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How do you measure up to God's plumbline?

Scripture: Amos 7:7-9

In chapter 7, God had given the prophet Amos three visions: (1) Grasshoppers destroying the land. This was changed in answer to prayer for mercy by Amos (v 1-3). (2) Fire destroys the land. This was also changed by the prayer of Amos (v 4-6). (3) A plumbline. Amos did not pray about this (v 7-9). The first two visions were Israel's impending punishment, and Amos immediately responded by praying that God would spare Israel. Prayer is a powerful privilege. **Amos's prayers should remind us to pray for our nation, families, friends, and neighbors.**

The plumbline is a tool used by builders to ensure that buildings are constructed correctly and in alignment. In the Bible, the plumbline is used as a metaphor to represent God's expectations for His people and their spiritual alignment with His Word. It is the image of God's righteous and holy standard that Israel failed to embody in their lives. The plumbline served as a measuring line representing Israel's failure, and how far they had fallen from God's guiding principles. **God wants mankind to be right with Him; He wants sin that makes us crooked removed immediately.** God's Word is the plumbline that helps us be aware of our sin.

Paul writes in his second letter to Timothy that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). The whole Bible is God's inspired Word. Because it is inspired and trustworthy, we should read it and apply it to our lives. The Bible is our standard for testing everything else that claims to be true. **It is our safeguard against false teaching and our source of guidance for how we should live.** God's word is a constant reference for us. If we find that we have erred or strayed, scripture declares the actions to be taken to rediscover God's love. Psalms 119:105 tells us, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Scripture directs the life of faith. It is a source of constant reference and encouragement.

The Bible is not an instruction manual, nor a compilation of stories and tales. Scripture is not merely to be read and then put away. **God's Word is to be incorporated into our lives.** As we practice scriptural standards our lives become transformed; we reflect the glory and the presence of our risen Lord. Without a plumbline to declare what this looks like, and how this comes about, our spiritual lives are lost.

We cannot discard the plumbline as an outdated metaphor simply because we find it in the Old Testament. The image of a plumbline is still applicable for us as we navigate our lives of faith. In fact, not only is this image useful for Christians. Understanding God's plumbline also helps us live deeper and fuller lives. **The presence of a plumbline is meant, not for condemnation, but encouragement?**

We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The truth is, if there were no standard to which God's people were measured, we could easily conclude that God is uninterested in our lives. This would leave us in chaos not freedom. The presence of a plumbline means that God has a desire for us. God desires that we live our lives immersed in divine love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. To immerse ourselves in this reality, however, we must recognize where we step out of the flow of God's divine love. The epistle of John declares "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

A plumbline is to be referenced and built upon. God's standards of holiness, righteousness, justice, and love are to be practiced in our lives. These things aren't just to be contemplated; we are to build our lives upon them. Christ's teachings are not simply old-fashioned tales of morality. Nor are they delightful stories to tickle the ears. Christ's words are to be incorporated into our lives. We build up our spiritual lives when we act upon Christ's words in faith and obedience. God's plumbline helps us remain spiritually healthy. Our spiritual livelihood needs a reference point that is reliable and stable. Otherwise, we run the risk of erecting a spiritual life without a foundation. If we build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone we are assured that our spiritual life is solid and secure.

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