Profiting From God's Word (Part 1)

Looking at the title of this article, one might think that we're going to examine the deeds of those charlatans who pretend to be messengers of God and prey on the bank accounts of their followers. Quite to the contrary, this article is about the value of God's Word to our lives. In general, the Bible is "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105). Specifically, the apostle Paul wrote, "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 perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16-17). The word "profitable" denotes something that is useful, beneficial and advantageous. In these two verses we find areas in which we can profit spiritually from our knowledge and application of the Bible.

We can profit from God's Word doctrinally. The form of doctrine that we teach is of extreme significance. Meaning nothing more than "teaching," "doctrine" is the very basis of one's system of belief. Why is a person a Moslem? It is because he has accepted the teachings of Mohammed. He is an adherent to the Islamic doctrine. The same could be said for those who adhere to Buddhism, Taoism or any other man-made religion. Technically speaking, even though denominations claim to be followers of the Bible, their creeds, manuals and disciplines mandate doctrines peculiar to each of them. While they profess to follow God's Word, the addition of their man-made works as authoritative equivalents to the Bible indicate that their doctrines come more from their books than from God's Book. Thus, one who is a Lutheran is such because he believes Lutheran doctrine. Likewise, Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc. are each of that stripe because of their respective doctrines, not because of the Bible.

Of the abundance of doctrines that fill our world, which one is truly profitable (useful, beneficial, advantageous) to our eternal welfare? Employing the opening words of II Timothy 3:16 to answer this question, we see that those scriptures (writings) that have been given by the inspiration of God provide us with this valuable doctrine. Any doctrine that is not from God's Word is not only uninspired, but it is harmful to our souls. Consider just a few of the many Divinely inspired passages that speak of God's doctrine.

- Obedience to this doctrine brings freedom from the bondage of sin. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6:17-18).

- The doctrine we practice and teach demands our utmost attention. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." (I Timothy 4:13). "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (I Timothy 4:16).

- The only way to truly win souls to the Lord is through the teaching of His doctrine. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (II Timothy 4:2). "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." (Titus 2:1).

- To be saved and to save others, we must live God's doctrine. "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good words: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." (Titus 2:7-8).

We can profit from God's Word doctrinally. In His Word He has given us "sound" (healthful) doctrine (I Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:9). In His Word He has warned us of unsound doctrine (Matthew 16:12; II Timothy 4:3; II John 9-10). In addition, He has given us the capacity to study, learn and know the difference between that doctrine which is beneficial to us and those doctrines that can lead us to eternal damnation.

The only way we can profit from the Bible doctrinally is to study it. Daily study of and meditation upon God's Word along with assembling with the saints to worship and hear the Word preached as well as attending Bible classes taught by faithful men of God will cause us to develop an appreciation for and adherence to that Divine doctrine that can lead us to heaven.

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