***The HICEE Preaching Technique

Colossians 1:15-20

COL-140***

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Our subject is "Hymn in Honor of Christ, number 30 in Colossians 1:15-20.

This past week, a man driving in the Mideast was listening to a tape on our recent studies on the doctrine of the church. He was so moved by the wondrous grace and victory relationship that he has to the Lord Jesus Christ in the body of Christ, the church, that he pulled over to the side of the road to phone me, and to thank me for the instruction of God's Word which he had just received. The man was absolutely euphoric over what he realized he possessed in Christ as a church-age believer, which no other believers in any other previous age had ever come near in any way whatsoever to possess in their experience with God: the power of godly living; the power of divine good service; and, the power to be a prince, and not a pig in the human race.

This man's call was, on the one hand, a word of great importance and encouragement to me in an era when Christian indifference is so widespread toward Bible doctrine teaching, and toward the role of the local church through the pastor-teacher focusing on expository preaching. The discouragements, I can assure you, abound, inside and outside of the circle of believers. So, it is nice to hear from someone who recognizes that here is a distinct, unique contribution because it is the Word of God, simply explained to the people of God.

His call, however, was also a sense of sadness to me as I thought of the lackadaisical latitude of Christians who lived nearby the Berean Church ministry, but who can hardly get out to a church service on Sunday morning, let alone to make it two in a row for Sunday evening. It is always astounding to me how attendance at the local church service in a church like this is no big deal to people. They think it of no eternal consequences – that nothing of great significance is at stake for them. How wrong they are! So, for any flimsy reason, people will stay home, and not attend the church services. Yet, those same people, if they had some deadly disease, would be parked on a doctor's door before he could get there. They don't understand that the deadly disease of the sin nature is far more serious than any disease of the body.

Therefore, Christians who finally catch onto this, they're the ones who finally get onto the vision and have the capacity to move up to super-grace living. The rest are always going to be trivialized Christians because they don't understand that it's the Word and the Word and the Word.

How are we to live in an evil age as members of the royal family of God? We expect unbelievers to be indifferent to the Word of God. It's appalling when Christians are like that. And do you think you're really going to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and feel perfectly comfortable and commended for all the times you didn't take the trouble to get here for instruction in the Word of God? If the kind of consistent delivery of the mind of God put out by Berean Church were for some reason suddenly terminated, and it could be, I can't help wondering whether those indifferent, lackadaisical on-again / off-again, sloppy, absent Christians from the church services would blame themselves for the fact that the ministry is gone.

Oh, the operation could still be there, but suddenly they'd wake up. The feeding of the Word of God is no longer there. The grasp of the insights of the deep things of the Spirit of God are no longer coming across to us. And they wander around and find that it's not available. It's not out there. You can count them on one hand in the metroplex area. But that's exactly what Romans 1:21-22 caution us about: "For even though they (people at the dawn of human history) knew God, they did not honor Him as God; think Him important; or, give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools." They knew all kinds of reasons why they should not attend the instruction in the Word of God. And God said, "You became a fool. You thought you were so wise. You thought your judgments so were so right – why you should not wrestle yourself out on a Sunday evening.

Now God says, "I'm taking it away from you. It's gone." Romans 1:24-25: "Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie (human viewpoint), and they worshiped and served the creature (temporal things) rather than the Creator Who is blessed forever. Amen." That is why we should never forget the admonition of Hebrews 10:25. We probably should get somebody in our office to make a nice card on this, with these words on it, so that everybody can plaster it on your refrigerator door. So, every time you walk by, you get this drummed into your mentality, and you get the seriousness that God has spoken on this subject. Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking our own assembling together (gathering in the church services) as is the habit of some of you, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching (the day drawing near – the day of the rapture). You're not going to be able to encourage people if you're not here. And you're not going to have the substance with which to encourage them.

