

North Christian Church -

Pastor Ed Collins

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5/8/16 - The Gospel, Salvation, and Sanctification - Part 83

How To Master the English Bible

By James M. Gray

PTEJC

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McLaren on 1Ti 1:15

That great Gospel which fills the Bible and overflows on the shelves of crowded libraries is here, without harm to its power, folded up into one saying, which the

simplest can understand sufficiently to partake of the salvation which it offers.

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Now, every word there is weighty, and might be, not beaten out, but opened out into volumes.

Perspective Matters

When reading theology, we must tap into the new creature's perspective - the one that never has a problem with the plainly stated things in the Bible.

Big-Picture Reading

If we read the Bible with the Gospel lens, we clearly see God's doctrines, the mind of Christ (1Co 2:16). However, if we read it with a doctrinal lens, we run the risk of losing sight of the Gospel (e.g., 1Co 13).

The Nature of the Early Church

Jesus' ministry was focused on salvation. Being Jewish, and given the Jews part in the Gospel, He often spoke keenly on topics at the forefront of their minds (e.g., the "kingdom of Heaven/God"). The keystone of His message was salvation (not so-called "spiritual maturity").

The Early Church Wasn't Hyper-Categorical

Hyper-categorization runs the risk of disjointed doctrines, which ultimately ruins one's vision of the Gospel in its purest, fullest sense.

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Jesus' Commission From the Father

Fishing implies catching. The focus is not on fisheries, where fish are matured, it is on catching souls (saving them), hence, the great commission He gives His disciples in Mt 28:18-20.

The Life of Jesus

Jesus was born to die. He came to save sinners. His audience was in shambles, a disoriented mess. His focus was to call His sheep to Himself (it was not to somehow mature them). Given the vastness of His ministry, the physicality of it, even, He had much to do regarding the simplicity of the Gospel.

Mature Reading

The central theme in the Bible is the Gospel. The central Person is Jesus Christ. The more "mature" you are, the more you'll read every passage of scripture in light of these two truths, and every passage will amplify them.

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"Spiritual Maturity"

Spiritual maturity is an issue of faith, as a function of humility. The Pharisees example proves that intellect has nothing to do with maturity. God's righteousness is only satisfied by faith given to us as believers.

Get Your Focus Right

The idea of "spiritual maturity" has been blown WAY out of proportion, with some teaching against divine wisdom, even (e.g., Ecc 12:12). Jesus' ministry (and His Great Commission for believers) was NOT focused on so-called maturity, but rather saving souls! "[Making] disciples" (Mt 28:19) means making believers!

"In the know" Garbage

Historically, the flesh has hijacked the simple, pure things of the Gospel for the purpose of self-elevation/-separation/-righteousness. The Pharisees and the Gnostics are examples of this. Today, we have other elitist ideologies that hyper-focus on spiritual maturity in the absence of having even the Gospel full/accurate.

"love is perfected with us"

This doesn't mean that at salvation we become perfect lovers; it means that perfect love is now "with us", providing us with a definite hope and confidence regarding eternal life.

Cambridge Bible Commentary

The Apostle thus anticipates a possible objection. A man may say 'I can love God without loving my brother, and I can prove my love by keeping His commandments' (Jn 14:15). 'Nay', says S. John, 'your own argument shows your error: you cannot keep His commandments without loving your brother'.

Cambridge Bible Commentary

Thus then we have two revelations of God: our brother, who is His image; and His commandment, which is His will. Not to love our brother is a flagrant violation of both. As Pascal puts it, we must know men in order to love them, but we must love God in order to know Him.

The Great Litmus Test

The hallmark of true love is a base desire to live for others. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The Spirit will assure you of your faith by revealing to you His love in you (1Jn 3:19-20; 4:13).

Paul's Ministry

- What is the nature of a well-written introduction, like the one in Php 1?
- What is the primary theme of Paul's ministry, as described from a prison cell?

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LK 19:10

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

MT 4:19-20

*And He *said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."
Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.*

1Pe 2:24

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

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