

## 108 – As to the faith, don't swerve

An article was recommended a few days ago in a Bible scholar's blog, named "God Didn't Say That." I subscribed to the blog because its title intrigued me. I'm always interested in what God said, and, as we've looked at many times, what He didn't say because, as we've seen, what God Didn't say is often as important as what He did say!

The recommended article from this gentleman was summarized in a question as to whether the Apostle Paul believed in the historical Adam. The Lord did not release me to **read** the article, possibly because to me it's an entirely foolish question, and a useless exercise. You'll recall Paul's own instructions to Timothy:

### [1 Timothy 6:20-21](#)

that which is committed to you, guard, turning aside from the profane prattlings and antipathies of falsely named "knowledge,"  
21 which some are professing. As to the faith, they swerve.

*Committed:* a deposit, a trust

*Guard:* Protect by vigilance and power

*Profane:* not kept sacred and may be trodden by others

*Prattlings:* empty sound, empty discussion, discussion of vain and useless matters

*Antipathies:* oppositions [Greek = antithesis; anti = against or opposed, and thesis = position]

"Protect with **vigilance and power** what has been **deposited** in you and **entrusted** to you. This is your accountability, not only to keep your eyes peeled through the visor of the helmet of salvation you have on, along with the rest of the panoply of God; but also be prepared with the sword of the spirit to take off some heads! Man up, Brother! Woman Up, Sister! Walk away from the empty discussion of vain and useless matters – the empty sound of what is not kept sacred and is easily trodden by others. Also walk away from oppositions which are falsely claimed to be something known, as if it were understood as science, by some who announcing and even promising to possess. When it comes to THE faith, these guys are **deliberately** deviating from it, even though they may know better or are intellectually dishonest and therefore announce error regarding the faith in Jesus Christ."

How did I get there from a simple mention of an article about whether Paul believed in the historical Adam? Does that sound like profane prattling to you? It does to me, and I'm committed to walk away from all of it, even when everyone may disagree with what I believe God is saying. How arrogant is that, you might well ask? What gives *me* the right to decide what God says? That's a great question, because to me it is at the heart

of “THE Faith” we share and in which we walk by God’s love, grace, and sovereign choosing. The answer is also at the heart of ***Light Up The Scriptures***.

## 2 Timothy 2:15

15 Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of [the] truth.

Who knew there was something we had to do to present ourselves to God qualified? For that matter, who knew there was a qualification? I thought Jesus handled all that? Isn’t that pretty much what the Christian Church teaches? Be saved and then...wait for it...do good things, like helping people, feed the poor, etc., etc., and don’t forget to give us your money. And do it all with a smile. That’s the Christian life I grew up hearing about. But what does Paul say?

1. You and I will present ourselves to God
2. Paul did ***not*** say this, but it is implied by its absence: there are two ways to present ourselves to God: a qualified and unashamed worker, or unqualified and ashamed worker.
3. What is the only qualification Paul lists for us to present ourselves as unashamed workers?
4. Correctly cutting the word of THE truth.

From Chapter 4 of GO GOD – Jump on or Hang on ‘Cause God’s Gonna Win.

Imagine standing before the throne of God, with Jesus sitting at His right hand, surrounded by a host of angels. The Father smiles toward you and says, “Well done, Son. Well done, Daughter. You qualified!”

Near the end of his life, Paul wrote his last epistle to his protégé, Timothy. In it he urged the young man to qualify himself before God by being diligent to **rightly divide, correctly interpret and properly apply** the word of “***the truth***.” Paul used the Greek definite article (“*the*”) to indicate the *specific, absolute and reliable* truth from the scriptures. It is not subject to revision, modification or amendment and it is neither relative nor questionable. Paul was not interested in some new age, wishy-washy concept of “*whatever works for you*.” His declaration was about “***the truth***” (“*actual facts in contrast to the false*,” CLNT-KC, 310). If Paul were sitting across the table from us right now, he would be as plain spoken as our best friend. He might lean forward, point his finger for emphasis and exclaim, “**There’s a lot at stake, here, so let’s get to it and let’s get it right!**”

