

Don't Dissect

#0817

Study given by W.D. Frazee—July 25, 1980

Suppose you had a choice as to whether you could be just like Jesus or just like the Devil. I don't need to ask you which one you would choose. I know which one you would choose. But did you know that is the only choice you have? Too many people are going through life sure that they don't want to be like the Devil, but afraid that they never can be like Jesus. In other words, they are in an intermediate experience. But we are in the harvest time. In the harvest time every plant goes to seed. And the seed that we reap is like the seed that we sow.

So which do you want? To be like Jesus or like Satan? Which do you really want? And remember, the only choice you have is to decide which way you are going. You cannot of yourself be like Jesus, but He will make you like Him if you will let Him. You may not make yourself entirely like the Devil, but the Devil will see to it if you will give him half a chance. You can choose which master you will serve. Jesus guarantees to accept you with all your weaknesses, all your faults and failures. He will accept you just as if you had never sinned. And He guarantees not only to forgive you, but also to transform you and finish what He has begun.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” 1 John 3:2.

Our text is in Matthew. These are the words of Jesus as He met the tempter in the wilderness after His baptism. He met Satan by quoting Scripture. That is what He wants us to do.

“But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” Matthew 4:4.

Does man live by bread? Yes. Does this text teach that? Yes. It says man shall not live by bread alone, but man does live by bread. All of us here are evidence of that. We have all eaten bread, most of us for decades. But man shall not live by bread alone because his life has more than one dimension. We don't just want physical existence. A dog or a cat can handle that. But you and I are called to be like Jesus. And in order that this may be so, we must live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. We live by the Word of God.

I wonder what that means? It means to read it. It means to believe it. It means to accept it. It means to obey it. It means to claim and trust it, to experience it.

Notice that Jesus doesn't say that man lives by the Word of God. There is a little word in front. *Every* word. I wonder how many words there are in the Bible? Wouldn't it be nice if someone would pick out all the words of God in the Bible and publish them? Then we would know which one to live by. There are some people who have set themselves to that test. But I think that before we get through with this study we will see that isn't the way God wants us to do it.

“For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable” 2 Timothy 3:16.

Unless the Bible not merely contains the Word of God but is the Word of God, then I and you and any other reader must be wise enough to see which one is the Word of God and which one isn't.

There are many people who have set themselves to that task. They think that is their job to find out which is the Word of God and which is the word of man. I am so glad that God has given us the Bible as He wants us to have it, and He expects us to listen to Him speaking from the opening verse of Genesis to the closing benediction of Revelation, all the way through.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” *Ibid*.

What I want to study with you tonight revolves around three words—dissect, select, and reject. Don't do any of them with reference to God's Word, friends. There is a place for dissection, but not dealing with the Bible. There is a place for selecting. You go to the super market and select this article or that article, this orange or that apple. But we must not come to the Word of God with that attitude. Our job is not to select and say, I will take this but not that. And certainly we must not reject the Word of God. We must not reject any of the Words of God. Don't dissect the Word, don't select what you will take, and don't reject any of it.

What does dissect mean? It means to cut up, to tear apart. There is a place for dissection. In the medical college they dissect the human body. They dissect out various systems and look at various organs. That is helpful for learning purposes. But I would hate to have anyone start dissecting my body. If someone dissected me very much I would be dead. And the person who starts out to dissect the Word of God ends up with a dead Word as far as he is concerned. The Word is just as living as it always was, but our acceptance of the Word is vital to our receiving the life of God.

I was interested to notice that God, in the Bible, has given us more than one warning on this.

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandment of the LORD your God which I command you” Deuteronomy 4:2.

Don't add and don't subtract. God has said it the way He wants it. And He wants you and me to leave it alone as far as changing it is concerned. So He warns us.

“What thing so ever I command you, observe to do it:
thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it”
Deuteronomy 12:32.

Take any figure you want, whether it is five or a thousand or a million. If you don't add to it and don't subtract from it, what is it? It is just like it was written. That's the way God wants our attitude toward His Word to be. Don't add anything to it, and don't subtract.

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this book”
Revelation 22:18-19.

Moses, the first writer, and John, the last writer, echo and reecho this solemn warning, don't add and don't subtract. Now if you don't add and don't subtract, what do you do? You leave it alone. Let it say what it says. And this is what God wants us to learn.

Now in the middle of the Bible is another warning.

“Every Word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” Proverbs 30:5- 6.

I was quite impressed with this statement:

“No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say or ought to have said”
Selected Messages, Book 1, page 16.

Some people are trying to do that, but the Bible says they will end up being found a liar. They are sure to miss it. No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say.

Somebody says, Brother Frazee, are you sure that it is all just exactly as Moses wrote it, or just exactly the way Jeremiah had it written? Notice:

“Some look to us gravely and say, 'Don't you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?' This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble

over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God. ... All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth. ...

