

DECLARING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

1. There are three requirements for declaring the whole counsel of God:

1.1. Know the word of God.

1.1.1. Know what it is.

1.1.1.1. It is the inspired word of God:

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, NKJV

The Bible is theopneustos: God-breathed.

1.1.1.2. It is the Old and the New Testament (the apostles knew they were producing Scripture).

- They knew they were speaking for Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-2:

1 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;

2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. NKJV

- They knew that they were speaking and writing doctrine.

2 Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. NKJV

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- Paul knew that he spoke for God.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13:

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. NKJV

- Paul knew that his writings carried equal weight with the Law.

1 Corinthians 14:37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. NKJV

- They knew the consequences of not heeding the instructions of the NT epistles.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. NKJV

“And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.”

- Peter equates Paul's writings with the OT canon.

2 Peter 3:14-16:

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

15 and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

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16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. NKJV

Peter refers to the rest of the canon (primarily the Old Testament) as the "rest of the Scriptures." He gives Paul's letters equal weight.

- In 1 Timothy 5:18: Paul equates Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7.

1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." NKJV

1.2. Know what it says.

1.2.1. If you want to reach men's hearts with God's truth:

Hebrews 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 discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. NKJV

1.2.2. If you want to be approved by God:

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. NKJV

There is a movement that attempts to use the Bible only as a textbook for sociology and psychology: "How to . . ." It is doctrine that is vital for our lives, not only instructions on interpersonal relationships.

1.2.3. If you want a place of prominence in God's providence:

Nehemiah 8:1-3:

1 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and

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they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel.

2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.

3 Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. NKJV

How did Ezra achieve such a position of prominence?

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

1.3. Know what it does.

1.3.1. It kills:

2 Corinthians 3:7: the Law was called "a ministry of death."

2 Corinthians 3:9: the Law was called "a ministry of condemnation."

Joshua 8:30 Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, NKJV

1.3.2. It produces life:

1 Corinthians 15:3-4:

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, NKJV

James 1:18: "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

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1.3.3. It changes people:

John 15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. NKJV

2. Live the word of God: Acts 20:17-35.

- 2.1. In humility, v. 19.**
- 2.2. Keeping back nothing, v. 20.**
- 2.3. With boldness, v. 20.**
- 2.4. With sacrifice, v. 24.**
- 2.5. Systematically, v. 26-27.**

He taught them the whole counsel of God.

- 2.6. By example, vv. 33-35.**

3. Summation:

- 3.1. Set your mind to know the Book.**
- 3.2. Set your heart to know the Lord of the Book.**
- 3.3. Set your face like a flint against compromise of the Book.**
- 3.4. Set your feet to take the Book to the world.**