

Blake Gillen
Grace Bible Institute
November 15, 2017

Glorifying God With His Word

Tonight we want to finish our first study in the Grace Bible Institute on Bibliology looking at how to glorify God moving forward with His Word. In this class we've spent time looking at the inspiration of Scripture, the inerrancy of Scripture, the infallibility of Scripture, the illumination of Scripture and tonight we want to finish with some ways to glorify God with Scripture. That's the reason God gave us His Word - His glory is the goal of everything.

I know that most of you follow the United States National Soccer team diligently. Therefore, you won't be shocked when I remind you that in the last few weeks the United States National Team failed to do something - do any of you know what the US soccer team recently failed to do? **They failed to qualify for the World Cup that is taking place this summer in Russia.** Countries with less than half the population of America made it to the world cup, but we couldn't get a win at Trinidad and Tobago to make it in. We are a nation of 327 million people and we couldn't beat a team from a country whose population is smaller than Dallas, Texas.

What's the problem with the US Soccer team? There are many problems. One of the main problems if you ever want to waste two hours watching a soccer game is that we don't pass the ball very well. Other teams that we play spread their 10 field players out around the field and they pass the ball well - **in other words, they let the ball do the work.** The US soccer team chases the ball while the other teams spread out and passes the ball and lets the ball do the work.

Picture someone standing 15 yards away from me. What would be easier - To dribble the soccer ball all the way to the other person or to swing my short leg back and kick the ball to the other person? **We lose soccer games because we don't pass the ball very well.** We don't let the ball do the work.

What does any of this have to do with benefitting from the Bible? **Throughout Scripture we learn that the Word of God does the work of God.** Let me quote a few verses from the Old Testament and the New Testament that remind us of this very important truth about Scripture:

Isaiah 55:9-11

- 9 “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.
- 10 “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
And do not return there without watering the earth
And making it bear and sprout,
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
- 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.

Hebrews 4:11-12

- 11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience.
- 12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

James 1:21

- 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

1 Peter 1:22-25

- 22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,
- 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.
- 24 For,
 “All flesh is like grass,
 And all its glory like the flower of grass.
 The grass withers,
 And the flower falls off,
- 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever.”
And this is the word which was preached to you.

Remember Spurgeon compared Scripture to a lion - you don't defend a lion, you let it out of its cage and it will defend itself. These verses are a reminder that the word of God accomplishes the work of God - It never returns void, cuts to the heart, causes sinners to be born again and endures forever. Jesus prayed in John 17:17 for those who would come to believe in His word through the apostles, "Sanctify them by the truth; Thy word is truth." The truth of Scripture is what God uses to save us and to make us more like Christ.

Tonight I want to finish our time looking at 3 ways to glorify God moving forward with your Bible:

1. Keep believing the Word - 1 Thessalonians 2:13

1 Thessalonians 2:13 is a very powerful verse about something Paul thanked God for in the Thessalonians believers. Please take your Bible and turn to 1 Thessalonians 2:13. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 is a verse that packs a very powerful punch.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

- 13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

What is Paul doing in this section of 1 Thessalonians? It's been a while since he has communicated personally with this church. If you read Acts 17 Paul was only in this city for a short time preaching the gospel before he was forced to move on. **Paul moved on from these people physically but he never moved on from them in his heart.** This church was very dear to the apostle Paul even though he had only known them for a short time. He mentioned them often in his prayers as he reflected on the good work God began in their life.

The same thing kept happening to Paul time and time again. He would go to a city, preach the gospel, people would come to know the Lord, a church would start and then Paul would leave and false teachers would come in behind him. False teachers would sweep in after Paul left and try and wreak havoc on the church. One of the main ways false teachers would cause problems was to try and discredit Paul - who he was and the message he preached.

Chapter 2 is Paul's defense against insinuations that he had ministered in Thessalonica with ulterior motives. Paul didn't like having to defend himself but sometimes he was left with no choice. His character was under attack once again when he wrote 1 Thessalonians. How does Paul shepherd them through this major challenge?

