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YPS

(Young Precious Seed)

is a supplement of *Precious Seed* designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live.

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Behaving ourselves in the house of God

Timeless truths about the local assembly

The Church – its order

God's pattern for leadership in the local assembly is centred around men who are shepherds of God's people and who have the responsibility to oversee the activities of the assembly (*YPS 2/1*). They are called elders and there should ideally be more than one of them in each assembly. It is God who has equipped them and called them to this work. The Chief Shepherd of God's people has left under-shepherds to do His work.

Gifted people and gifts for people

God has not only left His people shepherds, He has also given them gifted people to teach and preach. 'He gave some [to be] apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers', Eph. 4. 11-12. The universal church is 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone', Eph. 2. 20. Now that those apostles and prophets have passed away, we see in the church of today evangelists and pastor/teachers of God's word. This is true both of the universal church and the local church.

God has also given spiritual gifts to each one of His people, 1 Cor. 12. 4-31. The way in which the church should order its gatherings, and its conduct when it meets together, is to give opportunity for the Holy Spirit to use these gifts. The priesthood of all believers is a very important doctrine in the practical experience of the church. In Old Testament times only some could be priests; in New Testament times all are. All believers can say to Christ, 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God . . . and hast made us unto our God kings and priests [a kingdom of priests]', Rev. 5. 9-10. John writes to all believers and says to them, 'Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God', Rev. 1. 5-6. Each and every believer, no matter how poor or uneducated, and whether they are male or female, is a priest before God, and can therefore bring his or her worship directly to God through no person other than the



The Church – its order

Lord Jesus Himself. The New Testament does not teach the hierarchy of man-ordained priests purporting to come between the average Christian and God, and any system that teaches or encourages us to think there is such an hierarchy is wrong.

When Christians meet together, then, there should be freedom for all believers present to worship God and exercise their God-given spiritual gift within the constraints given in the New Testament. Man-made systems of worship, or systems of worship that put one man in the pulpit to do all the public preaching and teaching in that church, limit the exercise of these gifts. A one-man ministry is unbiblical; the elders, and through them the church, should give time and opportunity for the Holy Spirit to lead any who are gifted to preach and teach and also to worship and to pray. Are there any principles that govern how we should do this? There certainly are.

Discipline

The first is godly order, not confusion. 'Let all things be done decently and in order' is a command from God to the assemblies of His people, as He is 'not the author of confusion but of peace'; 1 Cor. 14. 33, 40. When Christians gather together to worship, pray, or preach, we are not to expect a free-for-all. Despite being free to worship as the Spirit leads, there is a godly order from which the Spirit will not lead us. An 'anything goes' mentality is not of God; after all, 'the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets', so each believer is to be aware of the way others are being led of the Spirit, and is to control his own behaviour and contributions accordingly.

Usefulness

The second principle is that all things should be done to edifying, 1 Cor. 14. 26. In other words, public praying,

preaching and teaching should be profitable, instructive, and lead to the building-up of believers. There is no room for preaching and teaching that is incomprehensible and therefore a waste of time, that is self-promoting or that is erroneous. Others should listen and judge whether the teaching is profitable or not, 1 Cor. 14. 29. No one should be encouraged to preach and teach if they are not gifted to do so. A one-man ministry may be wrong, but so is an any-man ministry.

Gender difference

A third and important principle in the order of worship in an assembly meeting is that there should be a clear and distinct difference between the roles of men and women. In any gathering of the assembly, God expects the differences between gender and headship to be clearly and visibly followed. In chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians, women are told to 'keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak', v. 34. Yet the men are encouraged to take public and active part. This prohibition is repeated when Paul writes to Timothy and says, 'Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence', 1 Tim. 2. 11-12. Though there is no difference between men and women as far as salvation is concerned there is a difference as far as service is concerned. That 'there is neither male nor female', is true when it comes to conversion – God will save any and all who come to Him in faith, Gal. 3. 28. Yet God does see gender difference in service and in life in the assembly and between husband and wife in the home.

