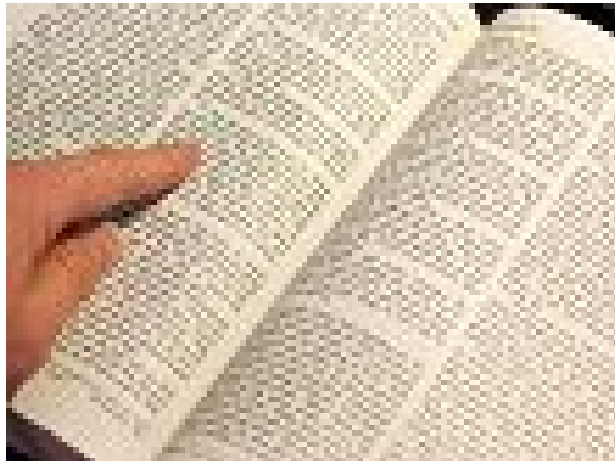


Bethany Baptist Church
112-17 148th Street, Jamaica, NY 11435
718-529-5842

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Back to the Basics



.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV

Reviewed by: Dr. Lambert Duncan

Back to the Basics

Psalm 119:11 (NIV) *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”*

2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV) *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”*

In the last three (3) Volumes of the Pastor’s Corner (Vol. 31, 32, and 33), we talked about the false teachings that have become so prevalent in the church today. Needless to say that unless the universal and local church does something to change the current path the church is on, we will witness false teaching in the church, in the not too distant future, at epidemic proportions.

Currently, there are only a few preachers and teachers proclaiming the truth apart from the typical charlatan gimmicks to get the money out of and/or control the unsuspecting. If the church does nothing to change its course, the few that are preaching and teaching the truth will become like a faint voice in a baseball stadium that is filled to capacity; nobody will hear them over the noise.

Although some of the “few” preachers and teachers proclaiming the truth believe false teachings in the church is already at epidemic proportions; I have my doubts. However, I do believe that those who have embraced the false teachings of our day (health, wealth and word faith) are so far gone that it would take nothing short of a miracle to put them back on the right course. In my opinion, some of the larger ministries teaching the common errors of our day are so far gone that if Jesus himself came to their services and told them they were in error, they would have him escorted out of their buildings. Why? Because being corrected by Jesus or anyone else stops or drastically reduces the cash flow into their ministries. After all, if there was nothing to gain by teaching error, why do it? This is not to say that all preaching/teaching error do so deliberately for money. I believe some are sincere at heart and mean well but are sincerely wrong in their message.

Going forward, if the universal and local church intends to get back on the right course, they must first get back to the basics of the Christian faith. By getting “back to basics” I mean:

- Putting the focus back on God and His will for our lives and His church, and taking our focus off of the blessings. Material blessings will fade away; only what we do for God lasts forever.

- Getting away from books, CD's and tapes from the so-called "spiritual elite" preachers and teachers that are usually filled with error and turning our attention back to the only reliable source of truth, the Bible. The money wasted buying material from false preachers/ teachers could be put to better use by giving it to your church, who in turn will use it to extend the kingdom of God.
- Stop believing every thing that you hear TV preachers/teachers say; check your study bibles and commentaries to see if they are preaching/teaching truth. The success or failure of most tv ministries depends on how well their audience knows the Bible and their basic Christian doctrines.

