

THE DOCTRINE OF SUFFICIENCY

Satan has been very good at conditioning the church to buy into a monstrous deception. Instead of SUFFICIENCY, we are conditioned to accept INTEGRATION – that is: We need God, but we also need other experts to cope with life; we need the Bible, but we also need psychology; we need the Spirit, but we also need drugs; we need godly counsel, but we also need worldly wisdom; we need God’s people, but we also need professional help, etc.

I am not saying that there is no place for doctors, medicine, etc. (although I think there is tremendous abuse), but I am saying we live in a context that has conditioned the average Christian to believe he does not really have all the SPIRITUAL RESOURCES he needs to cope with life.

But what does the Bible say?

Colossians 2:10 (NKJV)

10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

2 Timothy 3:17 (NKJV)

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:3 (NKJV)

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

IS GOD AND HIS RESOURCES ENOUGH?

Although the Bible CLEARLY teaches that God has provided EVERYTHING we need to have spiritual life and to live godly lives, the doctrine of SUFFICIENCY is consistently under major attack. This attack is often subtle and often comes from those who claim to be “Christian” and friends of the Bible, as well as those who are in open rebellion against God and His Word. However, whether carried out in ignorance or in willful defiance, many have joined together in this great challenge to THE DOCTRINE OF SUFFICIENCY.

It is clearly stated in the Word, it is often still found to some degree in doctrinal statements, and it is often on the lips of Christians, but I fear that in reality MANY evangelicals no longer really believe that God’s spiritual

resources (His Word, His Spirit, His gifted body) are truly SUFFICIENT concerning “all matters of faith and practice.”

They may say they hold to “sufficiency,” but I am concerned that, in practice, they deny it. They claim “sufficiency,” but in their heart, they don’t really believe it, and they fall prey to “idolatrous” sources of trust. They no longer really believe that the “fruit of the Spirit” is enough.

It reminds me of what Paul said would characterize the last days.

2 Timothy 3:5 (NKJV)

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NKJV)

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

THIS IS NOT A NEW ATTACK

In reality, THE DOCTRINE OF SUFFICIENCY has been under attack since the early days of the church. It is a VITAL doctrine concerning the spiritual health of believers and has, therefore, been under ATTACK from the beginning. This is why both Paul and Peter, in their last inspired letters both emphasized that God has given us all we need pertaining to life, godliness, and service (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4).

The last letter Paul wrote was 2 Timothy. He knew that he was about to die (cf. 4:6). Paul in 2 Timothy 3:15 emphasizes that the Word is able to show us how to be saved and goes on to show that it is fully sufficient to EQUIP us for every good work in 3:16-17. He then drives home to Timothy: “PREACH THE WORD” (4:2)! It is all-sufficient – it is what people need, although in the “last days,” people will reject this truth (cf. 4:3-4).

Likewise, Peter in writing 2 Peter knows he is about to die (cf. 1:14). Last words are important words and right from the start Peter emphasizes that God has given us all we need pertaining to life and godliness (cf. 1:3-4). The rest of the book builds on this premise! Indeed, if we are to properly “add” virtues to our faith as Peter goes on to emphasize (2 Pt. 1:5-7), we must then build on this foundation of sufficiency. Otherwise, we may well find ourselves “stumbling” into the kingdom (cf. 1:10) instead of

experiencing an “abundant entrance” into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (cf. 1:11).

“Bring the Book,” said Sir Walter Scott, when dying. “What book?” asked his friend. “There is only ONE Book – the Bible,” replied the dying man.