This gender difference is to be clearly shown in the assemblies of God's people. First of all, men are to uncover their heads in public worship, and women are to cover theirs, 1 Cor. 11. 2-

A one-man ministry may be wrong, but so is an any-man ministry

16. This action of the taking off or putting on of a head-covering (the idea that a woman's naturally long hair is a covering merely reinforces the idea that nature tells her she should put on another one over it) publicly acknowledges that God sees men and women as different, and even the angels are interested to see this done, 1 Cor. 11. 10. Secondly, men are to wear their hair short, and women are to have theirs long, 1 Cor. 11. 14-16. This means, in practice, that a man should be seen to be masculine and a woman to be feminine, and all attempts by men and women to blur the distinctions between the sexes are not of God. Thirdly, the men are to take public leadership in the gatherings of God's people, and women are not, 1 Cor. 14. 34-36; 1 Tim. 2. 8-15. When these differences are seen in practice, it shows that the people of God are content to follow God's principles of conduct, not the world's, and that the headship of God over Christ, of Christ over man and of man over the woman is publicly acknowledged, 1 Cor. 11. 2-5.

Objections

It is natural and inevitable that such principles of clear distinction between the appearance and the public role of male and female in the church are unpopular and frequently challenged. First of all, we are told, 'it is Paul who taught that women have to cover their heads and keep silent in the church, and we all know that Paul hated women'. This argument, aside from being untrue (for Paul commends Phoebe in glowing terms for her work for the Lord in Romans 16, and calls women 'fellow-labourers' with him) thoroughly undermines the important doctrine that it is the Holy Spirit who inspired men to write the word of God, and that nothing is their own opinion. Would anyone dare say the Holy Spirit despises women? Secondly, we are told

that the teaching about head-coverings in 1 Corinthians relates to a problem that believers had in Corinth alone. In other words, head coverings are a cultural matter and as we are not living in Corinth in the first century they do not apply to us. Yet Paul does say in 1 Corinthians 1.3 that he writes 'to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord', and he also says if anyone disagrees with the principle of visible gender difference in the assemblies shown by length of hair and covered and uncovered heads, 'we have no such custom, neither the churches of God', i.e. churches everywhere apart from Corinth, 1 Cor. 11. 16. The matter is hardly, therefore, a cultural one.

In addition to this, the word of God justifies the silence of women when it comes to teaching the word of God in public or leading in worship with reference to history, not culture. Women are not 'to teach nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence' because 'Adam was first formed, then Eve', and 'Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression', 1 Tim. 2. 11-14. From creation God intended the man to be the leader, and when the woman usurped the position of leadership she was deceived and she was wrong.

Any local assembly of believers which gathers together to pray, worship, and teach the word of God, waiting quietly and reverently before God, visibly displaying their acceptance of the principle of headship and leaving themselves open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and the public exercise of God-given spiritual gifts, is a wonderful place to be. Despite its shortcomings, that assembly is a place where God can be found. Don't give it up, and don't run it down. There is no more special place on earth.



Dangers in interpreting Scripture

Reading things into the Bible

If exegesis means 'drawing out' truth from scripture, then eisegesis means reading things into the Bible. For example, someone might argue that Psalm 45. 1 NKJV teaches that we should have a 'theme' at the Breaking of Bread. However, Psalm 45 says nothing about the Breaking of Bread. In any case, the King himself is the theme of Psalm 45. If we are focussing on the Lord Jesus at the Breaking of Bread we are 'on the theme'.

Other preachers go too far in their speculation about things that the Bible never clearly states. Who was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Answer, the Bible does not say. Does the Bible teach that God laid our sin on Christ during the three hours of darkness? Actually, all Psalm 22. 1-2 tells us is that God forsook Christ in the 'daytime' and in the 'night season'.

Another danger is spiritualizing the Bible. There is truth in typology, but

spiritualizing makes everything symbolic. One early Christian writer spiritualized Jonah chapter 1 as follows, 'Jonah pictures man fleeing from God, the sea equals life's troubles, the boat represents life and the whale is time, always moving and gobbling up everything!'