**The Shepherd and His Sheep**

We have learned some of the wondrous relationships which Christians of the church age have personally with Jesus Christ, which the Jews under Judaism never had or dared to dream of having. We have seen that Jesus Christ is compared to the great shepherd who cares for His church-age sheep individually. He protects them. He provides each of them with their daily need. Now, that's a great comparison. What an analogy. Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd, and you personally are His sheep. Whatever your problem is: spiritual; financial; physical; or, social, He's there, walking and working and taking care of you, and carrying you through. When people talk about something to carry them through their week, they should remember this analogy: Christ our Shepherd, and we His sheep. He's the one who carries us through.

**The Vine and His Branches**

We've also seen the figure of Jesus as the Vine whose eternal life flows daily through His branches, the church-age believers, as they move through a dead world. Now, that's pretty exciting. Christ, Whose eternal life flows through each of us, the branches in Christ, and we move with that kind of life in a world which is on self-destruct because it is a dead place.

**The Cornerstone and His Building**

We've seen the analogy, the figure of Jesus Christ as a chief cornerstone of his temple, which is made up of church-age saints as living building blocks in this residence of God. No Jew would've ever compared himself to that external temple that he saw there in the center of the camp. If you want to see how that looked, go out the foyer this morning, and take a look at the bulletin board. That's just the way it looked. But that Jew had never said, "I am the temple of God. That would've been blasphemy to him. And yet, today, the intimacy between a Christian and Jesus Christ is such that he himself makes up the temple of the living God.

**The High Priest and His Priests**

We have seen Jesus Christ compared to a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, not of Aaron. And the church-age saints who composed the royal priesthood of God are priest representing themselves before God. It was considered a great honor to be chosen in Judaism to be a priest of God. It is today in some circles, because that means you are the avenue of approach to God. You are the mediator between human beings and God. Well, now, wonder of wonders, there is nobody that you have to go to approach God. You are on direct communication with Him. You are your own priest, and you represent yourself.

**The Head and the Body**

We have seen the comparison where Jesus Christ is ahead of a body, the church, and the Christians are the various members – the parts of that body with special graces provided them to do His work. Now how close can you get? Here, Christ and we believers are united as all the parts of a body are united. Therefore, there's nothing that comes into our experience that He, the Head, does not feel. There is nothing could come into our physical experience such that, up in the head, we're not aware of it.

Now understanding, using, and enjoying these special relationships with the Lord Jesus Christ is entirely dependent on the ministry of expository preaching in the local church by the pastor-teacher. You can blow off these comparisons and these analogies (and the couple or three that we're still going to come to). You can blow them off. You're never going to enter into the experience of enjoying them. You just go to your average church member friend, and your high-powered, mega church operation, and you ask him to give you a little rundown about the intimacy of relationship between Jesus Christ in the age of grace (in the age of the church) and you as an individual believer. Ask him to describe to you the analogies (the figures) that the Bible uses. He'd be lucky to come up with one of them, let alone all these seven, such that God says, "I want to make it clear to you: Judaism is dead. The Jews are out of the picture. They're only in the picture now as part of the church if they believe in Christ. But here is what I have for you that was never given to anybody else before.

The average Christian doesn't know anything about it. Why? Because there's no expository preaching in his church. He's always been taken through a service of topical preaching. The preacher picks a verse or a passage, and say, "I'm going to speak on this subject." I was telling Mrs. Danish this morning, "I don't know whether you could have television programs or radio programs of expository preaching, because expository preaching can't play on people's emotions. It cannot make a big splash, sometimes when you're just explaining some passage of Scripture. But if you take a topic, you can always make a big bang. And you just take a look and see what the big-name preachers on television are doing. They're all topical preachers. They take a subject, and they make a big bang. And the big bucks come in.

Preaching which explains the teaching and the meaning of Scripture from the Hebrew and Greek texts – that's God's way. You can't know it any other way. That is God's way of coming to know the Scriptures. Preaching which does not artificially manipulate the emotions of the believers in order to give them an "Amen, hallelujah," shouting high, but it leaves them without any "epignosis" knowledge – that grasp of God's mind stored in their human spirits to resist the evil appeals of Satan, and of his world society of pigs. When you play on people's emotions, they shout "Amen, hallelujah." It's always distracting when somebody does that in the service, and you want to turn to him and say, "Knock it off. You do your "amening" and "hallelujah" as you drive home after the service. Just make notes, and say, "I want to say so many 'hallelujahs' and so many 'amens' on my way home, because I was so impressed with some truth.