“When men, in their finite judgment, find it necessary to go into an examination of scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us. ...

“I take the Bible just as it is as the Inspired Word. ...

“Men should let God take care of His own Book” *Ibid*, pages 16,17.

Of course, it is supposed to be childish to take that attitude. I will admit that it is child-like, and I want that child-like faith. What do you say? In the end everybody who takes that stand will be vindicated. And in the end all who take other attitudes will be exposed and found to be liars before God.

“Every Word of God is pure” *Ibid*.

The margin says purify. God has already done the purifying that is necessary in the prophetic revelation. God has already safeguarded the writing of His Word as well as giving the prophet the views that caused him to write. God has done His own refining. So don't you try it. God has not given you and me that job.

“Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” *Ibid*.

“When a man feels so very wise that he dares to dissect God's Word, his wisdom is, with God, counted foolishness” *Ibid.*, page 42.

No matter how high sounding the terms are in which this criticism is presented, no matter what bales of research are brought together, let's not miss the basic fact.

Do you know why people get into this?

“Some sit in judgment on the Scriptures, declaring that this or that passage is not inspired, because it does not strike their minds favorably. They cannot harmonize it with their ideas of philosophy and science, `falsely so called' 1 Timothy 6:20” *Ibid*.

Some look at the rocks and fossils and say Moses couldn't have it right because they look at what science shows us. Others go into carbon dating and other methods. But the Bible is not to be tested by men's ideas of science. Men's

investigation and research is to be brought to the standard, and the standard is not human research. The standard is the Word of God.

That attitude is called childish, but it is child-like. It is faith. And if you have it, then you can live by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The Bible has made some definite predictions about the time in which we live. It foretells a special preaching of the everlasting gospel message in this last generation. John saw it in prophetic vision (Revelation 14:6-12). And this threefold message is now reaching out to the millions of earth's inhabitants. Thank the Lord for every medium that is being used—Radio, TV, printing press, and most important the witness of everyone who has heard the message.

Among the specifications that God has given of this last day message is:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17.

The remnant church is one which the Devil has a special fight with. And there are things he especially doesn't like about them. They keep the commandments of God. How many of them? All. Every Word of God is pure. Don't add and don't subtract. If not even a Word of God is to be subtracted, certainly it would be a shame to think of changing or leaving out a whole commandment.

So the remnant church is characterized by an attitude of appreciation concerning the unchanging ability of God's law. And they keep it through faith in Jesus (Revelation 14:12). But this remnant church who keeps all ten of God's commandments has something. It is the testimony of Jesus. Jesus speaks to that church. If every word is pure and I want to live by that Word, I want to find the testimony of Jesus that the remnant church will have. Revelation 19:10 tells us how He testifies. The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. The Spirit of prophecy is the voice of Jesus speaking to His church.

Someone says, Well, you are not supposed to add to the Bible.

You are not supposed to subtract either. And people who reject the idea of the Spirit of Prophecy must subtract every verse in the Bible that promises the gift of prophecy in the remnant church. I need the whole Bible. And when I read *The Desire of Ages*, *Ministry of Healing*, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, and all these other inspired volumes, I am in harmony with this wonderful fact that every word of God is pure, and that includes the word in Revelation 12:17 that the remnant of God will have the testimony of Jesus. If Jesus has spoken, and is speaking through this gift, I want to listen. And I am living by His Word as I do that.

The same attitude of trying to dissect the Bible is manifested also in trying to dissect the Spirit of Prophecy. The purpose of trying to dissect the Bible is deciding which word I am going to try to listen to and which word I am not going to listen to. And the purpose of trying to dissect the *Testimonies* is the same thing. I don't like

this one so I don't think that is inspired, but this I love. I think it is probably inspired. Some of these beautiful devotional passages, lovely language, I will listen to. But when it comes to *Counsels on Diet and Foods* or *Fundamentals of Christian Education* or *Counsels to Teachers* or *Child Guidance*, I am not so sure about that.

I am dissecting. After I get through dissecting I select, and I end up doing what? Rejecting. I end up rejecting one thing, two things, a half a dozen things, and eventually I will end up rejecting the whole business. I want to read a warning on this.

“And now, brethren, I entreat you not to interpose between me and the people, and turn away the light which God would have come to them. Do not by your criticism take out all the force, all the point and power, from the *Testimonies*. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. If the *Testimonies* speak not according to the word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united”
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, page 691.

The *Testimonies* are not to be brought into the anatomy lab for dissection. Don't do it, brethren. And don't follow someone else's lead and watch what he shows you. If you do you take out all the force and power from the *Testimonies*.