Unbalanced Interpretation

Many truths are two-sided. Many heresies

are based on the denial of one side of a truth. For example, the Lord Jesus is both God and Man. Yet while God neither grows weary nor sleeps, Ps. 121. 4; Isa. 40. 28, the Lord Jesus did both, so how can He be both God and Man at the same time? The Bible is both God's word and the words of human authors at the same time, and they were not primitive dictation machines. The Bible teaches that God chose some people to be saved and yet it also teaches that people can receive or reject Christ. There are truths about God that are beyond our intellect and those who refuse to acknowledge the authority of God's word will stumble at them.

This point illustrates another serious danger in Bible interpretation. Any source of authority that we exalt above God's word will lead us into error, whether it be our reasoning faculty or our sense of fairness, the pronouncements of science, tradition, or making a commentary a 'paper pope'. Scripture must be the final authority in matters of faith and conduct.

Interpreting the difficult in the light of the clear

This principle is sometimes abused. For example, some will argue that Paul's allowance of women praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11. 5 is a difficult passage and must be interpreted in the light of Paul's prohibition of the same in 1 Corinthians 14. 34-35. Curiously enough, those who advocate that women should speak in the church use the same argument. Chapter 11 verse 5 is easy to understand, they say, and the difficult verses in chapter 14 must be interpreted in the light of the clear.

Likewise, those who teach there is no consciousness after death will plead



by Andrew Wilson (4)

that various Old Testament verses that speak of those in the grave not praising God, Ps. 6. 5, are obvious and easy to understand and we must interpret verses in the New Testament, Phil. 1. 21-23; Mark 12. 27; Luke 23. 43, in the light of these 'clear pronouncements'.

Therefore, the principle of 'interpreting the difficult in the light of the clear' must be used with great caution. It is used by every Bible-twister alive today to dismiss 'difficult' verses in favour of verses that appear to teach what the interpreter prefers. Instead, we must give careful consideration to all the verses concerned with the subject, seeking to understand the full scope of the scripture's teaching.

Pleading Ignorance

This is one of the most fashionable ways of avoiding unpleasant truths in the Bible. For example, some who believe that Christians will go through the great tribulation avoid the problem of the 'restrainer' in 2 Thessalonians 2. 6-7 in this way. Rather than argue against the idea that the Holy Spirit is in view here, or suggest a more appropriate alternative, they say 'the passage is vague. We just don't know who or what this is'. Liberals who deny the resurrection use a similar strategy. 'Something happened', they say, 'but 2000 years later we will never know what'.

To say, 'I don't know what this means' would be humble. But to say 'we don't know' is to say that because I don't know, no one else does either. To say 'we just don't know' is to try to shut down discussion.

Another trendy way of avoiding the Bible's message is to dumb it down. It is hard to argue with someone who

asserts, about James chapter 4, that the big thing is to love God. However, the way James 4. 4 actually puts it is that those who are friends with the world commit adultery and are God's enemies.

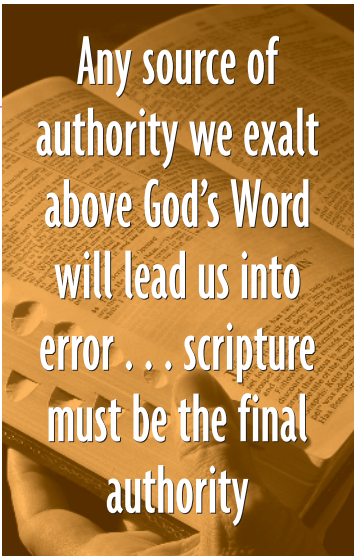
Inconsistent application

The Lord accused the Pharisees of inconsistency in their interpretation of scripture, particularly in relation to the Sabbath. He accused them of hypocrisy in forbidding Him to heal on the Sabbath whilst being happy about animals being rescued from pits, Luke 14. 5.

Someone might feel it is wrong to fill up a car's petrol tank on a Sunday. But if we are going to keep the Sabbath we should not even light a fire (or an internal combustion engine). Others forbid the use of missionary slides or OHP's in the meetings, yet enjoy preaching from hand-painted charts. Some say there is no mention of musical accompaniment of singing in the New Testament, despite the fact that we read of harps being used in heaven. Is it consistent to sing hymns (unaccompanied) that mention these harps?

