

EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH –May, 2023

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GOD'S WORD versus MAN'S WORD

The great battle in life is for the MIND! As a person thinks in their heart, so are they (Prov. 23:7). Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."

People function according to a belief system. Every person has a belief system that is either based on man's word or God's word. Satan is the master of this world's system (cf. Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). As the "god" of this age, Satan "deceives the whole world" (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9). Diabolical as he is - he is good at what he does. The voice of man, independent of God, really reflects the voice of Satan. When Peter spoke out of line Jesus rebuked him saying, "*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*" (Mt. 16:23) Note, as stated by Jesus, the things of men reflect the things of Satan!

Paul said we don't wrestle with flesh and blood but rather with the forces of darkness (Eph. 6:12). Our real battle is with the demonic forces of evil but they often work through people (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Everyone has a worldview tethered to Satan or to God! We either put our stock in man's word (fueled by demons) or God's Word (inspired by the Holy Spirit). We either have a humanistic/naturalistic worldview or a biblical/God-centered worldview. And the view that you hold reveals who or what you are trusting in.

When the devil, in the form of a serpent, came to Eve in the garden, the great test was over the Word of God. Would she believe the devil's word (that appealed to human wisdom independent of God) or would she strictly hold to God's Word? The devil subtly challenged God's Word saying, "***Has God indeed said***" (Gen. 3:1). This is consistently the devil's strategy and he has used it with great effectiveness from the beginning.

Jeremiah 17:5-8 draws a strong contrast between the person who trusts in man and is cursed and the person who trusts in God and is blessed. Everyone belongs to one of these two categories. It's all about WHO or WHAT one is going to trust. And Jeremiah 17:9 goes on to say, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*". A wicked heart leads one away from trusting in God. The wise person builds their life upon the ROCK of Christ's Word which withstands the storms of time. The foolish person builds their life upon the SAND of human wisdom and in the end it all comes crashing down (Matt. 7:24-27).

Satan's great attack is always against the Word of God. And the battle for the mind is always over whether we are going to believe God or Satan spewing lies through his representatives (2 Cor. 11:13-15). The issue is always this: Are we going to believe God's Word (the Bible) or are we going to believe other voices?

All the great battles of the day are over God's truth versus humanistic/Satanic lies! The battle lines over Creationism versus Evolution; over the gospel of grace; over morality; over the roles of men and women, etc., are all in effect an issue of AUTHORITY! What is the voice of AUTHORITY in all these matters? Is it the Word of God or is it the word of man?

The battle is for the mind and whom we will believe! It is a FAITH issue! In 1 Corinthians 1-3 Paul contrasts human/worldly wisdom with God's revealed truth. Paul here WARNS, "*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.*" (1 Cor. 3:18) And in that very context he severely warns that if "*anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him.*" (1 Cor. 3:17). To defile the temple of God (the people of God) with worldly wisdom is MOST serious!

Thot: For the faithful the Word of God ALONE is our authority in all matters of faith and practice!

Earnestly Contending, Pastor Dwight J. Oswald