Reading the scriptures is similar to reading a map. Symbols on a map have specific meanings to help point us in the right direction. Similarly, the words used in the scriptures

mean specific things, especially since God inspired them. For example, “**qualified**” is the same Greek word as “*tested*.” In Paul’s day, it meant “*one who is of tried faith and integrity*” (Thayer). The Adversary *tested* Jesus in the desert following His baptism. Jesus “*qualified*” Himself – and silenced Satan – by “**correctly cutting the word of [the] truth.**” Jesus met every question from the Adversary with “**it is written...**” (See Matthew 4:1-11). Failing to “*correctly cut*” God’s word has resulted in confusion, contention, conflict and division throughout Christian history. Even wars have been waged in the name of God because of this failure!

There is a fine line between “**correctly cutting**” and “**engaging in controversy for nothing useful**” (2 Timothy 2:14). One only upsets people, while the other enlightens, encourages, instructs and produces clear understanding. Although the process may seem tedious, it is as important as reading the right map and interpreting it properly. My wife has a wonderful illustration for this: “*If you’re one degree off when you leave Los Angeles, you’ll never reach Hawaii!*”

Seeing God’s word clearly and applying it correctly enables us to sail along a straight course. Proper understanding affects our thoughts and beliefs profoundly. Proper application affects the very fabric of our character. Even our physical bodies respond positively, with greater health and well-being, to beliefs that make us more like Christ, that bring us closer to knowing God and enjoying an intimate relationship with Him. When course corrections are needed, God’s word cuts clean and deep, dividing the truth from the lie. As uncomfortable as the image may be, clean cuts hurt the least and heal the quickest.

#### Hebrews 4:12

***“...the word of God is living and operative, and keen [sharp] above any two-edged sword, and penetrating up to the parting of soul and spirit, both of the articulations [joints] and marrow, and is a judge of the sentiments and thoughts of the heart.”***

My immediate burden this evening is to draw the distinction between what God is saying and what we **think** He is saying. This is especially important when it comes to what the Lord is speaking to you personally, whether by direct revelation or by prophecy coming through another person. The written word of God is crystal clear – which is not to say that it is easy to understand; far from it. Our understanding may be lacking, but the word of the truth is not ambiguous. I have been careful to preface any interpretation I bring to these studies by prefacing my thoughts with the heads-up that what comes next is exactly that: my thoughts, my take, my perception; then it’s up to you to fact-check and test the word to see if it holds up.

If we misinterpret God's word we will misapply it, and we will waste valuable time in error, not to mention potentially perpetuating that error by passing it off on to others. That's why [James 3:1](#) is such a fearful caution:

***Not many should become teachers, my brethren, being aware that we shall be getting greater judgment.***

Correctly interpreting and applying God's word spoken to you personally is as critical as His written word. There's a problem, however: because it is a word TO YOU, you may not find a direct written backup or correlation in the written word of God. God does not violate the scriptures, since they are His word, and, as Jesus said, "***Thy word is truth***" ([John 17:18](#)).

Consider what happened to Moses:

[Exodus 17:6](#)

I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. **Strike** the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.

[Numbers 20:8](#)

"Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. **Speak to** that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water.

Think about this: Most of the Old Testament figures had to spoken word of the Lord to instruct them. Yes, they had the law, written by the finger of God on stone tablets, and later the words written by Moses and others, but most of what we call the Bible is the result of spoken words from God to individuals that were written later and called "The Scriptures." Jesus referred to the scriptures, as did others. Everything that was written was first spoken to the authors, in dreams, visions, or direct revelation.

Look at an example from Paul:

[2 Timothy 2:16](#)

16 Yet from [the] profane prattlings stand aloof, for they will be progressing to more irreverence,  
17 and their word will spread as gangrene, of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus,  
18 who swerve as to [the] truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred, and are subverting the faith of some.