Alliteration

Preachers should seek acceptable words, Eccl. 12. 10, for sweetness of the lips increases learning, Prov. 16. 21. Alliteration is often memorable, too. However, Bible study is more than Bible Boggle and sometimes alliteration seeks only to highlight the cleverness, or otherwise, of the preacher.



Any source of
authority we exalt
above God's Word
will lead us into
error . . . scripture
must be the final
authority

The Challenge to Youth

The scriptures that are referred to in this article use the word 'child' but readers of YPS should not be put off by that because in the Old Testament the meaning of the word is usually 'youth' or 'young man'. It may also refer to a 'young woman' as well.

1 Israel - salvation

'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt', Hos. 11. 1.

Hosea, the prophet, was writing his book about 750 years after the nation of Israel had been delivered out of Egypt. He is giving the background to that escape and showing why God determined to take His people from that country to a better land that He would give to them. He refers to the nation at that point as 'a child' and certainly it was so politically as its history had been swamped by the captivity. But it was soon to re-emerge and would flourish in a land of its own. Hosea describes his understanding of God's motives in pointing out the childhood aspect. This would suggest weakness and vulnerability as well as immaturity and, perhaps, wilfulness.

Yet in spite of that God says, 'I loved him'. This was an unequivocal expression of love, and though not always appreciated by the nation in its vicissitudes and suffering it was ever true. Using this love as a launching pad God next 'called' the people out. This was a tough call for some for though in slavery they were nevertheless secure and enjoyed a reasonable lifestyle with good accommodation and

excellent food. Water, too, was freely available. A venture into the wilderness would put all of these blessings in jeopardy.

God also says, 'I taught Ephraim also to go, holding them by their arms'. This shows God's care for them in the wilderness journey. It is like teaching a child to walk. One holds their arms to support them and then as progress is made and lessons learned so one would hold them by the hands, and then maybe by a finger only. Soon they are able to walk unaided. Moreover, God says, 'I drew them with cords . . . with bands of love'. Now able to walk the child needed guidance and direction. This was done carefully and in love. God also fed them, 'I gave meat unto them', v. 4. Indeed so much progress had been made and such blessing bestowed on the child that the question is posed, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?' v. 8. Though tempted to do so God never did . . . He brought them right through.

These words should make us think of God's dealings with us. We have been loved, even when we had no love to God. We have been called out of Egypt, which is a type of the world, and tenderly led throughout our lives. We have developed as young Christians so that now we can walk the walk. We have been spiritually fed and nourished. *He* will not give us up and we shall not go back to Egypt, see v. 5.

2 Timothy - education

'From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise', 2 Tim. 3. 15.

Here, the word 'child' does mean 'infant' but then when we were first born again we all were infants in the things of the Lord and in particular in



by Roy Hill

the holy scriptures. Timothy had a great advantage and blessing in his homelife as a child in that he had a mother, Lois, and a grandmother, Eunice, both of whom loved the Lord and His word. It was their exercise that the young Timothy should learn the word thoroughly as that would become his guide and standard throughout his life. They would be able to make him wise not only as to how to be saved but also how to walk and to please God. It is incumbent on every young believer to read the scriptures daily, to study their teaching as time permits and to avail oneself of the opportunity of teaching in the assembly, at conferences, Bible readings or on a one-to-one basis or small groups meeting in a home. Many older brethren today can look back to such opportunities and thank God for their mentors who led by example as well as precept.

An understanding of the scriptures will warm and rejoice your heart. It will preserve your life and testimony. It will bring you close to God and to Christ. You will better understand God's purpose and plans and you in turn will be able to teach others also and be a blessing to them and your local assembly. So, as Paul counselled Timothy, 'Give attention to reading'!

3 Ephraim - reformation

'Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?' Jer. 31. 20.

Jeremiah chapter 31 deals with the promise of God to His people as they return to the land in restoration to undertake rebuilding work on all that had been broken down. The beautiful words of verse 3 correspond with our first section above. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee'.

