

WHAT ARE WE CLINGING TO?

2 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:9

People approach the Bible from different perspectives:

- another book**–*fiction*?–little evidence to support conclusions.
- collection of stories**–teaches *spiritual* truth, but not factual, historical, scientific truth.
- may* contain **errors of fact**; *spiritual* truth valid guide for living
- completely **trustworthy**–we believe everything it says
 - if not, it can't be trusted at all!

First point of **doctrinal statement**: *We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the **final authority for faith and life**, **inerrant** in the original writings, **infallible**, and **God-breathed**.*

We believe the Bible is “*God-breathed*,” it is totally trustworthy; ***without error of any kind.***

GOD HAS SPOKEN! Issue for us: ***What does God say?***

We claim the Bible is our final authority! Is it really?

Few go as far as one person who told me: “*I don't care what the Bible says, I know what I've experienced!!!*”

But, I *DO* hear people say: “***You can't live that way!***”

Too often our experience, or what our society thinks, is more significant in our thinking ***than what God says!***

We've been considering **prerequisites for godly leaders**

–and for *God's people*–as Paul presents them in **1 Timothy 3**.

We want to consider a **3rd area Paul presents in Titus**.

Crete: Lots of religion; little connection to daily living

Attitude spills over and infects church.

Paul left Titus to straighten out what's still crooked.

To appoint *blameless* leaders

-leaders we can model our life after.

Not perfect but blameless--no basis for accusation

* *Blameless with respect to home and family life* 1:6

* *Blameless with respect to personal character* 1:7-8

3rd area: Blameless in their use of God's Word 1:9

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

**GODLY LEADERS [and God's people] *MUST BE*
ABOVE REPROACH IN THEIR USE OF GOD'S WORD**

Pagan society is impacting the church.

People *claim* to know God, but lives convey different message.

–not concerned about God, or what He says.

–want salvation, but not transformed lives

Solution: exemplary leaders

who ***"march to beat of a different drummer"***

who model what God's people *ought* to look like!

Modern surveys: church imitates pattern of secular society.

Gallup: *"Never have more people been interested in religion.*

Never has it made so little difference!"

Difference in church and world: church runs **5 years behind**.

NOT: church follows God's standard; rejects world's standards.

We're *retarded*! We eventually follow same standards;

just 5 years late! When will we learn it's O.K. to be on time?

If God says it's wrong, it's just as wrong 5 years from now!!

The issue: ***What does GOD say? NOT, do I like what God says!!***

[God wants...] **PEOPLE WHO TAKE HOLD OF HIS WORD
& WON'T LET GO!**

Not *just* in doctrine, but also in daily living—in *our lifestyle*
KEEP A STRONG GRIP ON GOD'S WORD 1:9

*NLT: "He must have a strong and steadfast belief
 in the trustworthy message he was taught;
 then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching
 and show those who oppose it where they are wrong."*

2 APPROPRIATE ATTITUDES TOWARD GOD'S WORD:

(1) Grab hold of the Word and refuse to let go of it.

Tozer: "While truth is unchanging, the minds of men are porous vessels out of which truth can leak, and into which error may seep to dilute the truth they contain. When men deal with things earthly and temporal, they demand the truth; only in religious thought is faithfulness to truth looked upon as a fault! We need a return to gentle dogmatism that smiles while it stands stubborn and firm on the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever!"

Grab hold of God's Word—cling to it!—refuse to let go!

—whatever the pagan world around us may think!

[2nd attitude Paul wants us all to adopt—especially leaders:]

(2) *Recognize that God's Word is faithful;
 it is worthy of confidence.*

God's people should place our confidence in God's Word

We believe God's Word is trustworthy because *God cannot lie!*

We should be willing to stake our life on it! (& our lifestyle!)

God's Word is our final authority!

People don't come here to hear my point of view!

People come here to hear **GOD'S** voice.

If our idea doesn't agree with God's Word, **scrap OUR view!**
 Don't try to make God agree with US!
 Don't make OUR preferences equal to God's Word!
 Don't try to make God preach OUR sermons for us!
**GODLY PEOPLE (leaders) HAVE A PROPER ATTITUDE
 TOWARD GOD'S WORD—TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN IT!**

They cling to it; they recognize that it's trustworthy.

"Faithful word" applied to gospel they received.

NT not written yet. How do they receive message?

Heb. 2:3-4: Christ taught it first

Then **disciples** gave testimony to what they'd seen

God confirmed message by **miraculous evidences**

=> Evidence affirms message is "trustworthy"

If they trust message *they* have, how much more can we?

Now God has *"breathed out"* His Word, recording it *without error*, so we can know what **GOD HAS SAID!**

A proper attitude towards God's Word

leads to proper activity with God's Word.

Proper activity is revealed in **THREE ACTIONS:**

1. HOLD FAST TO GOD'S WORD—Keep a firm grip on it!

"Cling to it!" "Hang on to it!"

Rom. 1:18: *"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth i) by their wickedness."*

People **"hold down"** truth—opposite of clinging to it.

People want to **stop** God's purposes.

Matt. 6:24: Jesus says: *We can't serve two masters. You will hate one and love the other. You will "stick to"*

*or “hold on to” one and look down on the other.
God's Word ought to control our life.*

Goes beyond *just* believing it's true.

It must be the **center** of our life and ministry.