Let's assume, for the sake of our discussion, that Hymeneus and Philetus were totally well-intentioned believers in Jesus Christ who wanted only to contribute to the edification and advancement of the ecclesia of God. Somehow they reached a totally

erroneous conclusion about the resurrection of the dead, promised in the scriptures, and as a result, were busily promoting false knowledge – error, literally – among 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians. They had misinterpreted and therefore misapplied the word of the truth and were leading others astray by deviating, or “swerving,” as Paul wrote, from the faith. Their misinterpretation polluted the faith of Christ in others. They didn’t lack the word, mind you. They simply misused them by failing to correctly cut the word of the truth.

The point of all this tonight is to inspire the question in you: ***“Have I in any way or at any time misinterpreted God’s word, whether written in the scriptures or spoken to me personally either by direct revelation or through another person?”***

Once we ask that question, it remains to wait on the Lord for revelation (again, either directly, through someone He may appoint, or even by an experience He engineers to teach us); once revelation is received or PERceived, we must repent – we must change our minds if we are to avoid “swerving” as to the faith; ask God for forgiveness, and others whom our words or actions may have affected; finally, receive correction through sound instruction and make the necessary adjustments in thinking and living.

#### [2 Timothy 1:13-14](#)

13 Have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

14 The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the holy spirit which is making its home in us.

I love Paul’s boldness. He knew who had taught Him and given Him not only his unique commission, but His unique revelations as well that transcended the kingdom administration and described a, celestial destiny for the Body of Christ. Paul, then, defined a ***“pattern of sound words...in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus”***; that is, those which the Apostle himself had spoken. Notice also the first of the two instructions to Timothy to guard – that is, protect – what had been deposited in him and entrusted to him. Finally, the agency of Timothy’s protection – and ours today – is the Holy Spirit which is making its home in us.

#### [\(2 Timothy 2:19\)](#)

19 Howbeit **[but yet]**, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knew those who are His, and, Let everyone who is naming the name of the Lord withdraw from injustice.

No matter what error, whether deliberate or accidental; whether spoken or written by a person, God’s foundation – the one He laid – stands. It’s seal of authenticity and immutability is that The Father knows who **are** His [present tense], and whoever that is must pull out of any association with injustice.

Now I'm going to go way out on another limb this week. We are witnessing many with whom we are in intimate fellowship go through massive redeterminations and redefinitions of their lives and the relationships in them. Barbara referred to some specifically during last week's Jammie Church, who are going through, finalizing, or have received completed divorce decrees. I believe that those actions have been entirely necessary withdrawals from injustice; that is the injustice of a union that God did not actually join. Look at the Lord's words:

[\(Matthew 19:5-6\)](#)

5 and He said, 'On this account a man shall be leaving father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh'?  
6 So that no longer are they two, but one flesh. What God, then, yokes together, let not man be separating."

The scripture begs two questions:

1. Did one or the other fail to fully leave father and mother, the family systems and the games entangled in them, and cleave to his or her mate?
2. Did God yoke them together, or did they just think it was a wonderful idea at the time?

There's so much contained in these two verses that we could probably devote an entire study to them; however, for now, let me set out the proposition that whom God has yoked together **will** leave father and mother – and everyone else who would stand in the way of the purity of such a union – a man or woman CAN separate. Fortunately, the reverse is also true. Barbara and I are blessed beyond words to know absolutely that God yoked us together, and that forms the basis for determining relationships that are permitted on the periphery of our union, and for reconciling any differences of perception we may have. He is the landmark in the center of our marriage, and everyone else either gets that, gets out or never gets in at all.

[\(2 Timothy 2:20-26\)](#)

20 Now in a great house there are not only gold and silver utensils, but wooden and earthenware also, and some indeed for honor, yet some for dishonor.

21 If, then, anyone should ever be purging himself from these, he will be a utensil for honor, hallowed, and useful to the Owner, made ready for every good act.

22 Now youthful desires flee: yet pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with all who are invoking the Lord out of a clean heart.