However, some preachers don't have a service if somebody isn't jumpin' and jivin'. Jack Smith sent me a tape recently. What a marvel it was as an example of a man who has gone from zilch zero nothing as a Kentucky prison guard, who picks up a tape on doctrine from Berean Church, and happens to hit the principle of confession of known sins to stay in fellowship, and he goes off like a rocket. He finally understands what 50 years of religious life has been an empty shell for him, and he never could figure it out. And then he became a real student of the Word of God.

So, he is preaching this little country church. I knew it was country because there was a baby who was appointed to cry throughout the whole service. And this baby cried all the time. And several times he said, "Take her to the nursery," but they didn't. And there was somebody, unfortunately, sitting close, who kept saying, "Amen. Amen." And about the time Jack would make a brilliant point. And what a student of the Word of God he has become. What a sermon he can preach. It is astounding. He got up and gave them an expository sermon that was first-class, and it touched all the critical important points. And sometimes the guy in the "Amen" corner was silent. And it was about the time when Jack Smith was entering some cathedral-like depth of doctrine, and I knew that this boy had never heard it, and he didn't know how to respond, and he didn't know how to react. Suddenly, he was in the presence of the majesty of the Word of God. And his little, put-on emotionalism was no longer suitable. He couldn't crank it up.

Doctrinal preaching is not without emotion. It will stir the deepest Holy Spirit emotions in the human soul for the church-age believer. It'll give him real genuine joy and power to serve God, and to be loyal to Jesus Christ. That is the wondrous era in which we live – the power of God within us to serve Him and to be loyal to Him. Christians who are denied expository preaching, or who get it, but who are negative to it, sooner or later become whimpering, whining, wounded, spiritual casualties. They're robbed of their joy. They're robbed of their integrity. They're robbed of their self-respect. They're robbed of their divine good works. And they become prodigal princes and princesses, descending to living with the pigs of the devil's world. That's the result when people do not have expository preaching. And I hope that you, about now, have begun to get a feel of what that means to know the mind of God through the Word of God. It is not out there, folks. You are sadly mistaken. You deceive yourself if you are not discerning enough to watch and to listen. The preacher makes them laugh. He runs his one-liners. He gives his cute stories, but they have no substance.

You'd like to get hold of the Christians who sit there listening to them, and shake the brains out of them and say, "Do you realize the price you're paying? Do you realize the con job which is being played on you?" Of course not. How can they? In the circle, everybody compliments everybody else that all is well. Christians who are denied expository preaching are in for a big disaster. Christians who are negative to expository preaching are in for a bigger disaster.

I must remind you again that this is a biblical principle. Ephesians 4:12 – spring this on your cutesy-pooh church friends out there in the big-time operations. You young people, spring this on your fellow youth. Ask them to tell you what this Scripture means. Ask them how important it is. Ask them how this applies to their church life. Ephesians 4:11-12: "God has given a pastor-teacher – one to every local church." For what reason? It says, "For the equipping of the saints." That word "for" is the Greek word "pros" (pros), P R O S. That is a preposition, and it means "face-to-face." This is face-to-face equipping of the saints. This is a military description of giving the equipment for spiritual combat.

What is the equipment for spiritual combat? Doctrine. The knowledge of the tools – the weapons of spiritual warfare, and the tactic of prayer for using those spiritual weapons. You don't know that. You're not born with that. Somebody has to explain that to you. God says, "I've already set that up in the local church.: But if this do-do in the pulpit is going for the money; the crowds; and, the prestige, he's not going to be explaining the Bible verse-by-verse, because you can't always make that very kicky. He's going to go for topical kicks every time.

