

The Authority of Scripture



What It Means to Be a Man of God (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

Now the subject that's been assigned to me for this evening, with my agreement, is "What It Means to Be a Man of God." But I'm going to divide it into two sections: first of all, what it means to be a man and then, a man of God. I think there's nothing that is under more systematic satanic assault today than the very concept of what it is to be a man. I'm sure many of you are familiar with Rudyard Kipling's well-known poem, If, and the last stanza goes like this:

> "If you can fill the unforgiving minute
> With sixty seconds' worth of distance run
> Yours is the earth and all that's in it
> And which is more, you'll be a man, my son."

So that's Rudyard Kipling's recipe for being a man: Filling the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run.

Now, I'm not going to preach on that. But I want to say, first and foremost, and this is very important, that I have only once source of authority and it is the Scripture. I have no other source or authority to which to appeal except the Scripture. That may sound simplistic, but it's extremely important today because the Scripture is being systematically undermined and very often by people who profess to represent God.

I want to quote just two Scriptures and one man. John 10:35. Jesus is speaking and He says in reference to a certain Psalm:

> "If He called them gods to whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken…"

So Jesus gives to this book the two titles we most commonly use: the Word of God and the Scripture. And then He says "the Scripture cannot be broken." You could not make a more emphatic assertion of the authority of Scripture than in that simple statement: the Scripture cannot be broken.

And then, in 2 Timothy 3:16 we have Paul's personal testimony on this theme. 2 Timothy 3:16:

> "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God—there is no such thing as uninspired or unauthoritative Scripture. And bear in mind that both Jesus and Paul were speaking primarily of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, commencing with Genesis.

And then I'd like to quote John Wesley. When I was a young preacher, I was a Pentecostal, and one of our Pentecostal slogans in those days was: We've got it all! Then I started reading John Wesley's journals, in four volumes. And after I'd read a little bit about John Wesley, I thought, "If we've got it all, what did he have? Because he certainly has a lot more than we have." And there's just one thing he said that impresses me. He said:

> "I acknowledge no other rule of faith or practice but the Scripture."

That's the founder of Methodism. Where is Methodism today? Where are we today? At any rate, that is my personal stand. I acknowledge no other rule of faith or practice but the Scriptures.

Now, let me give you another side to this. Recently I came across a book called Spirit Wars written by a Brit who has done the same as I do—moved across to America. And his theme is what is happening in the church today and how the church is being systematically undermined by false teaching. And the false teaching is not new. It's a resurrection of a heresy called gnosis, which was contemporary with the apostles and the early church. It's just the old line come back again. I want you to listen to this rather carefully. Speaking about this new type of interpretation of Scripture:

> "This new style exegesis is popping up everywhere lately, in more or less radical forms. One of note comes from the scholarly British publication The Journal for the Study of the New Testament, published at the University of Sheffield and known for its conservative, evangelical leaning. It's present editor, Francis Wattson, from London University, publishes an article in which he finds the Biblical text, New and Old, hopelessly patriarchal and hierarchical."

And let me tell you patriarchal is a dirty word today.

> "Wattson considers quite unconvincing, no doubt correctly, all attempts to save these texts by recovering between the lines a sort of pristine egalitarianism. He leaves the reader with what he judges the more appropriate strategy—resistance. Such resistance, according to Wattson, would take the form of a counter-reading, reading the text defiantly against the grain. In practice, this would involve [now this is his conclusion] seeing the serpent as liberator, Eve as heroine in her courageous quest for wisdom, and the Lord God as a jealous tyrant, concerned only with the preservation of His own prerogatives."

That is from a leading British Bible scholar. It is totally in contradiction of Scripture. So I want to say, I'm with John Wesley. I acknowledge no other rule of faith or practice but the Scripture.

Now, when we come to a theme of how to be a man and family life, I want to turn to Matthew chapter 19, where Jesus was approached by the Pharisees. In Matthew 19, beginning at verse 3, on the subject of divorce: Matthew 19, beginning at verse 3:

> "The Pharisees also came to Him [Jesus] testing Him and saying to Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?' And He answered and said to them, 'Have you not read that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female.'"