Verse 9 would suggest our second section, 'I will cause them to walk by the rivers of water in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble'; and, 'Their soul shall be as a watered garden', v. 12. With these and many other blessings

the questions God now asks about Ephraim are i) Is Ephraim my son? and, ii) Is he a pleasant child? The answer to the first is a most definite 'Yes' but the answer to the second may be in some doubt. Salvation and sonship should produce pleasant children. Pleasantness suggests enjoyment and delight. Of the Son of God it was said, 'in whom is all my delight'. In the Old Testament Jonathan is described by David as being 'lovely and pleasant in his ways'. There is nothing so attractive as a young person who is pleasant. It is not in the nature of Christlikeness to be impatient, arrogant or unthankful and every Christian young person has a responsibility to cultivate a pleasant attitude and demeanour. It is honouring to the Lord. It is the Lord's purpose to change sinful lives and unlikeable people into those who are 'lovely and pleasant'. Has he succeeded with you?

4 Jeremiah - commission

'Say not, 'I am a child': for thou shalt go to all that I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak', Jer. 1. 7.

The prophet was not a child but as an excuse claimed to be one! He did not want to go on the mission God had planned for him. God told Jeremiah that He had before his birth, indeed even before his conception, marked him out as one to serve. God had set him apart and ordained he should be a



prophet unto the nations, see 1. 3. Jeremiah, however, had other ideas. He did not want to go and said, 'Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child'; v. 7. God replied to Jeremiah in terms that he would have found difficult to resist. God knew that fear was a big thing in Jeremiah's statement so He said, 'Be not afraid'. That fear of opposition from men was accompanied probably by a fear of loneliness and isolation in the service of the Lord, so God said, 'I am with thee'. The third element of Jeremiah's refusal was a fear of not knowing quite what to say in certain circumstances. God says, 'I have put my words in thy mouth'. So, all of Jeremiah's excuses for not serving were dealt with and he was reassured. We know of course that he went on to be an outstanding and effective prophet for God. The Lord is still equipping young people to serve him. What is your excuse? Do you think the Lord can handle your problem? Or is He not up to it? Of course He is. So, don't be afraid to go forth to fulfil His great commission, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel'; Mark 16. 15. 'And, lo, I am with you alway'; Matt. 28. 20. You will never regret it.

Found written in the inside cover of an old Bible

**This book will
keep you from
sin – or sin will
keep you from
this book.**

Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World

**Wise words from the
book of Proverbs**

**A soft answer
turneth away wrath,
but grievous words
stir up anger, Proverbs 15. 1**



The natural thing to do when someone is angry with you is to reply in anger: yet how often we regret the words once they are out of our mouths. The tongue, despite being such a small part of the body, has an influence very much inverse to its size. How many wars, conflicts, divorces, suicides, divisions and distresses have been caused by angry words and unruly tongues!

One writer has said, 'We yield to irritation, retort upon our neighbour, have recourse to self-justification, insist upon the last word, say all that we could say . . . neither party gives up an atom of the will. Pride and passion on both sides strike together like two flints, and what a fire is kindled'. It is almost as though we would rather lose a friend than lose face.

How happy must he be who never regrets the swift retort, the angry response, the sarcastic dig, the instinctive bite of the tongue. The sign of a wise person is not his or her business acumen, nor is it extensive knowledge of a subject. It is the ability to control the tongue. The 'soft answer' which turns away wrath - the kind reply or the gentle comment, in other words - is like water that quenches a flame, defusing a potential row. 'Grievous words', however - the nasty, unkind reaction - are like oil that causes a fire to blaze all the more.

We, who in this modern world claim Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Saviour are encouraged to be compassionate and understanding to one another, 'not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but [on the contrary] blessing'; 1 Pet. 3. 9. After all, our Lord is our great Example in this, for when He was reviled, He 'reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously'; 1 Pet. 2. 23. Think before you reply; it will make all the difference. It is far better to walk away from an altercation regretting what the other person said, rather than regretting what you said.