

Single-Minded Devotion to the Word of God

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Introduction: What is the difference between worldly religion and true discipleship?

A. Jesus often weeded out those that were worldly. **(Lk 9:23-24)**

1. Jesus was tender, compassionate, and patient with the sincere. He also often exposed hypocrisy.
2. He wanted people to see their hearts and then make a choice. **(Lk 18:22-24)**
3. Consider how Jesus spoke to the churches of Asia. **(Rev 3:19-20)**

B. Am I a worldly professing follower of Christ?

1. God wants us to see ourselves as He see us. **(Rev 3:15-16)**
2. He does not give up on the worldly follower! He wants us to open our eyes and change! How would I know where I stand with the Lord?
3. What is our true attitude towards the written words of God?

I. How do I actually view God's word?

A. Early Christians were exhorted to test their hearts for sincerity. **(2 Cor 11:3)**

Simplicity - ἀπλότης - singleness, simplicity, sincerity, mental honesty; the virtue of one who is free from pretense and dissimulation

1. There is a single-minded commitment and focus. There is an honest desire to learn and change. **(1 Pt 2:1-3)**
2. The opposite of this is hypocrisy. All understand how it is easy to fake interest. Consider the slacker at work. **(Col 3:22; Eph 6:5)**

B. What does "simplicity" look like?

1. How did the Apostles react to Jesus' warning of betrayal? **(Mk 14:18-19)**
2. Consider the reaction of Josiah in finding the Bible after it was lost for years! **(2 Kings 22:8, 10-11)**
3. The new Christians on Pentecost were taught this attitude. **(Acts 2:42, 46-47)**
4. What does the "simple-hearted" Christian do? How do they think? Who do they want to be around? **(2 Cor 13:5)**

II. The Power of God's word in a heart of simplicity

A. There is no greater power on this earth than God's word. **(Rom 1:16)**

1. When the creator of the universe reveals how we can have His power working for us, we should rejoice! Nothing can defeat this power.
2. God tells us in many ways that His word cannot fail. **(Isa 55:8-11)**
3. There is one thing that can limit this powerful word from blessing us ... the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. **(Heb 4:1-3; Mk 10:21-22)**

B. There are crucial steps to building a heart of "simplicity." **(James 1:21-24)**

1. We must be pushing thoughts, intents, and distractions out of our hearts. This is what daily repentance looks like. We must do some "weeding." **(Mk 4:19)**
2. Also we must learn to regularly read these written words. We must never stop!
3. When we have real intention, we will make the word a part of us.

Implanted - ἐμφύτος - implanted, engrafted; metaphorically, of the Word of God *place in, put within* (JA 1.21)

4. How do we keep from forgetting? What if we seriously do not want to forget? What if we have no concern about forgetting.

III. Those that fail to develop a simple-minded heart will be easily deceived

A. Paul plainly said this to the Corinthians. **(2 Cor 11:2-4)**

1. When something is not very important to you, it is easy to compromise.
2. The worldly religions of today place relationships and money above conviction. In truth, conviction is a threat to them. **(Gal 1:10; 5:11; 6:12)**

B. How can a local church equip each Christian to “make faith their own?”

1. It is an crucial goal because until they do there is great danger. **(Eph 4:14-15)**
2. When we let others do the teaching and accept what we like, then we are still children. **(Heb 5:12-14)**

C. Imagine trying to play chess with a grandmaster. We do not have a chance.

1. Now imagine trying to match your mind against the powerful spiritual being called Satan. **(Eph 4:14, 6:11-13; 1 Pt 5:8)**

Wiles - μεθοδεία - method, procedure; in the NT in a bad sense, as scheming to deceive *craftiness, cunning, deception* (EP 4.14); plural *stratagems, cunning attacks, tricks* (EP 6.11)

2. Jesus tried to warn Peter about the power of this great deceiver. **(Lk 22:31-34)**
3. What kind of thinking could have led Peter to ignore this warning? What kind of thinking can we similarly engage in?

D. The greatest step in overcoming deception is to “press towards” having a pure heart. **(Mt 5:6-8; Prov 22:11)**

1. Because of God’s mercy I can find repentance and forgiveness.
2. It takes effort and pain to be honest about what is in your own heart. Taking the easy way will never lead to repentance. **(Prov 27:19; Jer 17:9-10; 2 Cor 7:8-9)**

IV. How Satan seeks to remove the word of God from the unstable heart

A. Satan simply cannot stand against God’s word in an honest, mature heart.

1. Imagine Satan running away like a scared dog! **(1 Pt 5:8-9; James 4:7)**
2. Jesus showed us what the “implanted” word looks like in temptation! **(Mt 4:6-10)**

3. What if one does not take the word of God seriously? **(Mk 4:15)**

B. Consider the attacks coming from religious seminaries.

1. The common man cannot understand the Bible without the “clergy.” **(Eph 3:3-4; 5:17)**
2. The Bible cannot be understood by if that’s all you read. We must have knowledgeable theologians tell us what the cultural context is.
3. Did Paul see the need to explain “cultural context” to the churches? He told others to share his writings. **(Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Pt 3:1-2)**

C. Do not let men take your Bible from you! **(Isa 35:8; Acts 11:14)**

Conclusion: What is my commitment to understand and keep God’s word? **(1 Jn 5:2-4)**