

“The Christian GPS” Why The Bible Is So Important

Some of the best bow hunting I have done has been in the Rocky Mountains here in Colorado. One of the things I have learned, though, is just how easy it can be to lose your way while in the midst of such dense forests. Diverse clumps of trees, dead trunks, and small streams can all look the same. A hunter or hiker can think that he is taking the proper turn to get back to his camp because he remembered turning at a particular opening in the trees when, in reality, it is a different place. Such a turn can send him off in the wrong direction and toward trouble, if he is not careful.

This is why I believe a Global Positioning System device is so important for anyone who will be out in an unfamiliar setting in the mountains. These small units help someone find his way by utilizing microwave signals and satellites. In one sense, by utilizing an above-the-trees and above-the-earth perspective, a GPS can help a person find direction and gain a knowledge that his own position or perspective could not afford.

This is very similar to how the Bible, God’s Word, operates in our lives and why it is so important. Let’s look at this more closely.

The Bible’s Big Picture Perspective

One of the first and most important reasons we must see the importance of the Bible and spend time in it has to do with its revelation to us of what we could not come to know on our own. Just like a hiker can improperly look at certain facts contained in rocks, trees, and canyons to determine whether or not he is heading the right direction, so we can look at life situations (Whom should I marry? What kind of approach to my vocation and family will be best? What is my purpose) based upon alleged knowledge or facts and be very mistaken.

For example, from our perspective in the place and time we now live, we might conclude that it is good to live with someone before marrying them. After all, it just makes sense that you must first try out the relationship. Besides so many people do this around us, it just seems like it can’t be that bad. Yet, God makes it clear that a couple must covenant with each other in marriage before living as a married couple (1 Cor. 7:1ff.). This is not only the will of God and what is for His glory, it is for our

Westminster Shorter

Catechism, Q. 2. What rule ha[s] God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

WSC, Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

own good (Dt. 5:29-33). God knows how He has made us and how life is to be approached that will be for our best. God has made us such that the very best way for a couple to live and the very best atmosphere in which to raise children and the very best means whereby the world can learn about God's relationship to us (Eph. 5:21-33) is for a man and woman to abstain from marriage relations until marriage and then to be faithfully committed to one another for life once they are married.

What we are dealing with in this whole discussion is what philosophers call Epistemology, i.e. how to know what is true and what is right and wrong. Do we figure these things out only on our own? Do we simply follow our heart? Or, must we have the perspective of someone who sees the whole picture and can keep us from making wrong turns? The answer should be obvious.

The Bible's Accuracy

Another GPS-like reason we must pay attention to God's Word is that it is accurate and will not lead us astray. If a hiker is trying simply to remember his way back to camp, he might unintentionally take a wrong turn. He thinks that he is headed the right direction and means well. Yet, his memory, his recognition of landmarks, or his sense of direction may be considerably off the mark.

So it is with those who think that research alone, opinion polls, one's own experience, emotions, or reason alone can lead in the right direction. We can (and most likely will) get off of God's path for us and away from the truth, if we don't follow the direction of His GPS, the Bible. Consider the accuracy of the Bible. It is not only from God (2 Tim. 3:16) who does not lie (Titus 1:2), but we are also told by God that the Bible is like pure spiritual milk (1 Peter 2:2) which is even more sure than miraculous signs or visions (2 Peter 1:19), and that every word of God proves true (Prov. 30:5).

The Bible's Utilization Of Our Reason

We have already seen that reason alone cannot get us out of a mountainous forest with which we are unfamiliar. In the same way, reason alone is insufficient to bring us in line with the right and true information we need to know and to follow God and His way.

Yet, just as reason is needed to look at our GPS and determine if we are going in the right direction to arrive back at camp, so also, we must utilize our God-renewed minds to follow the Word

"Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies knowledge. It attempts to answer the basic question: what distinguishes true (adequate) knowledge from false (inadequate) knowledge?" -From *Principia Cybernetica Web*

"Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms, obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.... Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives." From the 1978 [Chicago Statement On Biblical Inerrancy](#)

of God. What this means is that we must work hard at reading and studying it so we can know its meaning. We also must follow its logic and flow of thought so that we can come to the right conclusions and applications (e.g. Romans 12:1-2 in light of ch's. 1-8).

The Bible Must Be Taken Off The Shelf

We need to remind ourselves, however, that just as no hunter will be aided by a GPS which he leaves at home, so no Christian will find help from a Bible he leaves on his shelf. The Word of God must be internalized, thought about, and responded to for it to have its full impact (Joshua 1:8; James 1:22).

The Bible's Overlap with General Revelation

One final word we need to say about the Bible has to do with the reality that some philosophers and careful thinkers throughout history have gotten some things right. Men like Aristotle and Plato have set forth some very insightful and helpful thoughts about what mankind and life are like. This should not surprise the Christian who is reading his Bible. After all, God has revealed some things to mankind in creation (Ps. 19:1ff.; Rom. 1:19ff.) and through our conscience (Eccles. 3:11; Rom. 2:14-15) that lead us to have some right general concepts about the world through careful thought and research. When this is considered in light of the fact that man is made in God's image with a special dominion over the rest of creation to be and do things like God far beyond any of the rest of His creation (Gn. 1:26-28; Ps. 8:5-6), we should not be surprised that even men who don't personally know God and who don't believe the Bible can get some things right.

However, somewhere along the line men without God's revelation inevitably will misinterpret the things about the world they discover because they are not seeking God (Rom. 3:10-11), they do not see the need for what God says (1 Cor. 2:14), and in fact, they simply are unable to take all the data and put it in the order it should be in so that they are on the right path because they lack the spiritual desire, vitality, and direction to do so (Eph. 2:1-3). They are like a man who is in a dense forest who makes five correct decisions about how to get back to camp, yet the one mistake he makes due to his blindness of the big picture takes him away from camp and to his death.

Family Discussion

1. Name some of the different ways we learn truth.
2. Why must the Bible be the only ultimate source of truth?

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured. We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation. *Sola Scriptura* in the 1996 Cambridge Declaration, The Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals

3. What difference does this devotional reading make in how we view knowledge and truth?