23 Now stupid and crude questionings refuse, being aware that they are generating fightings.

24 Now a slave of the Lord must not be fighting, but be gentle toward  
all, apt to teach, bearing with evil,  
25 with meekness training those who are antagonizing, seeing whether  
God may be giving them repentance to come into a realization of the  
truth,  
26 and they will be sobering up out of the trap of the Adversary, having  
been caught alive by him, for that one's will.

There's something else I have to declare here. Some of you have heard me say this already, and it's a little out of context with our study, but bear with me. I believe it will have to be published in a blog post, and it may have to be written in some upcoming book:

Since I offered to support Barbara's ministry in an admittedly uninformed approach, back in August, 2007, I have seen example after example of God sovereignly choosing women to herald His word and minister to His children, and requiring men to take on a support role. It's a completely upside down picture from the traditional, patriarchal Judeo-Christian model; but it is God's model, from what I can tell, so I am exhorting husbands to cease the practice of Lording over their wives, because Paul's admonition to love our wives as Christ loves the church **MUST**, by definition, support them completely and facilitate the call of God on their lives. Jesus Christ is Lord, but He does not Lord it over anyone. Indeed, He serves the Body of Christ even today, as the greatest of all. How can husbands do other than toward their wives? In this season, God is appointing women. Men have had their chance, and their season appears to me to be over.

To me, this also means that the whole "*woman in submission*" concept is way old and way over. It only works in the context of God putting a man in position of authority, but it is in no way absolute, and God is free, it seems to me, to switch those positions of authority in any order He chooses for His purpose anytime He wishes. Our accountability is to recognize the order He has set at any given time and in any given set of circumstances. In August, 2007, I approached Barbara to support the call of God on her life, not the other way around. God directs me in the areas He decides and I stay the heck out of the areas He directs Barbara in except as a support when and where needed. Barbara went to DC, NY, and NH on a 3-week missionary journey recently, doing all that God showed her, while I stayed here doing what God showed me. I have an accountability for Light Up The Scriptures, and Barbara supports me in that; while Barbara has an accountability for Jammie Church, and I support her in that.

Barbara made this startling statement the other day when we were in our early morning time together with the Lord: There is no human father throughout the entire scriptures,



who didn't screw up somewhere, with the possible exception of Enoch, whom God took up to Himself. Of all others who are written about in the scriptures, not one is entirely clean. The only sinless man, Jesus, did not father a child. It stands to reason that no human dad can begin to compete with THE Father for righteousness or even recognition; and all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Again, I am declaring that in this season, God is picking the women to lead the Body of Christ, and it would be well for the men to grasp this, give up the failed traditional male-over-female paradigm, and support and facilitate the wives whom God has chosen...or else be removed, because His will be done!

These comments may have seemed out of context with our study tonight, but look at what follows in **2 Timothy 3 and 4**, and, if you're a guy especially, ask yourself whether you can see any of these qualities in you...and be honest, because God already knows, and His Agape will stop at nothing short of his purpose being fulfilled, in and through your life. Your only decision is whether He accomplishes His purpose in and through your life sooner or later; that is, before Christ returns, or after. If you have correctly cut the word of the truth, you cannot help but conclude that sooner is better.

#### (2 Timothy 3:1-6)

- 1 Now this know, that in the last days perilous periods will be present,
- 2 for men will be selfish, fond of money, ostentatious, proud, calumniators, stubborn to parents, ungrateful, malign,
- 3 without natural affection, implacable, adversaries, uncontrollable, fierce, averse to the good,
- 4 traitors, rash, conceited, fond of their own gratification rather than fond of God; [this next one is the most fearful of all to me]
- 5 having a form of devoutness, yet denying its power.
- 6 These, also, shun.

Guys, if you're being shunned by your wife, ask yourself what your position, your posture and your attitudes toward her have been and whether God has have drawn a line to separate you to protect the call on Her life that you failed to.

#### (2 Timothy 3:6-9)

- For of these are those who are slipping into homes and are leading into captivity little women, heaped with sins, being led by various lusts and gratifications,
- 7 always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth.



