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Christian Perspectives ? point of reference

A point of reference is an important thing. Life is full of them. If you were on a train, for example, you'd know the train was moving when you see the platform moving past the window. Without a good reference point we can lose all sense of where we are or in what direction we are moving. Have you ever been on a boat and then had that strange feeling that you're still and the land in the distance is moving? For most of history mankind believed that the earth was still and the sun moved around us. We now know that our point of reference was wrong, the sun is stationary and it is we that move! It isn't until you have a proper reference point that you can evaluate the world around you. Without it, you don't know what is up and what is down.

In Acts 17:1-15 Paul and Silas pass through Thessalonica and Berea and in these two cities we see two very distinct reactions to God's Word, the message of Jesus Christ. As the ultimate point of reference in our lives, God's Word does two very important things: it shines light on our character and is also our measuring stick for life, our foundation.

In Thessalonica Paul and Silas went straight to the synagogue to share the truth of Jesus Christ. Many of those in attendance were persuaded but many became envious and jealous!

They went out in search of evil men with goal of gathering a mob. These people heard ultimate truth and what it did was reveal their true character. God's Word, the message of Jesus Christ, has a way of shining light on our character. These people that later attacked Paul and Silas were not willing to examine God's Word and see if what Paul was saying was correct. For them, it wasn't about following the Lord, for them it was about status and power.

Ephesians 5:10-14 ? Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.

Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret.

But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said,?Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light?.

When God's Word and truth shines light on your life exposing sin, how do you respond? In repentance? Or pride?

The next stop for Paul and Silas was the small back-water town of Berea. Paul describes these people in a completely different way ? open minded. Rather than just believe what Paul said, they decided to compare His words to scripture! For Paul, being open-minded didn't mean just accepting everything as truth. The Bereans were open-minded because they considered Paul's words before accepting them. The scriptures were their measuring stick.

God's Word gives us a foundation so that we won't be tossed and blown about. Not only is it a foundation, but it illuminates the world around us, Psalm 199:05 says, ?Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path?.

The Scriptures, God's Word, needs to be our absolute ? without it there's no sureness in life!

No matter what you're going through, no matter how crazy life gets, it is a constant in your life. This is because God and His Word do not change! They can't and they won't. This unchanging nature of God's Word is what gives us the right to reach out to people in need. There are so many hurts out there in this world. I've never had cancer, I haven't lost my wife to an accident. I don't know what those things are like, I don't really want to know! Without God's Word, a common foundation for all of us, how could I have the nerve to try and help someone in that situation? I couldn't possibly on my own offer insight to help! But with God's constant Word, I can take verses that I know to be true, true no matter what the situation in my life, no matter what the situation in someone else's life. No matter what they've gone through, the scriptures are applicable! 2 Timothy 3:16,17 ? All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

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