Now, when Jesus said, "at the beginning," you have to know that the Hebrew name for the book of Genesis in Hebrew is bere sheet [phonetically], which is the first words of the text: In the beginning. So, when Jesus said, "at the beginning," He was saying, "turn back to Genesis" and see what was God's purpose when He made them.

> "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female."

And that still stands today. There are two sexes: male and female. That sounds obvious to me, but I find a lot of people whom it is no longer obvious. And God made them—they didn't just happen. It was God's order that there should be male and female.

I remember years ago I was walking somewhere in a town and I passed a barbershop. And this is nothing against barbers—but on the glass door it was painted one word: unisex. And I thought to myself: "We must be very close to

the end of the age." Unisex. Now I'm not against a barber cutting men's and women's hair—that's not my point. My point is there are two sexes—and only two sexes. Obviously, in this country at this present time, this is a rather controversial issue.

And let me tell you something else. We're being enticed along a road by a subtle change of language. I don't know whether you realize how much is being, as it were, pressed on us, by the language we are given. For instance, talk about abortion. No longer is it called killing an unborn baby. It's not even called aborting a fetus. After all, a fetus and a baby are not the same thing. I mean, you don't kill babies, but you can abort fetuses. But now it's called "terminating a pregnancy." What a nice, kind phrase. Terminating a pregnancy. Just blotting out a little life that was created in the likeness of God. We have to beware of the language that we use.

And I find another subtle change, which is, people no longer talk about sex. They talk about gender. Gender equality. My dear friends, sex is physiological, gender is grammatical. I'm not a gender, I'm a sex. I'm a male sex. I've been male all my life and I don't think I'll ever change! I want you to see how subtle it is. We're not told just take the Bible and throw it out. But we're told edit the Bible. Change the language a little bit. Move this and move that and adjust here and adjust there. And by the time you've done all the adjusting, you're believing something directly contrary to the Bible. But you don't realize it.

So Jesus said in the beginning God made them male and female. And He went on to say:

> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. So then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

So Jesus said, in effect, "When God started the human race, He laid the basis for human relationships and family order and that has never changed." It's still the way God ordained it. And if you go contrary to that, you're going contrary to the Word of God.

Radio Program

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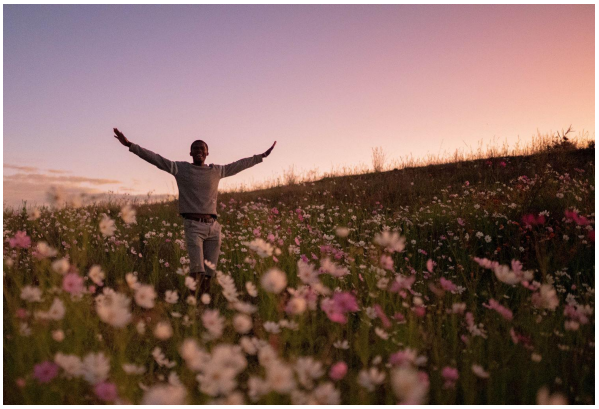

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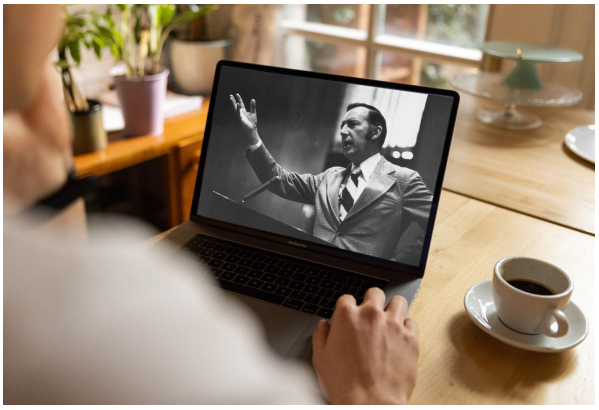

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