

SEPTEMBER 2008 Week 2 TEACHING

The Right Way

Imagine that our present emotional state was visible on the surface of our skin. Many of us would look like we've been in the boxing match of the century. We've been so bruised and battered by life, and the question all of us must have the guts to ask is did we have to be. Could we have minimized the impact of a harmful set of circumstances by following God's Word? The answer to that question is of course "yes", so why didn't we follow it. Most of us have an adequate reservoir of biblical knowledge at our disposal. Why didn't we apply it to some of the most meaningful and hurtful situations of our lives? Oh, we can come up with a gazillion different explanations why, but they all have their root in one basic reason and it is this—we think our way is better.

Proverbs 14:12(NLT) informs us that *"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death."* This verse lets us know two extremely important things about life. The first is that there are very definitely two paths that we can take. The second piece of information that Proverbs 14:12 imparts is the fact that you and I make the choice as to which path we will choose; one that *IS* right and one that *SEEMS* right. Do you see how subtle that is? As clever as you and I think we are, there will be times when our natural senses are not enough to distinguish the two.

God's Word is the definitive source on anything pertaining to life. There isn't a situation any of us can face that would preclude or fall outside its directives and guidance, but when our backs are against the wall, particularly if we feel we have something to lose, we choose what seems right to our natural senses—we go with what we think will make us feel good. This is hardly ever a winning strategy.

Romans 8:37 says that we are more than conquerors. If we were to be brutally honest we'd have to admit that somewhere in our thinking we really don't believe that. We don't see ourselves as having the power to take authority over our circumstances. God has no feet but our feet...no hands but our hands...no mouths but our mouths. He works within us both to will and act according to His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). So if we don't see God as having the power to positively change our lives through His Word, we certainly can't see ourselves that way.

God works through us—that's the confidence maker. He works through us as we put on the mind of Jesus Christ and walk by it. But here's the big thing, you cannot rise above that which you do not know. You can't walk in God's Word if you don't know it, haven't heard it, or it isn't written in the deep

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recesses of your mind and heart. I'll give you a good example. Recently I've learned that an acquaintance of mine has broken off his engagement. He is extremely distraught having invested 5 years into this relationship, not to mention quite a bit of money and time in wedding preparations.

Of course I'll protect their anonymity here, so for the sake of this story we will call this couple Jason and Carol. Jason's relationship with his fiancée had been tumultuous from the very beginning. Now that it has ended, he has sworn off marriage for the rest of his life and has done what most individuals who refuse to honor the authority of God's Word will do—blame someone else. He blames his girlfriend, Carol, for every argument and for refusing to see his side of things.

Their biggest source of contention was Carol's commitment to financially support a brother who couldn't seem to hold down a job. He had been the rock of her family and helped her to pay for college, but after his own marriage fell apart he seemed to lose his way. In Jason's mind Carol's allegiance to her brother outweighed any goals they had. It factored into every decision and plan they made as a couple. The bottom fell out when Carol insisted that they not buy a house right away. She wanted to help her brother purchase a car to get back and forth to what he considered his new dream job. Jason felt that Carol put her brother's needs before his. So on top of his hurt feelings, there is also an unwarranted bitterness that he continues to resurrect in conversations with anyone who is willing to listen to his side of the story.

What if Carol came to Jason crawling on her knees, begging for forgiveness, and admits that she was all wrong and he was right all along. Is it possible that Jason would draw more satisfaction from seeing her in this state than he would from seeing her smiling face walk down the aisle on the arm of her brother who, coincidentally, would be giving her away?

At face value, probably half of us would say that Jason has a valid point and his actions were justified; half of us would say exactly the opposite. But love rules the day, and there is no better way to see how it does than to seek the authority on the subject, the creator; He created the love, the rules, and the daylight.

The one thing that we know about Jason is that he assumes that he is right, and he does so with no other authority than that of his own. **“Right”**, according to Jason, has left him without the love of a woman who wants to repay a brother whose sacrifice paved the way for her success; it also placed her in a position to meet her ex-fiancée. **“Right”**, according to Carol, left her without the love of a man who cannot stomach the idea of sitting back and

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doing nothing when there's a possibility that someone is taking advantage of the woman he loves. "Right", according to God, is "...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose." (Romans 8:28 KJV)

Proverbs 21:2 NLT

2 People may think they are doing what is right, but the Lord examines the heart.

If you don't have faith in anything else, you can most assuredly be guaranteed of one simple fact that will hold true for not only the rest of your life, but everyone else's—you cannot trump God! You and I cannot see what is in each other's heart, but our Heavenly Father is intimately familiar with its contents. Perhaps in the instance of our couple, one was more at fault than the other, but you and I will never know. We do know, however, that God "...will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19 NLT)

Even if Jason was being emotionally immature and acting selfishly, Carol could have trusted that God would take care of her brother's needs; which would have allowed her to be attentive to Jason through love and prayer. According to Philippians 2:12, spiritual work is a constant in life, and if we are earnest about our love for God—He will help us to spiritually grow. Therefore, Carol could have been patient. She could have had some level of peace that Jason would eventually get to a place in the Lord where he wouldn't see her devotion to her brother as a threat. On the other side of the aisle, had Jason allowed the Word of God to govern his thinking, perhaps he would not have felt the need to call off the wedding.

1 Corinthians 2:10

10 But we know these things because God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, and his Spirit searches out everything and shows us even God's deep secrets.

God reveals vitally important information to our spirits. Faith fuels the connection that allows that information to flow into our consciousness. It anchors a swell of spiritual treasures within, and it allows us to operate with the same level of joy and functionality, no matter the circumstance. Romans 10:17 tells us that this same faith is cultivated through hearing God's Word, that's why it is so awesomely important to read it.

Remember one incredibly important point, Adam had dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26), and it wasn't until he disobeyed the Word of God that he lost

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it. How do you and I take authority and dominion over our circumstances? How do we take our power back? How do we reverse the negative cycle to a positive one? We accomplish it all through the Word of God...by reading it, understanding it, and applying it. It's the "right" way!

SEPTEMBER 2008 Week 2 Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Please forgive me for the things I have thought, felt, said, and done that were contrary to Your will, and hear me, O' God, as I make the desires of my heart known before Your throne. I know that people mean the most to You. Help me to develop a heart to value others and honor my relationships. Reinforce my commitment to be patient, loving, and kind with the treasure of revealing that I am well pleasing in Your sight. As I take one step to be the person You have called me to be, anchor me in the next...and the next...until I am walking tall on Your Word. Help me to stay rooted in Godliness and to maintain my own individuality—that piece of me that so many of my friends like and count on. I realize that as I grow, many will not remain in my life, but for those that do—allow my light to be a witness of Your great love. Help me to show them that we all have a place in Your kingdom, and we don't have to look a certain way, or appear to be something we're not to reflect Your love. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

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SEPTEMBER 2008 WEEK 2 Scriptures:

Scriptures link to
[New Living Translation.com](http://NewLivingTranslation.com)

Day 1: [Proverbs 21:2](#)

Day 2: [Philippians 4:19](#)

Day 3: [Proverbs 14:12](#)

Day 4: [Romans 8:37](#)

Day 5: [Philippians 2:13](#)

Day 6: [Proverbs 12:15](#)

Day 7: [Romans 14:7-9](#)

Spiritual Focus for the Month of SEPTEMBER 2008:

Honoring Relationships

WEEK2Prayer FOCUS:

*To Value Others through
God's Love*

(Remember to pray for those on the SMS Prayer List.)

Scripture Study:

[To complete the scripture study for the month of SEPTEMBER please click here](#)

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