

## **Rely on the Authority and Guidance of Scripture**

"I like to think of Heaven this way."

"I've always imagined Heaven to be a place where . . . ."

"To me, Heaven is like . . . ."

Have you noticed how people want to take biblical terms, empty them of biblical content, and fill them with their own meaning? Take Heaven, for instance. Everyone wants to go to biblical place called Heaven, but many reject the qualifications for Heaven declared in the Bible and show no interest in the Bible's description of Heaven's activities.

People also tend to repackage the truth about the nature of God and spirituality. They imagine God as they want Him to be ("Well, my God isn't like that!"), despite what God has revealed about Himself in the Bible. And people want to relate to God through their own self-determined kind of spirituality. But God has established His Word—the Bible—as the final authority and infallible guide for true and eternal spirituality.

One reason we should accept the authority and guidance of the Bible is because it is God's self-revelation to us. God is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Timothy 1:17). And unless our invisible Creator revealed Himself to us, we would know nothing about Him. How could we? Anything we might say about Him would be pure speculation. Someone could claim that God has a body of green flesh, three heads, and stands one hundred feet tall. How would he prove that claim, or anyone else prove otherwise? The only completely trustworthy source of information about the nature of God, knowing God, and how to relate to God in our spirituality is the self-revelation of God we call the Bible.

This is why God tells us throughout the Bible to search it for guidance in all things, especially our spirituality. But shouldn't we look to the real-life spiritual experiences of people as equal in authority to the Bible? As helpful as they might be to us, the prophet Isaiah answers, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

As a guide for our spirituality, "The law of the Lord is perfect . . . sure . . . right . . . pure . . . clean . . . true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:7-9). The Bible's counsel for our spiritual life is not just a collection of ancient wisdom, rather as Jesus puts it, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). So Scripture guides our spiritual life by more than mere "principles," but by a real, supernatural power, "For the Word of God is living and powerful . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrew 4:16). All this is so because, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Who but God can tell us about God and guide us in our experience with God? He does so in the Bible. Rely on it.

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