Then there's a chain reaction because this is hooked to another link. If this is done, something else happens. This is indicated to us in the Greek, because the next preposition is "eis" (ice), I C E, indicating "resulting in" – face-to-face" instruction in the Word of God resulting in the work of service. This is equipping the saints, resulting in the work of service. That is so Christians can serve God. You cannot serve God if the first part has not been done for you. If you have not been trained in doctrine, you cannot serve God. You're always operating on the sin nature. You're always operating on human viewpoint. You're always doing good things that are flowing from the sin nature. And don't forget that the good things flow from the sin nature. But don't forget that Isaiah 64:6 says that that stuff is all "filthy rags."

Then there's another link here. And that one is also signaled by the preposition "eis" (ice), I C E. It results from the second preposition – the building up of the body of Christ. The Lord's work cannot be done if there is not expository preaching in the pulpit, explaining verse-by-verse from the original languages the Word of God, so that the Christians are equipped now with God's mind, so that they are able to serve Him under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that people can be saved; the body of Christ can be developed; and, individual Christians can be taken on to spiritual maturity, to the super-grace level of living. And these prepositions in the Greek tie it all together, so anybody who read this in the Greek, he would immediately say, "My goodness, if number one is not done here, number two can't be done, and number three can't be done. The whole chain breaks down. The link is broken right here. This has to be done.

Once you understand this, you'll never be a fool in terms of local church ministries again. You will never go for rah-rah, grandstanding, hoopla, jokes, something to make you laugh, or something that plays on your emotions, and then you go home empty, as you were before, relative to the thinking of your Heavenly Father. That's a travesty. It's a robbery. And you have a right to know the thinking of God.

**The HICEE Technique**

The result of teaching the Word is production of divine in the believer's service, and that results in the erection of a spiritual maturity structure in the soul of the believer. The pastor-teacher uses the grace system of perception. That's a basic feature in which he teaches. It's a system of going from the Scriptures to the mind of people. And if he's a good expositor (he could be an expositor and not be good), but if he's a really good expositor, and he's going to give you what you have coming, that's where we have told you that he will have the HICEE technique.

The "H" stands for "Hermeneutics." There are certain principles that guide in interpretation. For example, it has to be literally interpreted unless it indicates that it's a symbol. That's just a simple rule. And there are several rules. If you don't obey the rules, you'll misinterpret the Scriptures. You'll make it say what it doesn't say.

Then there's the "I" which is "Isagogics." The word "isagogics" stands for the background of the time: how people thought; and, how they lived. When you read about a bridegroom coming for his bride in the New Testament, to fully understand that, you have to know how that worked in their times. And when the preacher says, "Now, here's how they did it in those days," then you read the Scripture, and you say, "Ah, now I see really what they meant. That's the background. Now, that makes so much more sense. So, he has to explain that to you.

Then there is the "C" for "Categories" of doctrine. Sometimes the expositor has to stop and say, here's 10 or 15 points on the doctrine of whatever, and he brings it all together from all over the Bible for you. Some of you were taken to the mat the time we told you: "25 points for the doctrine of the blood of Christ. And you didn't realize what the Bible had to say on that subject. And yet when we brought it together for you, from all parts of the Bible, it was the greatest.

Then there is the first "E," which is "etymology." That's the meaning of words. That's why we put up a Greek or Hebrew word here for you: to tell you this is what the word in the original text said, such that the Spirit of God said, "I want this word here." That's what the word means. If you don't know what the word means, you can't speak. You can't even think without words. You go ahead and try to think a thought now without using words. No, don't do that. You'll hurt yourself.

The second "E" we call "exegesis", E X E G E S I S. "Exegesis" means "grammar:" relationships, tenses, cases, plurals, and singulars. All of that is important. And if the preacher hasn't sat down in his study, surrounded by the appropriate books and helps and whatever he needs, and gone through, first of all, the text in the original language before he ever gets up and talks to you in English, and uses this technique, he's not going to be a first-rate expository preacher. He's not going to be able to explain to Scriptures in quality for you so that you get what you deserve.

So this HICEE technique is the method that enables a believer to live in the Word of God.