To accomplish these objectives, the following must be put into habitual practice:

1. Attend the teaching ministries in your church – A member in good standing in any church attends Sunday School and Bible Study along with Sunday services. For some reason, most saints think it's enough to attend Sunday morning services only. However, it is in these teaching ministries (Sunday School and Bible Study) within local churches that we learn the Bible and our Christian doctrines. In addition, we learn hermeneutics, the art and science of biblical interpretation, a much needed ability if we intend to separate truth and error.
2. Stop church hopping – Many saints go from church to church and never stay anywhere long enough to get taught truth. If you are in a healthy, well-balanced church, stay there. If you are not in a healthy well-balanced church, find one and join it!! Keep in mind, no church is perfect; they all have problems. However, their teaching and practices must be biblically sound in all areas; that is what makes it a healthy well-balanced church.
3. Learn your Christian doctrines – The main reason false teachers are so successful today is because most Christians do not know their basic Christian doctrines. For example, if every Christian understood the "Sovereignty of God," the false notion that our words have creative powers disappears. In fact, such teachings would be downright offensive to the Christians that know their basic Christian doctrines. If for some reason your church has not yet studied basic Christian doctrines, ask your pastor when the church will be studying them.
4. Get study tools – Although the only source of truth for the Christian is the Bible, there are some good commentaries available to help us determine truth from error. Study bibles are even better, I believe every Christian should have at least two (2) study bibles. Study bibles like the "NIV" or "The Student Bible" are highly recommended. However, there are some bibles that should be avoided at all costs. There are three (3) that come to mind:

- The “New World Translation” (The Jehovah’s Witnesses Bible)
 - The “Word Study Bible” (with contributions by know faith teachers)
 - The “Dakes Annotated Reference Bible” (considered to be one of the worst as it relates to false teaching by the Christian Research Institute)
5. Go to church – Being a member of a healthy, well-balanced church means nothing if you do not attend it regularly. Sadly, some saints have substituted church attendance with watching tv preachers/teachers. In Hebrews 10:25 (NIV) we read, *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing...”* Get back to church!!
 6. Develop a Berean attitude – In Acts 17:11 (NIV) we read, *“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for **they received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.**”* Some preachers/teacher today feel they should not have their message examined in light of biblical teachings. However, if Paul was not exempt, no preacher/teacher should be exempt. We must stop assuming that popular preachers/ teachers are right in what they preach or teach. Like the Bereans, we must examine every message they preach/ teach in light of the Bible. It does not matter how popular they are, how many books they have written, or how large their church is. Examine their message in light of the Bible!!!
 7. Speak up – Once we have identified the error of any preacher/teacher, we should, if possible, approach them privately to express our concerns. If they are not approachable and we hear saints parroting the error of these preachers/teachers, we must speak up in love. Failure to correct our brothers and sisters in Christ, in love, when they parrot error is to neglect our command to love one another (John 13:34-35).

In closing, I am reminded of the words Paul, who in my mind, next to Jesus, is the greatest man in the New Testament. Paul told Timothy, his son in the gospel, *“..the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, **they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.**”* (2 Timothy 4:3 NIV) Folks, that time is here right now. The error that is so prevalent today is what people want to hear, not what God says in His word. Some saints want to hear that they will live in excess, having more than they need instead of depending on God to supply their needs day by day. However, this is what Jesus taught in the model prayer, he told his disciples and us to pray, *“..give us today **our daily bread...**”* (Matthew 6:11 NIV). So our expectations should be for God to supply our needs daily and not excess. If we have excess, it’s to bless the poor and/or others less fortunate than us (Proverbs 19:17 and 1 John 3:17-18). Others that are sick want to “claim” their healing they want to hear the words of Isaiah 53:5, *“...by his stripes we are healed”* applied to their sickness through the prayer of a preacher, but God said, “My grace is sufficient for you”

instead of healing them. In truth, most if not all people want to have excess and perfect health. However, sometimes the sovereign God we serve says “no” for whatever reason and we can’t change his mind. After all, it is the all knowing God alone who knows what’s best for us, even when it makes no sense to us.

Finally, I am reminded of the words of Jesus himself, who at a very troubled and sorrowful time went to Gethsemane to pray. His words in this prayer should be the primary goal and prayer of every Christian. He said, “*..yet not as I will, but as you will.*” (Matthew 26:39 NIV). For Jesus, being in the will of God the Father meant death on the cross. The Christian’s goal in life should be to abide in the will of God at all times; this pleases God.

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

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