This doesn't mean you are to take a statement in the Spirit of Prophecy, and unless you can point to what the Bible says that you think is in harmony with it, you can reject it. Nothing of the kind. It is saying in plain English that you have got to make up your mind whether this gift is from Jesus or from the Devil. You have got to make up your mind whether these visions came from heaven or from hell. You have got to make up your mind whether you accept this as the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of prophecy, or whether you think it is a fake, a counterfeit, a vicious, devilish substitute. It is one or the other.

“For Christ's sake do not confuse the minds of the people with human sophistry and skepticism, and make of none effect the work that the Lord would do” *Ibid*.

We are living in an hour when this warning is very relevant and timely. I appeal not only to you who are sitting in this chapel tonight, I appeal to all who hear this message. Do not confuse the minds of the people. Do not allow your mind to be confused. Don't listen to criticisms. Don't come in and watch the dissection. Don't watch as the learned man tell you that this has to be just a human opinion, but this over here is from God. God has warned us off that ground. He says, don't take that job upon yourself, and don't let someone else give it to you. Leave the Bible with God, and leave the Spirit of Prophecy with Jesus who gave it. Accept the Bible as a whole or turn from it. Accept the Spirit of Prophecy as a whole, or reject it. But don't dissect it. It stands or falls on its claims. It is the work of God, the testimony of Jesus, or it is a base counterfeit. Do not dissect.

“And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” Mark 7:9.

Jesus was talking to religious leaders back in His time. They considered their human opinions worth more than the plain statement of God, yet they claimed to reverence the Word of God. So today, Judas betrays the Master with a kiss, and in the name of respect and admiration of the work of the prophet, her writings are dissected and finally will be rejected by those who go that road.

What is the problem?

“Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” *Ibid.*

People want their own way. They want to follow their own wisdom. We see the great contrast between human wisdom and divine revelation:

“The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?” Jeremiah 8:9.

God calls them wise men. They think they are wise, but God exposes them. He asks what wisdom is in them. What is the matter with them? They have rejected the Word of the Lord. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God and with those who believe God.

I am thankful for the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. I am not anxious to arrange an armistice with the enemy. I am not anxious to have a confab over whether some of his suggestions might not be considered; see if we can't broaden our horizon, broaden our views on inspiration. God help us to hold to the landmarks, to stand firm for the foundation truths.

“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” *Ibid.*

Every word of God is pure. Add not unto His words. Don't add. Don't take away. Just take it like it is.

God has not only given us the Bible as His word. He has given us the book of human experience. I wonder how much of that is from the Lord? It is all from the Lord to teach us, if we are willing to be taught. If we will come to the study of the book of experience with the same modest, humble, trustful, child-like attitude we come to the Bible, God has many things to teach us.

What is our problem? It is if I have a great need of money, and I am praying about it. I get an envelope and open it, and there is a check. I think that is a providence. But if instead I get a bill I had forgotten about, that is a problem.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” Romans 8:28.

Just as God wants me to get into the habit of accepting everything in the Bible without doubt, He wants me to accept every experience in life as arranged or permitted by a loving Father.

Don't misunderstand me. I don't mean that God causes everything that happens. He allows it as far as His children are concerned.

When Joseph was put into prison after his experience of ten years as a slave in Potiphar's house, he recognized that it was God's providence that put him there. He accepted God's guidance in his life. He accepted the inspiration of God as God was writing for Joseph and with Joseph the book of experience.

We can thank God for certain outstanding things in our lives and say, God met me here. He did this. Let us also cultivate the habit of accepting every experience as a part of His plan in teaching us His will and developing our characters.

It is too bad when life becomes a humdrum, and we miss the blessing of walking with God. Jesus spent most of His life in a carpenter shop doing what many people would think is monotonous work. But to Jesus it was a day by day walk with His Father in heaven as well as with His earthly father.

So you and I can accept the guidance of God in our individual lives. We can accept the providence of God in our human experience. And as we read the Bible, we are not to try to dissect, so in our human experience. While we rejoice at certain things that we can see is the providence of God, let us rejoice even more in the fact that God is working all things together for our good.

This was the experience that Jesus learned on the hillsides of Nazareth, in the carpenter shop, and in the home. As He studied the Word of God, and committed His life to His Father above, He made no plans for Himself, but day by day accepted the Father's plans. This was the faith that took Him through the experience of Gethsemane and the midnight darkness of Calvary. When all hope was gone, this is what enabled Him to cling by faith to His Father's hand and say, Father, into Thy hand I commit My spirit, My life. This is what enabled Him to triumph in the greatest battle in eternity.

This is what will enable the remnant to go through the time of Jacob's trouble, and vindicate the character of God and bring glory to the name of our Heavenly Father. Oh, I want this lesson of child-like faith, don't you? And you and I are to depend upon God.

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