Now, when we come to this matter of studying the Bible, the reason I come down so hard upon attending church service is because that's the first stage of studying the Bible. You do a lot of Bible studying and understanding on your own, as indeed you should, but it all basically, in God's order, is: completed Scripture; pulpit; pastor-teacher; local congregation; silent monologue; paying attention in an academic setting; and, understanding what God has said. It is not what the preacher thinks it says, or to let him use it as a springboard.

We have a particular topical preacher here in town, and I looked at his outside bulletin board again this week. There he is, preaching on another verse. He has jumped to another part of the Bible, and the verse has to do with the subject of salvation. Here's this huge church. Every service, people come in. They fill it wall-to-wall, and they sit there, waiting to hear the gospel: which they already know; which they've already believed; and, for which most unsaved people are not here. Half of the city of Irving is across the street getting their tires changed and repaired. They're not in church, but all those poor Christians are there, and they go out, and they put their money in the offering plate, and they greet one another, and they smile, and they've been robbed of spiritual nutrition. They're starving to death spiritually. They're nothing but skin and bones, and the devil knocks them around like a bunch of ten pins in a bowling alley.

It is the believer's responsibility not to let that happen to him. The Bible indicates that each Christian is his own priest. Therefore, he is responsible for his own spiritual wellbeing (1 Peter 2:9). God provides the technique for the spiritual wellbeing of the believer, but the believer has to decide to use it. So, we refer to it, as someone has said: "The techniques of the Christian life." You can get a series of tapes on that for your spiritual progress and maturity. The Bible indicates that our spiritual life must be nurtured on a daily basis just as we must nurture the physical life of the body with food on a daily basis. That's very simply stated in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

So, every Christian for maximum blessing; personal stability; spiritual productivity; and, divine viewpoint has to follow a regular intake of the Word of God. He has to feed on doctrinal concepts. You never learn it all. You never get where you don't need it refreshed. We probably won't get to it this morning, but we will tonight: one of the most dramatic pieces of the Word of God that a Christian needs to know about, and it comes directly out of expository preaching. But you've heard about it. Tonight you'll be blown out of the water. You've heard about it, but now it comes into the picture in focus because of what we're talking about, that as 2 Peter 1:12 says, "Now is the time for me to remind you" (your pure minds) by means of memory to remind you of something now at this point that you need to apply." And we're going to do that this evening.

The Bible stresses that we are to know all the counsel of God. Here's the condemnation of the preacher who is not an explanatory preacher. He could never say this. Acts 20:27: "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God." The King James Version says: "The whole counsel of the Word of God:" "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. Paul said, "I didn't just preach the gospel to you once you were saved. But I preached to you how to get a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. I preached to you the techniques of the Christian life. That included prayer; confession of known sin; and, all the features that go with being able to live in the Word, and to be able to live in Satan's world without getting defeated. Most Christians know snatches of the Word of God after years of church attendance because they've been fed with topical preaching. The total panorama of Bible doctrine is understandable in a usable form, and is absolutely essential in Satan's world. If you don't have a total grasp of the panorama (the scaffold of doctrine), in Satan's world, you will never make it.

Now, you may get by without getting too bruised up, but you're going to be poor as a hound dog at the Judgment Seat of Christ, because your life will have been lost to you. That's the greatest problem. The technique of Bible study enables the Christian to get this full picture of what God thinks. And nowhere is this admonition toward knowing the word declared more forcefully than in Psalm 119:11. This is the longest Psalm in the Bible. This psalm goes through the Hebrew alphabet. It starts with "Aleph," "Beth," "Gimel," "Daleth," and it goes through, and it has a divine declaration under each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. And each section focuses on the Word of God; the Word of God; The Word of God. Doctrine is the point of this whole longest psalm in the Bible.

Verse 9 begins with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet "Beth" ("B"). Psalm 119:11: "Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I might not sin against God." Now, in God's name, how in the world can you treasure the Word of God in your heart, which indeed will keep you from sinning against Him, when you have never been taught that word in any depth? All you've had were little frivolities of Bible information, but never the Word of God that moves your soul to say "Amen" to a doctrinal position that gets transformed from "gnosis" knowledge to "epignosis" full knowledge, and is now stored in your human spirit. That's where you treasure the Word of God: in your human spirit, and that's where it works for you. Snatches are not going to make it.