Paul begins with his witness - He reminds these people in chapter 2 how he lived among them. By the way he conducted himself in Thessalonica it was clear that he didn't have ulterior motives. Paul provided for his own living expenses and he cared for these people spiritually the way a new mother cares for her newborn baby physically. Paul lived a life approved by God.

In verse 13 Paul shifts from his witness to his words. He reminds them where His words came from and how the word had worked in their lives. "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it not as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God." Again, this verse packs some power.

Notice the description of what the Thessalonians did with Paul's message - They received it, they accepted it. **Paul continually thanks God that the Thessalonians not only heard the message and intellectually understood the message, but they appropriated it - They welcomed it into their hearts.** Chapter 2:13-16 really echoes the ministry of the Spirit in chapter 1:6-8 and verse 10. Remember the Spirit is the one who opens our eyes to the majesty of Christ through the gospel.

D. Edmond Hiebert, "“When you received” looks back to the time when the Thessalonians heard the message being preached to them. It records their active response to the message."

Notice in the middle of verse 13 the significance of the message they received and responded to. Notice in the middle of verse 13 Paul reminds them where his message actually came from - "**when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it not as* the word of men.**" This is a really important description of how we benefit from the Bible. To glorify God we must keep going back and reminding ourselves that men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Kevin Zuber, "The self-authenticating Word of God had performed its work of convicting and convincing them of the truth of Paul's message (cf. 1Co 2:4-5; Col 1:6). "The verb rendered performs its work means to work effectively,

efficiently, and productively on a supernatural (divine) level (cf. 1 Cor. 12:6; Php 2:13" (MacArthur, *Thessalonians*, 58)."

Kevin D. Zuber, "[1 Thessalonians](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1882.

Paul defends his message in the middle of verse 13 with a negative reminder and a positive reminder. What's the negative reminder? The negative reminder is especially important to a local church dealing with false teachers. **The negative fact is that Paul's words were not the words of men.** I think Paul is writing to the Thessalonians believers but he has the false teachers in view as well. They're in the scope.

The false teachers words originated in men. **Paul's words were different.** Today, we face similar challenges. People everywhere claiming to have a word from God - a new word from the Lord leading multitudes astray because it is nothing more than the words of men that have no power to touch or to transform the soul.

D. Edmond Heibert on the origin of Paul's message - "It is not a humanly originated message, like the teachings of the religious quacks and charlatans who were everywhere exploiting the gullible people with their pretensions."

Paul's gospel words did not have their origin in man

What's the positives reminder? Keep reading in verse 13, "But for what it really is, the word of God." This is what set Paul apart from the fellas that were now causing problems in the church. **The word but is a strong contrast and it represents a positive fact.** In the context, Paul is referring back to the oral message of the gospel that God sent him to preach. Paul is referring back to the gospel, the spoken word of God. **His spoken words were God's Words.**

What false teachers and unbelievers say about Scripture doesn't change Scripture. **Scripture is unalterable.** It cannot be broken. And it had done its work in these people - Turning pagans into genuine pursuers of Christ.

Now, notice the last part of verse 13. This is what I really want you to see. Paul is still thanking God for what this church did with his message in the past. Now he moves from the past to the present. It says, "**The word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.**" The word performs the work. Do you see that? Who is Paul giving credit for the transformation of the Thessalonians? The Word of God does the work of God in all who believe it.

The greek word that is translated works is where we get the word energy. Paul knew the energizing power of the Word of God when the Spirit of God was working through it. Paul loved this description of the Word. Eighteen of the twenty-one occurrences of the verb rendered "works" (*energeō*) in the New Testament are in Paul's letters.