Jim Dobson: “The Lord has chosen to place this ministry in the path of a cultural revolution that has shaken the foundations of the family.... Not only are we called to support the institution of marriage and parenthood, we're also asked to confront the evils of our day, including campaigns to abort millions of babies, promote teen sexual promiscuity, legalize homosexual “marriages,” interfere with parental rights, kill the sick and the elderly, outlaw religious expression in public life, and others.”

*If we're going to speak to what GOD says about such issues, we WILL conflict with culture. So, what's our **final** authority?*

What controls what we're going to say?

*Our society? Popular Christian opinion? **God's Word?***

When we trust God's Word, we submit ourselves to it!

We don't move away from it, no matter what winds blow!

***God's people ought to put total confidence
in God's Word and cling tightly to it!***

We should take a firm hold on God's Word;

God's Word should get a firm hold on us!

[Once we take hold of God's Word, we'll do two things with it:

Encourage people and refute false teaching.]

McGee: [to do those two things:] “Men who hold office in a church should be Bible-trained men. During WW II we had what was called “ninety-day wonders.” The army needed more officers and so they put them through a short course in a hurry, and they came

up with some rather peculiar 2nd lieutenants in those days.” ... [Paul seeks leaders who are well-trained] “to stand on the Word of God and to give it out.” [2 main ways we give it out:]

2. USE GOD’S WORD TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WITH SOLID TEACHING

“Encourage” => We come alongside of others
to give the right kind of help at the right time.

*defense attorney *teacher *encourager for discouraged

*comforter to people who are suffering

*coach—gives swift kick when you need it!

Applied to: **Holy Spirit Christ Barnabas**

WE should encourage those to whom WE minister.

To encourage effectively we must cling to God's Word firmly!

God’s Word motivates people to be all God wants us to be.

God's Word in hand, we encourage people with *healthy teaching* **Heb. 10:24**: “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.”

Healthy teaching—based on God’s Word— **encourages us to be all God wants us to be!**

3. USE GOD’S WORD TO REFUTE PEOPLE WITH SOLID TEACHING

(LB: “Show those who disagree where they’re wrong”) =>

Lit., **“Cause them to see the light clearly”**

Paul explains **why this role is needed**: no lack of false teachers who preach a different message! **1:10-11**

“For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers ... ¹¹They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach.”

Calvin: “A pastor needs **two voices**, one for gathering the sheep [= encouraging] and the other for driving away wolves and thieves [= refuting]. Scripture supplies him with the means for doing both; he who has been rightly instructed in it will be **able both to rule** those who are teachable and **to refute** the enemies of the truth.”

Bryan Chappell: We must refute those who oppose sound doctrine because, without adequate expression of the truth of the gospel, families come apart, young people are led astray, compulsions control, despair grips.... Even those trained to deal with spiritual diseases can fail to anticipate the nature and degree of ruin that concerns Paul. At a gathering of young pastors, the statement that got most sympathetic “Amens” was the honest confession: “I was unprepared for, and have grown depressed with, the number, degree and repetition of messy sins in people’s lives.”

Only God’s Word can clean up the mess!

If leaders are going to help people who’ve gone astray,
we must cling to the trustworthy Word of God; use ***it***
to encourage people to be all God wants us to be
to refute those who resist the truth.

We can’t change another’s mind

—but we can help them see what’s at stake.

We present what God’s Word says. Rest is up to *Him*.

We present evidence clearly, **on basis of God’s Word**.

We model truth **by teaching and by example** so those who want to argue won’t have an excuse to deny the truth.

We help people recognize nature of decision they’re making.

We present truth; people make their own decision.

That's between them and God.

We can't make people change!

Only those who know God's Word, who cling to it,
can use it to correct those clinging to other teachings!

NOT my opinion

God's Word helps people "see the light."

**Healthy teaching causes people who oppose
truth to see clearly what the issues are!**

GOD'S WORD IS WORTHY OF OUR TRUST!

But, what are we doing with it? Is it OUR final authority?

When we give advice, what's the basis of our counsel?

Do WE give 2nd place to OUR opinions

in order to take hold firmly of God's Word?

Basis of godly counsel isn't *my* opinion—it's *God's Word*.

God has spoken! We help people discover what *He* says.

3 requirements for ALL godly people (esp. leaders):

Take a firm hold on God's Word; let it hold us!

Encourage one another with healthy instruction

Help each other understand truth

How about us?

Are WE clinging to God's Word as our final authority?

Are WE encouraging others on the basis of His Word?

Are WE using GOD'S WORD as our foundation

when we deal with people who disagree with us?

What's our FINAL authority? Who has *last* word in our life?

Our society? Our friends? Other Christians?

Or, is real authority in our life: **GOD HAS SPOKEN!**

I'll do whatever HE says!

What does God want you to work on to give His Word it's proper place in your life?

How well do we know God's Word?

How often do we read it?

How much time do we spend in God's Word each day?

We can't use it if we don't know it!

We can't know it if we don't spend time in it!

Can you use it to show others why you believe what you believe about God, about eternal life, about godly living?

The Message: “. . . and have a good grip on the Message, knowing how to use the truth

to either spur people on in knowledge

or stop them in their tracks if they oppose it.

GOD HAS SPOKEN!

His Word is what makes His people different.

His Word is truth! It's trustworthy!

It's our FINAL authority!

Let's grab hold of His Word; cling to it; no matter what others think!

Don't put *human* opinion on the same plane—even *mine*!

GOD HAS SPOKEN!

Let's cling to HIS WORD alone!