

Trends

A 2017 poll of U.S. adults about the Bible found:

- ☛ 47% believe it is the inspired Word of God
- ☛ 26% believe it is a collection of fables.
- ☛ 24% believe it is the actual Word of God.
- ☛ Belief it is the inspired Word of God is highest among college graduates (50%); but so was belief it is a collection of fables (36%).

- via Gallup

★ **2 Timothy 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."

Sentence Sermons

★ "A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't."

—Charles Spurgeon

★ **Psalms 119:105-106:** "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. 106 I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments."

★ **Job 23:12:** "I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."

News & Notes

● Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

● Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She's an encouragement to all!

● Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

● Pray for the African appeal for funds to buy Bibles, songbooks and support faithful preachers' travel expense. Donate if you're able! 1 Jn. 3:17

● Another 6.9 earthquake hit the southern Philippines. There have been over 3,000 tremblers since this terrible disaster first hit October 16th. Remember, we are "tools of God's providence" for those in need! Jas. 2:14-17; 1 Jn. 3:1-7

● Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

● Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

● There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!

● Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

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Words of Life

Westside church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68

Jump Start # 2504

Roger Shouse



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Ephesians 5:17: "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Understand...understand the will of the Lord. One of the keys to development in maturity and spiritually is understanding. When we know, then we can function. Knowing gives us confidence and assurance. One can know that he is right with the Lord because he understands what God expects.

There are some things we need to see here:

First, God's will can be understood. It's been long believed by many that no two people can read the Bible and come to the same conclusion. It is thought that the Bible means different things to different people. Often, these differences do not come from the pages of the Bible, but what folks are wanting the Bible to say or starting with their own agendas. The apostle said, God's will can be understood. Jesus said, 'You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' Can we know it? God says, 'Yes!'

Second, for you and I to understand God's will we must have the same platform or information. We do. It's the pages of the Bible. What God says must take precedence over what we feel. I cannot feel the way you feel. Your background, your knowledge, your experiences all shape how you feel about things. Your feelings are based upon you. My feelings are based upon me. Two of us can go to a modern art museum and stand before a canvas of multiple colors that look like they were thrown on there. I can look at that for about two seconds and walk on by thinking, anyone could have done that. You can stand in front of it for a long time and see the artist's pain and his transition to a better time in his life. Impressions. Feelings. That's not the basis of understanding. The foundation of unity and understanding is in words. Words that can be defined. Words that have absolute meaning. Words that can be translated. Words that can be memorized. Words that carry the same definitions and meanings across generations and across the planet. We can understand God's will when we gather around God's word and agree to make it the only basis of our faith.

Third, understanding God's will takes some effort on our part. It doesn't just happen. It takes an understanding of words. It takes the ability to know words, read words and understand what those words mean. As an example, the word 'baptism,' can have many definitions if you look at a modern dictionary. The Greek word means to dip or immerse. When we see how the Bible defines the word we see that baptism is compared to a burial. Now a modern dictionary can leave the impression that baptism is nothing more than pouring a little water on someone's head. If you search the internet, you get the idea that baptism is a step one follows after they are saved. Some would even say that it's not necessary at all. So, if I build my faith based upon modern dictionaries and the internet, I journey through this life convinced that one doesn't have to be baptized. Is that God's will? Is that understanding God's will? Is that what the Bible teaches? Looking in the Bible, and doing some digging and research in the Scriptures, one sees over and over that forgiveness, remission of sins, cleansing and even salvation are the result of being baptized. The Biblical conclusion one reaches is that a person must be baptized to be saved. To understand God's will one must let the Bible speak for itself. Put down all the other books and just read the Bible. Look at the context. Look at the order of the words. Put on your thinking cap. You can understand the will of God.

Fourth, there are some things in life that are hard to understand. It's hard to understand some people. It's hard to understand why some are mean. It's hard to understand, given the choice between right and wrong, why some will take the wrong. It's hard to understand why some do not want to honor and worship God. It's hard to understand why some people love drama in families. It's hard to understand why some are content to live as if there is no God. It's hard to understand why some want to twist and change the word of God. It's hard for normal to understand abnormal. It's hard for the natural to understand the unnatural. It's hard for the righteous to understand the unrighteous. I hear some say, "I don't understand why some people are the way they are." I understand why they don't understand. Through your eyes it's upside down, inside out and twisted. Through your eyes it's all wrong. But in their eyes, it seems perfectly normal.

It's hard to understand why Eve chose the fruit from one tree that was off limits when she had all the other trees to choose from. It's hard to understand why David chose to have a sexual relationship with someone he was not married to, when he had all those wives. But the same could be said of us. Why do we choose to tell a lie when we could tell the truth? Why do we choose the easy path, when the right path is the best? Why do we gossip about a friend? Why do we find excuses that we know are flimsy and wrong? Why do we judge others so much? Why do we complain so often?

Sometimes it's easier to understand the will of God than it is to understand ourselves. Sometimes we find ourselves doing things that beats all sense, reason and logic. Sometimes there is no understanding what we

do. We remember that the prodigal came to his senses. He then came home. Sin can be senseless. Sin can be just plain dumb.

And, what helps us is knowing the will of God. Knowing what is right, leads to doing what is right. Knowing the will of God is the drive behind our preaching and Bible classes. An informed church that knows the will of God will be on track to do what is right.

It's when we do not know that we start going down the path that leads to a dead-end street. Senseless and thoughtless are the components of trouble. "I didn't know it was wrong," are the words of someone who does not know the will of God.

Get that Bible open. Spend some time looking, thinking, learning and remembering. God's word leads to a common understanding of God's will. That is our only hope for unity and our only hope for pleasing the Lord.

You can understand the will of God.

Understanding Christ's Teaching **Sword Tips #1787 (August 21, 2019)**

Joe R. Price

"14 When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand 15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man 16 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!'" (Mark 7:14-16, NKJV)

We can understand the teachings of Jesus by listening to them. It concerns us when Christians take exception with that simple statement of trust in the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:17). When we reduce the teachings of Christ and His apostles (who taught His commands, 1 Cor. 14:37) to personal and relative "interpretation," we have elevated ourselves above the Lord and surrendered our allegiance to His authority (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 3:17). In today's passage, Jesus taught that spiritual corruption does not occur because of what one eats but is due to what comes out of the heart (Mk. 7:17-23). Understanding that evil proceeds from the heart and is identifiable is not a personal, relative, or so-called traditional interpretation of the Scriptures – it is what Jesus said (read Mark 7:20-23). We ought to ask ourselves, "Do I have 'ears to hear' Jesus?" If so, you will understand Him. Do not be deceived by attempts to persuade you that understanding God's word amounts to accepting a tradition about the Scriptures. Truth is not open to different interpretations or opinions. Therefore, neither is understanding it. We open our hearts to the devil when we close our ears to the word of God by reducing an understanding of it to "our tradition."