

The King's Highway

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THE HEART AND THE SCRIPTURES

By George F. Pentecost in "Prairie Overcomer"

It is said of Ezra, one of the most famous Bible students of any age, that he "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it" (Ezra 7:10). Mark the words: he prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord. This certainly is what every Christian ought to do. Nay, more; if we study the Law of the Lord, intelligently and spiritually, we must do it with a prepared heart.

The Law of the Lord is the entire revelation which God has given us of Himself, and of His purpose of grace concerning us; or to state it in another way, it is the revelation of His will concerning us in our relation to Him, and in our relations to our fellow men, whether they be Christians or unbelievers. This revelation of His will also includes the statement of our position in relation to the world, to time, and to eternity; the whole life is covered.

There are two or three important conditions to be observed if we would come to know fully the meaning and power of God's Word.

1. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Ps. 25:14). Do you ask me, What is it to fear the Lord? Well, I am at a loss to know what to say. I do not know how to tell you what it is to fear the Lord. "He who does not know the meaning of this verse," says Spurgeon, "will never learn it from a commentary"; certainly he will not from us. But begin a Bible reading right here; take your concordance and look up the word "fear" as applied and used in this sense to an attitude of heart toward the Lord; and then know, examine, and see if you fear the Lord. If so, His secret will not be kept long from you. It will whisper itself into your heart out of every page of His Word.

2. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

Here then are two or three conditions: consecration, nonconformity to the world, and the renewing of the mind. Be sure that the Christian who allows himself to be absorbed with this world, retains its fellowship, and gives it his love, has barred his heart to the joyful understanding of the Word of God. If we want to understand God's purpose of grace as revealed through His Word, and be sanctified by it, and lifted up into communion with Him through it, we must break fellowship with this world. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world"; therefore "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15-16).

Many Christians, young and old, are saying, "I do not understand the Bible," and "I do not enjoy reading it."

In most cases the reasons are very apparent, and among them this one: They will not give up the world, but persist in these unholy, and in many cases ungodly associations, which war against the soul and prevent fellowship with God—without which the Bible is a dull, dry, dead book.

But come out from the world and be separate, and God will receive you, and reveal Himself and wonderful things out of His law to you. Why is it that so many Christians make their choice with the world, only to perish with hunger on miserable husks that the swine do feed upon; when, if they would only live at home with their Father, they would have kisses, and robes, and rings, and shoes, and fatted calves, and such music and dancing as the world never dreamed of and cannot give?

"Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (Ps. 81:13-16).

3. Finally, when God has wanted to fill a soul with Himself, He has, in a noticeable way, separated him in body, as well as in heart, from the world. A monastic life is not according to the letter or genius of the Scripture; but God does often take His children apart to instruct them. Abraham, the friend of God, must have been much alone with God; Moses was forty years in the wilderness mostly alone with God, and forty days entirely alone with Him on the mount; Elijah was also carried away for a similar length of time; John the Baptist was a wilderness man; Jesus had His days of separation, and He would often take His disciples apart from the crowd, and instruct them and commune with them. Paul was a long time down in Arabia, where he seems to have had special instruction directly from the mouth of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 1:17).

John was on lonely Patmos when the "revelation" came. Some of the early fathers separated themselves to study the Word of God. Luther in the old Wartburg, Bunyan in Bedford jail, Wesley in his secluded chambers, Madame Guyon and Fenelon in prison learned their deepest lessons in the truth.

Alone with God! Alone with God! How few of us know what it is to go apart for awhile and be with God and His Word; and yet, if we would know the Scripture and have clear insight into it, we must have our seasons of retirement in order to be alone with God.

May the Word of God dwell in you richly!! May the Spirit of truth prepare your heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and go with you into the holiest of all, into the temple of truth, and light up the otherwise dark dwelling place of God, and give you a heart to do it, and to teach the Word to others!