The technique of Bible study pursues, then, a systematic survey of the Bible revelation verse-by-verse. You cannot study the Bible by "hop, skip, and jumping around." It's verse-by-verse through a book. Maximum progress in the knowledge of the Word of God is made through studies that are in the form of a series.

Now, sometimes it is good to stop and to take a series on a subject like marriage, and you talk about it. There's nothing wrong with doing that. But that is a specialty item, and periodically, it's proper to do that: either in scriptural form; in preaching; or, even in a visual form, with the era of the video, that also brings those things together in a special way. Boy, don't miss next Sunday night, incidentally.

What this does (this verse-by-verse) is that it takes you through a book of the Bible or a category of doctrine. Preaching which skips around to different, unrelated texts or topics each week produces minimal results. Do you know why? Because it violates Isaiah 28:10, which tells us how you must approach the Bible. "For He (God) says, 'Order-on-order; order-on-order; line-on-line, line-on-line, a little here, a little there.' Indeed He will speak to His people. And what Isaiah says is that it has to be in an orderly fashion, verse-by-verse, one-after-another, line-following-line, a little bit of information on this segment, and this word going on to the next. That's the way.

Now the preacher who focuses on the gospel message, every sermon, always jumps around to a text that he can use to jump off into the gospel. It's easy preparation for the preacher. You wouldn't believe how easy it is to have a sermon that's going to focus on the gospel. And you wouldn't believe, unless you've been an intense student on a college level or a university level, how hard it is to follow a HICEE technique, and come up with a sermon of instruction that bears the dignity of the Word of God upon it, and enables the people of God to know what God knows.

The HICCE communicator of the Word of God is what God has ordained: face-to-face teaching. The duty to communicate doctrine is the greatest responsibility that God can lay on any person. It is my duty first. But after you've learned it, it's your duty as well. And you have no responsibility that is greater than that. And here at Berean Church, that duty is made considerably easier – that opening up of doctrine of people with a tape catalog, or an individual tape. No responsibility in life, however, will meet greater satanic pressure to neglect, or temptation to accommodate to people, to seek popular pulpit style, or to seek devotional lists by which you can get things done.

I knew a man recently who died. Two of my friends who were Christians were associated with him. This man was not a Christian. And on one occasion, they were out at a social event, and the wife began speaking to this man, who was a prominent name in certain circles, and no slouch. And she began speaking to him about salvation – about Christ. And as she spoke, her husband was very nervous. And after a while, the man that she was speaking to said, "Do you really believe that?" It was so astounding to him that God could be such a gracious Person, and have done all that he needed to get to heaven. I don't think he ever believed it. The husband chewed out his wife later. He felt embarrassed. And then this man gets a deadly disease. He had the information – the information that he needed as an unbeliever. He needs the gospel. He doesn't need the deep things of the Spirit of God. He needs the gospel. That's all he can understand. And he probably rejected it. And I'll bet that he wishes that that lady had been maybe more forceful to say, "You have to make the decision, and the time is now.

The pastor-teacher role demands, needless to say, a lot of discipline. Needless to say, it demands a lot of courage. Needless to say, it demands the capacity to execute this kind of a calling consistently over the years, so that people are always making forward progress. Nothing in life is more important to people and to their eternal wellbeing than a pastor-teacher who is an expository preacher, who is communicating the Word of Truth to them.

Where Christians are denied this kind of instruction, they're at the mercy of their own reasoning in spiritual things. And they're at the mercy of the opinions of other people about spiritual things. That's human viewpoint, and it's always wrong. God has given us the Bible in order to transmit from that book to our minds, His mind. Somebody has to explain that Bible to you, or you will never get the mind of God. If you never get the mind of God, you're a very shallow, nothing person. It is the divine manual on human life. And God holds everyone responsible for knowing what the Bible teaches. He holds you responsible for knowing what the Word of God has to say.

