



Worthwhile Instruction

The apostle Paul wrote and reminded the young evangelist, Timothy, “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2nd Tim. 3:16, 17; NKJV). The word I would like to focus on today is the word *instruction*. We know what that is, right? Well, maybe not enough!

I say “not enough” because the word *instruction* comes from a Latin word that, literally translated, means “to build in.” The primary meaning is that one is “building in” an individual the information necessary or desired, but implied in this word is that there is already a foundation upon which we are “building” and, if we continue our instruction, we continue “building” on what has already been learned. Any teacher worth his or her salt knows that instruction is just that: a constant “building into” and “building on” to what has already been learned. All instruction is a matter of “building in” information, and many subjects that are taught in school depend on the student learning and grasping the meanings and concepts before any further “building on” can be done successfully. A house with a poor foundation will not stand long; a student with a poor educational foundation will not go far or even actually learn much, no matter what grade he or she is given.

In spiritual matters, and in this passage in particular, God tells us His word is profitable for “building in” the disciple that which God has revealed in the written word, and “building on” current and prior knowledge; it should be noted, though, that it is “*instruction in righteousness*” Paul is writing about. Stated another way, God’s word is useful to help us to know true righteousness, to *become* righteous, and to become more and more righteous. That is what instruction — “building in” and “building on” — means.

But why should we be concerned about being instructed in righteousness? Does it matter? Is it important?

Consider, first of all, that Jesus said, “*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*” (**Matt. 5:20**). Clearly, there is a righteousness that exists, but which is insufficient to provide entrance for any man into the kingdom of heaven; we should not desire that righteousness, and instruction in it will do us no good.

Second, consider that Paul wrote about some of his Jewish brethren who “*ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, ...did not submit to God’s righteousness*” (**Rom. 10:3**). Paul was not saying that they had successfully contrived a righteousness that would help them get to heaven; he was condemning them for rejecting the only righteousness that would render them acceptable to God!

Finally, consider that Paul also wrote by inspiration that God made Christ “*to be sin, ...so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God*” (**2nd Cor. 5:21**). He also wrote that the gospel of Jesus Christ contained [and thus *revealed*] the righteousness of God (**Rom. 1:16, 17**) and that a man is accounted as righteous by God when he has faith in that gospel and what it teaches us (**Rom. 4:5; 10:10**). Paul himself sought the righteousness that was not of self, but of God (**Phlp. 3:8, 9**) that he might be able to look forward to Christ’s coming and His judgment. As was noted in the beginning, the written and revealed word of God is the means by which we may be instructed “*in righteousness*,” for that is where it is revealed.

As Paul said to Timothy, God’s written word is profitable [beneficial] for “*instruction in righteousness*,” so if we seek to be approved by Christ in the final Judgment, we would do well to consult God’s word first, often, and continually. Nothing that man offers — whether the creeds or the commentaries — will instruct us in righteousness, for Paul also said that

Worth Quoting

“It’s not what is poured into a student that counts, but what is planted.”

— Linda Conway



“*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*”

— Proverbs 1:7

Let God’s word be the FINAL word.



The Lord’s Church at Glendale Schedule of Services

Sunday:

Morning Bible Classes 9:00 AM
Morning Worship 9:40 AM
Evening Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 7:30 PM

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.” —

Psa. 122:1

Elders:

Daryl Strickler
Melvin Thompson
Tad Thompson

Deacons:

Bob Lewis
Sylvester McCalpine

Evangelist:

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those Scriptures would make a man “*complete*” and “*thoroughly equipped*,” meaning there is nothing else we need to be complete. Whatever words men may add in commenting on the written word of God gives us nothing new, and certainly nothing better than what God has already revealed. If anything, the words of men only serve to confuse us and divided us!

Since we now know the benefits of God’s word, what will we do with it? It is good to have a Bible, but it will not be spiritually beneficial to you unless and until you open it; it will do you no spiritual good until you read it; it will do you no spiritual good until you understand it properly; and it will do you no good until you *apply* it properly. Yes, God gave us the words by which men will be saved, but the mere delivery and revelation of those words to mankind did not assure anyone’s salvation immediately; it is not until we *do* the words of the Father that they do us any good (cf. **Matt. 7:21**).

For those words to be beneficial, we must understand them, so there may be occasions when we need to ask someone who is more familiar with God’s word to explain it to us, as Philip did for the Ethiopian eunuch (cf. **Acts 8:30-39**). Be careful, though, to check what is taught against the written word, for there are many men out in the world who would deceive you, either intentionally or unintentionally (cf. **1st John 4:1**). Remember the principle of *truth*, that God’s word will not contradict itself; if something you are taught does not agree with another Bible passage, do a deeper study and investigate it more thoroughly to see the *truth*, and then stand firm on that. Just know that there are numerous errors being promoted as God’s word when they are nothing but the doctrines of men, and will not save you.

When and if you have been instructed in God’s word and you have submitted to its *instruction*, it is important that you do what you can to *instruct* others, too. If you understand the gospel message, then you understand why this is true: “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*” (**Heb. 11:6**), and, “*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (**Rom. 10:17**). If we want to be pleasing to God, we must hear His word and obey it; if we want others to be pleasing to God, we must teach His word to them and show them the need to obey it. *Faith* is not, as the modern dictionary defines it, “belief without evidence,” but “*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (**Heb. 11:1**); in other words, we must give others *evidence* as to why they should believe. Of course, that evidence is found within God’s written word. It is that *instruction* that will save, as Paul said to Timothy.

But God’s word is for more than just the information needed to have our sins forgiven and to be called a child of God; Peter said that God has given to us “*all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us*” (**2nd Pet. 1:3**). Through God’s written word, we not only have the knowledge of how to obtain spiritual life, but we also have the *instruction* as to how we live righteous lives! That means we need to be constantly searching to learn how God would have us live. — Steven Harper

Which Takes More Faith?

Skeptics and outright atheists will argue that those who believe in God are trusting in “blind faith” — belief without evidence. While some may, indeed, have such a ‘faith’, that is not the faith of the Bible. God tells us faith **is** based on evidence, though we do not actually *see* the things in which we believe (**Heb. 11:1**).

But let’s not overlook the fact that what atheists believe is based on faith, too! That’s right! It takes a **lot** of faith to be an atheist! You must believe that all the complexities of this universe and the individual living beings all just “happened.” You have to believe that things were “just right” through billions and billions of years, enough to cause a ‘spark’ of life and which then allowed life to progress and evolve into immensely complex life systems and environments. You have to suspend logic and mathematical odds and believe that all these events happened consecutively and without interruption to get us where we now are.

Or, you can use logic and reason and believe what the Bible says about it all (**Gen. 1:1**).