Paul preached the gospel and the Holy Spirit energized it. Hiebert, "The effect it had wrought in their lives was widely known; it turned them to God from idols, committed them to the service of the living God, and gave them the hope of the return of the risen Christ as their Savior from the coming wrath (1:9–10). Such a transforming experience convinces every believer that what he has accepted is truly the Word of God. **No humanly contrived message can produce such results.**"

Notice you who believe is in the present tense. They kept believing. When you read 1 Thessalonians it becomes clear that coming to faith in Christ made their life a lot more difficult. Maybe you can remember trying to teach your kids to swim. Normally you try and let them get the hang of it in the shallow end a little

bit before you take them to the deep end. But other people teach their children the old fashioned way - Throw them in the deep end and see what happens.

These baby believers were saved and thrown into the deep end. Satan was assaulting their faith and society was making life difficult because now they worshipped the one true God instead of all the other false gods. Everything in that city revolved around the gods that were being worshipped. But through it all these baby believers kept the faith. They kept believing.

Romans 1:16-17 are the key verses of Romans.

- 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- 17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."

There is a growing temptation as our world continues to spiral out of control to be ashamed of the gospel and to turn away from aligning with Christ and the absolute truth of His Word. Paul felt it. I'm sure you feel that pressure from time to time. No one said this was going to be easy.

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. Why? Because he knew what it was. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the almighty power of God directed toward toward the salvation of those who stand under divine wrath. Eternal issues are at stake in this. Souls are at stake in this - Your soul and my soul and the souls around us. No other message contains the power of God unto salvation. **Paul's understanding of the gospel made him not yield to the temptation to be ashamed of the gospel but live to proclaim it.**

Where are you at tonight? I know that many of you are going through hard times right now. Life is tough. There are no shortage of challenges to follow Jesus Christ on the narrow road that leads to life when most people are on the broad road that leads to destruction. I think I understand that. I lived in the real

world for 29 years before I became a pastor. I know its tough to let your light shine for Christ in the midst of a dark and depraved society.

At the very top of the totem pole of our priorities must be continuing in the faith. Value what is eternal over what it temporal. How do we do this? Last week we looked at 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." Get into the Word and let the Spirit of God show you the glory of Christ. Be teachable. Be humble. Stick with the Savior remembering that He will never leave you or forsake you.

The second way we glorify God with our Bible's is by:

2. **Keep proclaiming the Word - 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10**

This is another area in which Paul gave thanks for the Thessalonians. Look back with me to the first chapter:

1 Thessalonians 1:6-10

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

Every local church is known for something. This church was known for receiving the word and proclaiming the word. They received the word but they didn't just keep it to themselves. Look at verse 8, "For the word of the Lord has sounded

forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything."

This church was an exemplary church. Why? **Because they gathered together for worship and they scattered to witness.** It was a dangerous thing in Paul's day to sound forth the word of the Lord. Follow Paul around in the book of Acts. **That guy was either getting beaten or recovering for getting beaten for the gospel.** But he didn't back down and neither were the Thessalonians. **Too much was at stake - The glory of God and the souls of people were at stake.**

Richard Mayhue paints a vivid picture of this exemplary church - "Just as the word came to them from Paul (1:5), just as the word was embraced by them (1:6), so the word had been literally 'trumpeted' or 'reverberated' wherever the Thessalonians travelled, both in Greece (**Macedonia and Achaia**) and **also in every place their faith toward God** (1:8) had **gone out**. Thus, their ministry of reproduction had gone beyond their own city, their own region, their own nation, to ultimately have an *international* scope. Their message was like a thunderous echo that continued to sound forth."

To glorify God with our Bible's we have to receive it the right way but we can't stop there. We can't make it our goal to be secret service Christians where our goal is to make sure only Jesus knows we believe in Him. That's not the way it's supposed to be. We can't be gospel ball hogs. We've been given the treasure of God in jars of clay.

Who are you sounding forth the word of the Lord to? What unbelievers are you trying to help understand the gospel the right way? When was the last time you helped someone understand Scripture the right way? I'm not sure there is a greater privilege than to open God's Word and read it and explain it in love to someone else.