8 Now, by the method by which Jannes and Jambres withstand Moses, thus these also are withstanding the truth, men of a depraved mind, disqualified as to the faith.

9 But they shall not be progressing more, for their folly shall be obvious to all, as that of those also became.

OK, so much for the watch-out-fors; now Paul launches into how-to-get-it-rights:

[\(2 Timothy 3:10-4:6\)](#)

10 Now you fully follow me in my teaching, motive, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,

11 persecutions, sufferings, such as occurred to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra: persecutions such as I undergo, and out of them all the Lord rescues me.

12 And all who are wanting to live devoutly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted.

13 Yet wicked men and swindlers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14 Now you be remaining in what you learned **and verified**, being aware from whom you learned it [Paul is referring to himself here, I believe, since "whom" is not capitalized],

15 and that from a babe you are acquainted with the sacred scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act.

**Chapter 4**

1 I am conjuring you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus, Who is about to be judging the living and the dead, in accord with His advent and His kingdom:

2 Herald the word. Stand by it, opportunely, inopportunely, expose, rebuke, entreat, with all patience and teaching.

3 For the era will be when they will not tolerate sound teaching, but, their hearing being tickled, they will heap up for themselves teachers in accord with their own desires,

4 and, indeed, they will be turning their hearing away from the truth, yet will be turned aside to myths.

5 Yet you be sober in all things; suffer evil as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus; do the work of an evangelist; fully discharge your service.

6 For I am already a libation, and the period of my dissolution is imminent.

Here's the report we want to be able to give at the end of our lives:

[\(2 Timothy 4:7-8\)](#)

7 I have contended the ideal contest. I have finished my career. I have kept the faith.

8 Furthermore, there is reserved for me the wreath of righteousness, which the Lord, the just Judge, will be paying to me in that day; yet not to me only, but also to all who love His advent.

We started out tonight talking one thing: being certain of What God is saying versus what we THINK He's saying to us. We've taken a journey through what has been written, particularly by Paul, who was so confident in what the Lord revealed to Him alone, apart from all of the other apostles, that He could say, "**fully follow me.. Have a pattern of sound words which you hear from me...Be remaining in what you learned and verified, being aware from whom you learned it.**"

Look around at your life, especially at the relationships in it. Look at it all from Heaven's view. Are you a degree off, having departed from Los Angeles on the way to Hawaii? If you draw your last breath tonight, will He be smiling when you meet Him face to face? How will your review go when you give account before the Lord? What award will be yours at the dais of Christ? Are you **endeavoring** – being diligent -- "**to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of the truth**"?

Take these three steps daily:

**Recognize, Acknowledge, and Accept** – Be continually recognizing, acknowledging and accepting all that God has said and done; what He *is* saying to you and doing in your life today, as well as what He is not saying and not doing. Then, **ACT** accordingly. Don't be found to have "**a form of devoutness yet denying its power.**" Rather, *DO* be found having genuine devoutness and fully abiding in and declaring its power!

If you aren't sure what God is saying or doing, or is you are assuming that you know, stand on what you know and wait for confirmation or correction. One more thing, be

patient. God is not in a hurry. He'll never be late, but He may not be early enough to suit you.

Father, we recognize, acknowledge, and accept [Isaiah 55:7-9](#):

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake their ways  
and the unrighteous their thoughts.

Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

<sup>8</sup> "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,"

declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> "As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

#### [Psalm 119:151](#)

Yet you are near, LORD, and **all your** commands are true.

#### [Psalm 119:160](#)

**All your** words are true; **all your** righteous laws are eternal.

#### [Psalm 119:172](#)

May my tongue sing of your word, for **all your** commands are righteous.

#### [Psalm 145:10](#)

**All your** works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you.

We worship You, Father, and we give you all honor, praise and thanks for all You are, all You have done, all You are doing and all You will yet do in and through our lives as we humble ourselves in obedience before You tonight, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, AMEN.

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you: the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."