John 15:22: "If I had not come," Jesus said, "and spoken to them, they would not have sinned, but now they have no excuse for their sin." Jesus said, "The sin of the Pharisees and the scribes is compounded, because I came and I taught you the Word of God, and you resisted that. Now your sin is even greater, and your suffering in hell will be greater. That's why there's different degrees of punishment in the lake of fire. The unbeliever is going to pay for his sins for all eternity in hell. The untaught Christian will pay forever in heaven in the loss of rewards, and in the loss, even worse, of crowns.

The manual on a new car is given to the owner in order to preserve him from damaging the vehicle, and to secure the happiest use out of it. If the owner treats his new car according to what his logic is, or his good sense, or the opinions of other people, he will damage his vehicle. He will lose out. If he opens the hood of his new car and something isn't working, he says, "No wonder! There's too much stuff in here." And he pulls something out and throws it out, and says, "Let's get rid of this thing," it will not solve the problem. It will make it worse. The manufacturer, in that case, is not to blame for damage or for poor performance of a brand new car if the guidelines of the manual are violated.

It's the same with the Bible. It's God's manual to you as a believer. If you violate the manual, He is not to blame. He is not responsible for the results in your life. All those stupid, asinine decisions, choices, selections, and moments of foolishness that we enter into. Why? Because the mind of God is not circulating in our thinking, because there's no doctrine in our human spirit to keep flowing up there, to keep the mind of God on everything that we're doing. That's the real life that God has extended to us. Ignorance of the guidelines for using the vehicle does not protect the car from damage. And it does not excuse the owner from responsibility for the consequences.

So, what have we said? We have said that God has provided the Bible as the manual for our lives as Christians. We need the means, however, for learning what it has to say. And the pastor-teacher and the local church organization have been provided by God for that, along with that grace system of perception that does not depend upon human IQ to be able to understand spiritual things. In spite of this grand provision, many Christians think that God is not going to hold them accountable for their ignorance of Bible doctrine principles. So, they madly assume that God will keep them from violating biblical guidelines if they just do the best that they know how, and if they depend upon their sincerity instead of their knowledge. How often have I pointed out Scriptures relative to the working of the Holy Spirit to a charismatic, and I've said to them: "And if you violate this, the loss will be eternal to you in the investment of your life for rewards and for blessings now. How often have these people consistently (almost like they had been trained) said to me, "Oh, I can't believe that God would treat me like that when I'm acting in such sincerity.

That's like saying, "I can't believe that General Motors would hold me responsible for not wasting my money on putting oil in my car. I can't believe that they would hold me responsible for that, even though it all froze up and won't work. And they should give me a new car." You say, "That's crazy." Yep, it's crazy. But your life is going to freeze up. One man said, "Well, my truck is over at the repair shop. It blew a plug. The oil was gone. I didn't know it. And in a minute or two, the whole engine froze up." And that's what happens with a life without doctrine. It is the oil that keeps things working smoothly and successfully. Don't depend on your sincerity. You are responsible for knowing what is in this book. Are you going to get it sitting at home tonight?

Good intentions of doing what is right and honoring the Lord are often substituted for learning doctrine. It takes years of regular instruction to learn this book. And to build spiritual maturity in one's soul takes a long time of consistency, to replace that human viewpoint blindness with the mind of God. And you know what? You never finish the process of securing and acquiring the mind of God, and flushing out human viewpoint. You will take that job with you into eternity. You never finish.

God our Father, we ask You to help us to begin what we will never finish. We thank You for the Word of God, and for the instruction which You have given us this day. And we pray that we will have a new appreciation for a place like Berean Church. And we pray that our opportunity here may not be snatched from us, as the lamp stands of testimony were taken from the seven churches in the book of the Revelation, because they did not esteem what they had, and proved unfaithful to their calling. We pray, our Father, that we will continue to shine as a beacon of expository preaching and in-depth instruction, leading people into the great cathedral of the mind of God. We pray in Christ's name, amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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