3. Keep Studying the Word - 2 Timothy 2:15

To glorify God with our Bible's we have to be willing to put in some hard work - To work up a sanctified sweat. In his last letter to Timothy Paul provides Timothy with a pattern for his ministry that is a model for everyone wanting to make a difference in this world for Christ:

2 Timothy 2:15

- 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

This verse provides a great motivation to how we study the Bible. Even though it was written for a pastor it has relevance for every believer wanting to honor Christ. To glorify God with our study of Scripture there is a plan to follow:

a. **Diligence**

Paul's command to Timothy to be diligent is not an option - it's a command. It's a word that combines urgency and effort. Diligent study of Scripture is required for this servant of the Lord and for every servant of the Lord

b. **Direction**

What direction should we have in mind when we study Scripture? Be diligent to present yourself approved to who? Present yourself approved to God. This picture of presentation is used in other places of a bride being presented to her husband for the first time. Her goal no doubt is to please her husband. We study Scripture with the ultimate desire to please an audience of One. Our goal is to study in such a way to be approved by God Himself because we took the time to understand His word His way.

c. Dedication

Notice the middle part of the verse, "as a workman who does not need to be ashamed." The way we handle Scripture leads to shame or honor. Our goal is to dedicate ourselves to the study of Scripture so that we get to the end, stand before Jesus and hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

d. Devotion

"Accurately handling the word of truth." To accurately handle the word means to cut it straight. It's the picture of a farmer plowing a straight furrow, an engineer making a straight road, a stone mason cutting a square stone, and even a priest cutting an animal the right way for a sacrifice.

John Kitchen, "Paul is calling Timothy to be a man of the Word, to avoid being led off into pointless debate and controversy, to keep holding forth the gospel in a clear and pointed manner. While others absorb themselves in pointless debate, the one whom God will approve keeps clear-headset and tenaciously faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ."

God will approve our labor if its done with the right effort, the right motive, the right ethic and the right skill.

Let's close with some final thoughts on interpretation:

Several important principles are basic in the interpretation of Scripture. This last section is from a section in Paul Enns book called The Moody Handbook of Theology and it shows the basic way we interpret Scripture at Grace Bible Church. It's called the literal, historical, grammatical hermeneutic.

Literal Interpretation

Literal interpretation means the words and sentences of Scripture are understood in their *normal* meaning—the ways that words are understood in normal communication. It is a literal or normal meaning of words that is the basis of communication. Biblically there is a precedence for interpreting the New Testament literally. Old Testament prophecies like Psalm 22; Isaiah 7:14; 53:1–12; and Micah 5:2 have all been fulfilled literally.

Grammatical Relationships

Because we acknowledge the verbal (words) and plenary (full) inspiration of Scripture it is incumbent on us to pay attention to the words of Scripture. Grammatical relationships are important to study because words stand in relationship to one another; therefore, it is necessary to study verb tenses, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and laws of structure.

Historical Context

The historical context is important as a framework from which to interpret the Scriptures. Every book of Scripture was written in a historical context that should be understood in order to help interpret the book accurately.

Literary Context

Interpreting in context involves three main steps.

Study the immediate context. The immediate context should be carefully studied; several paragraphs preceding and following the passage should be studied.

Study the more remote context. The major segment of the book (usually 2–3 chaps.) in which the passage occurs should be studied.

Consider the context of the entire book. The emphasis of the entire book should be studied.

Paul Enns, [*The Moody Handbook of Theology*](#), ed. Jim Vincent and Allan Sholes, Revised and Expanded. (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 180–181.

So, what do we do with this class moving forward? How do we glorify God with His inspired, inerant, infallible Word? We glorify God be continuing to believe His Word, continuing to proclaim His Word and continuing to study His Word to be approved to God.

We will pick up again in our Grace Bible Institute on January 10 with a study of Theology Proper - An 8 week study of God the Father.