

“Useful For...” - The Importance Of The Bible In Discipleship

The Situation:

- An estimated 8 out of 10 American youth from evangelical Christian homes walk away from their faith by age 23 (Brown 2006).

Findings from *Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church*

- Only one in three Canadian young adults who attended church weekly as a child still do so today.
- Of the young adults who no longer attend church, half have also stopped identifying themselves with the Christian tradition in which they were raised.

This, despite the fact that we have more high-energy, fun activities and a greater emphasis on relationships than ever before in youth ministry.

What does the Bible say about making disciples?

Matt. 28:18-20 - Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

2 Tim. 2:2 - And *the things* you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. [Note: *the things* = the gospel (v.11) and the pattern of sound teaching (v. 13)]

Eph. 4:14-15 – ...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ

Dr. Voddie Baucham (from *Expository Apologetics 101*) – “There is a piece to discipleship we’ve neglected. It’s called indoctrination...[Instead] we’re producing passionate people with empty heads who love the Jesus they don’t know very well, and who are driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine.”

Def’n – Indoctrination - “to instruct especially in fundamentals” (root word is doctrine)

What does God say about the importance of His Word In Making Disciples?

2 Tim. 3:14-16 - But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are *able to make you wise for salvation* through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and *is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Implications:

- “Wise for salvation” – Are we clearly, consistently, and repeatedly preaching the gospel?
- “Useful for...” – Are we going beyond teaching, to rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness?

If being a disciple is being like Jesus, how did Jesus use the Bible?

- Jesus quoted from the Old Testament 78 times; he quoted from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah and Malachi
- He believed the Bible was true (John 17:17 - ...your word is truth)
- He said, “Scripture cannot be broken.” (John 10:35)
- He stated that God’s Word will not pass away and those who “do and teach” them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4:17-19)

- He accepted miracles as historical facts (ie. Jonah in the belly of the great fish – Matt. 12:38; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah – Luke 17:29)
- He affirmed the authorship of Moses/Torah (Mark 12:26), David/Psalms (Matt. 22:43), Daniel (Matt. 24:15), Isaiah (Matt. 15:7),
- He confirmed counter-cultural teachings of Scripture, including:
 - that God made Adam and Eve at the beginning of creation (Mark 10:6)
 - that there is a real place called hell (Matt. 5:22) where people will suffer eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46)
 - gender binary and heterosexual marriage (Matt. 19:4-6)
- Furthermore, he used Scripture to teach his disciples (Luke 24:27, 44-47)

Kevin DeYoung (in *Taking God At His Word*): *“Jesus believed in the inspiration of Scripture – all of it. He accepted the chronology, the miracles, and the authorial ascriptions as giving the straightforward facts of history. He believed in keeping the spirit of the law without ever minimizing the letter of the law. He affirmed the human authorship of Scripture while at the same time bearing witness to the ultimate divine authorship of the Scriptures. He treated the Bible as a necessary word. It was never acceptable in his mind to contradict Scripture or stand above Scripture.”*

Suggestions:

- 1) Preach the gospel from Scripture...clearly, consistently, and repeatedly (including a call to repentance!).
- 2) Teach the foundational doctrines (From your statement of faith): the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture, the trinity, the deity of Christ, salvation by faith alone, the ordinances of baptism and communion, as well as the future return of Christ and the consummation of the kingdom.
- 3) Provide good answers to questions they have and objections they’ll face about the Bible (ie. It was written before writing was even invented, it is full of mistakes, science/archaeology/etc. has disproved the Bible, etc.).
- 4) Don’t just tell them what the Bible says, teach them how to study the Bible for themselves.
 - a. **Good Bible Study Method (ie. Inductive: Observation, Interpretation, Application)**
Duffy Robbins (in *Building A Youth Ministry That Builds Disciples*) - “It’s so important that we equip our students with the basic skills of *inductive* Bible study – called inductive because its an approach that starts *in* the text and *invites* the text to stimulate our thinking.”
 - b. **Good Hermeneutics (Bible Interpretation Principles)**
 - i. The Holy Spirit helps you interpret Scripture.
 - ii. The Bible is a complete book.
 - iii. Understand the context.
 - iv. Study ALL the Scripture on one topic.
 - v. Always interpret unclear passages in the light of clear passages.
 - vi. Let the Bible interpret the Bible.
 - vii. Understand the difference between descriptive and prescriptive statements.
 - viii. Interpret the Bible as literally as possible, when it is clear that the meaning is not symbolic or allegorical.

Resources:

- www.biblearchaeology.org – The Associates for Biblical Research: a group of scholars and archaeologists dedicated to demonstrating the historical reliability of God’s Word
- www.gotquestions.org – A good source to find answers to over 480000 questions...all biblically based!
- www.creation.com – A good resource for scientific information that doesn’t make it into the mainstream media due to their bias
- www.bryanwindle.com – The first three lessons from my Word Up series (Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Authority) are available for download here...both ppt presentations and lessons