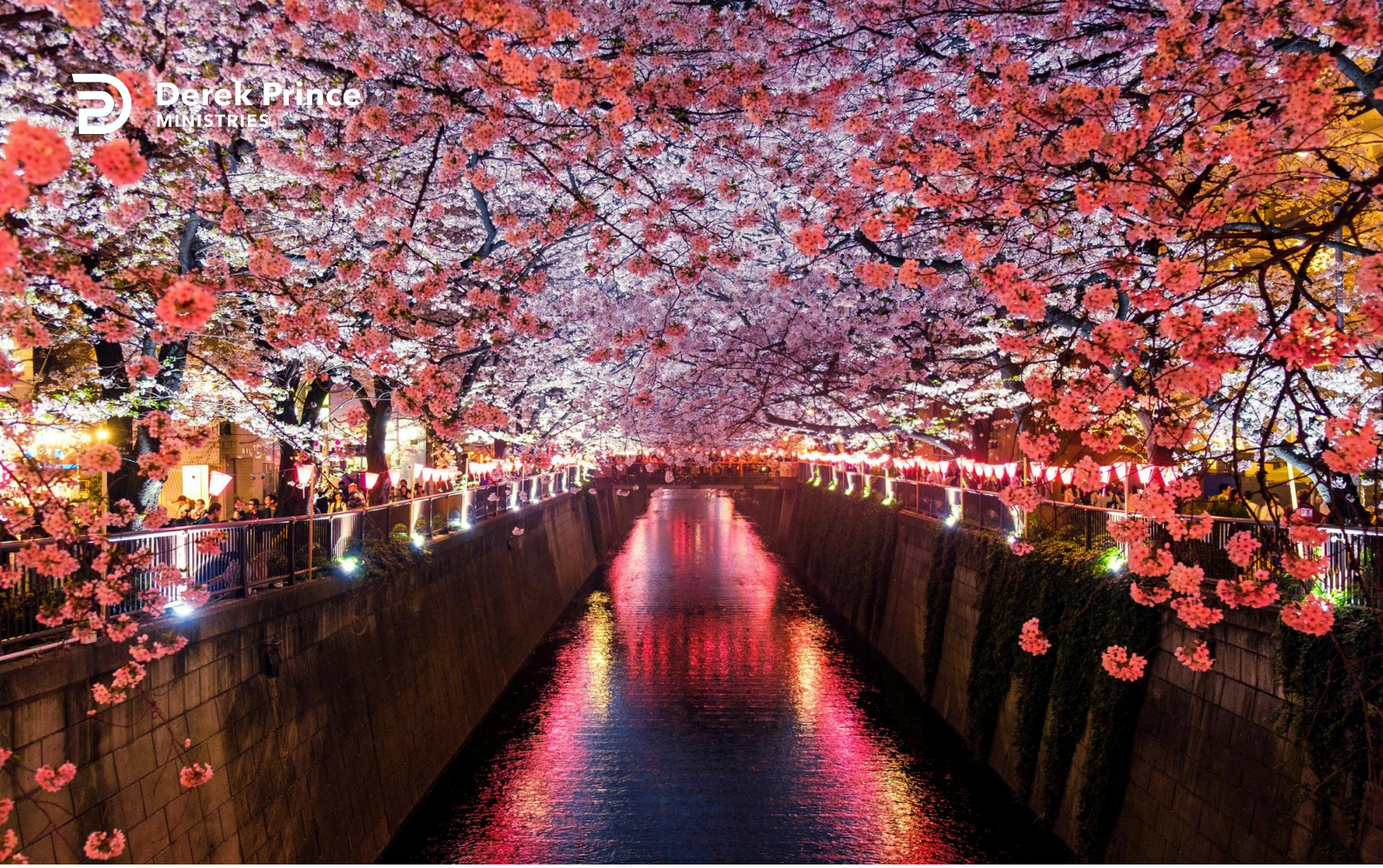


Teaching In The Local Church



Foundations (Day 42)
by Derek Prince

It is sometimes suggested that the way to meet this need of thorough scriptural teaching for Christian young people is to send them to Bible colleges. However, this proposed remedy can be accepted only with two qualifications. First, it must be stated that there is an increasing tendency at present, even among evangelical or full-gospel Bible colleges, to devote less and less time to the actual study of the Bible and more and more time to other secular studies. Paul warned the Colossians:

> "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men." (Col. 2:8)

Paul also warned Timothy:

> "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust [that is, the truth of God's Word], avoiding the profane and vain babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge –by professing it, some have strayed concerning the faith." (1 Tim. 6:20-21)

These warnings need to be repeated today. In many cases, it is possible for a young person to complete a course at a modern Bible college and come away with an inadequate knowledge of the Bible's teachings and how to apply them in a practical way.

The second qualification we must make is that no Bible college course, however sound and thorough it may be, can ever exonerate the pastors and elders of local churches from their duty to provide all the members of their congregations with regular, systematic training in God's Word.

The local church is the central point in the whole New Testament plan for scriptural instruction, and no other institution can ever usurp the local church's function. The apostles and Christians of the New Testament had no other institution for giving scriptural instruction except the local church. Yet they were more successful in their task than we are today.

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Other institutions, such as Bible colleges, may provide special instruction to supplement the teaching done in the local churches, but they can never take their place. The most desperate need of the great majority of local churches today is not more organisation or better programmes or more activities. It is simply this: thorough, practical, regular instruction in the basic truths of God's Word and how to apply them in every aspect of Christian life.

Devotional

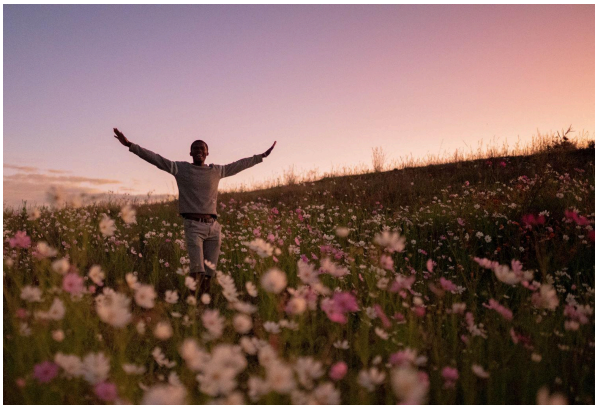
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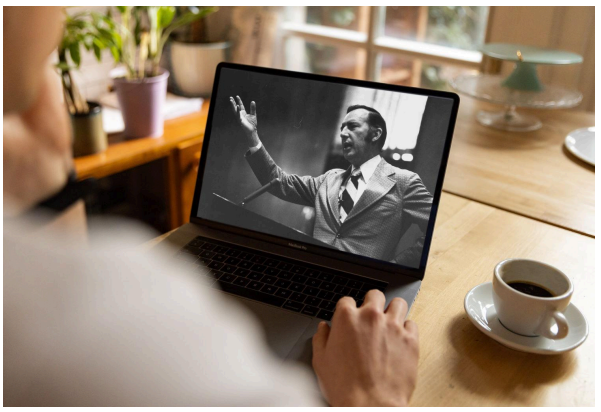
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