How about you? Is God's Word effective in your life or are you making it void through disobedience, neglect, indifference?
- 2. The vast majority of our society have set aside the Word of God and will pay a tremendous price (Matt. 7:13-14).
- 3. Don't let that happen to you (2 Cor. 5:10).
- 4. Let us have the attitude of David: *"I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word..."* Psa. 119:158
- 5. Friend, have you been making the Word void in your life?

Adapted from a sermon ("Making the Word of God Void") by Donald Townsley.