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TRAINING FOR GUYS



The Bible. Is it better than life itself?

We've been talking about the Bible this year so far, and our need to read it more.

The first thing to teach younger Christian men (and women) is the same as the last thing to teach them: if you want to follow Jesus you have to know His Word.

The Bible teaches us all we need to be made right with Christ. For instance, it says:

1 Thessalonians 5:9: **For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Romans 10:9: **if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

Let's just stick with those two truths from scripture for now. If we **know** them, we are on solid ground. We can counter the lies that (often well meaning) people say because it does not feel right that we have to do nothing to get right with God. The same can be said for countless other truths that scripture teaches us about Jesus, about God, about our relationship with Him.

We are fortunate, because there is a Bible in our house. We can read it. For centuries, Christians had no Bibles – the ones that existed were locked up in churches and in Latin. Because of this, false doctrines were able to grow up and were taught.

During the Reformation, men like Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Cranmer rediscovered the Bible and got it translated into their languages. For this most of them were burnt at the stake.

They were burnt because what they taught offended and contradicted the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. That Church **has not changed its teaching** even to this day. On the next page you can see some snippets of that teaching, taken from up to date Catholic websites. Opposite it you can see the fate of Christians in the past who have opposed it.

They went to gruesome deaths because of their love of Scripture. Do we love it 'unto death'? Do we read it enough?

When it comes to the issues where Christians are called bigots today do we

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Catholic Teachings

from catholic.com and vatican.va,
quoting the Council of Trent,
Vatican 2 and Pope JP II

.. the practice of indulgences is beneficial because it teaches us to "know and see that it is evil and bitter for us to forsake...the Lord our God."... While it is true that indulgences are free gifts, they are granted only on fixed conditions for the living as well as for the dead. To gain indulgences the work prescribed must be done.

CANON 9: "If any one says, that by Faith Alone the sinner is Justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema."

CANON 12: "If any sinner shall say that Justifying Faith is nothing else than full Confidence in the Divine Mercy pardoning Sins of Jesus Christ, or that it is that Confidence Alone by which we are Justified ... let him be accursed"

'The Eucharist is a true sacrifice, not just a commemorative meal, as "Bible Christians" insist' (copied verbatim from catholic.com)

Catholic Catechism point 1414: As sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines purgatory as a "purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven," which is experienced by those "who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified" (CCC 1030). It notes that "this final purification of the elect . . . is entirely different from the punishment of the damned" (CCC 1031).

The purification is necessary because, as Scripture teaches, nothing unclean will enter the presence of God in heaven (Rev. 21:27) and, while we may die with our mortal sins forgiven, there can still be many impurities in us, specifically venial sins and the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.

It is a divinely revealed truth that sins bring punishments inflicted by God's sanctity and justice. These must be expiated either on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and calamities of this life and above all through death,(3) or else in the life beyond through fire and torments or "purifying" punishments.

"Protestants" who stood against these teachings

John Wycliffe (1320-1384)

Wycliffe produced the first English translation of the Bible. In 1374 he denounced the sale of indulgences and verbally attacked the Pope. From this point on Wycliffe had severe opposition from Rome and from the church in England. The Pope issued five decrees (Bulls) against him and condemned him on nineteen different charges concerning his writings. Forty years after his death, John Wycliffes's bones were dug up and burnt by order of the Roman church.

John Huss (1369-1414)

Huss was stirred by his knowledge of the Bible. He read the works of John Wycliffe and he started preaching in a chapel in Prague known as the Bethlehem Chapel. This chapel was established to allow people to hear the Bible in their own tongue The Pope excommunicated Huss and forced him out of Prague. In 1414 Huss was summoned for trial before the General Council of Constance. He was promised a safe conduct so he went to defend himself. Huss was burnt at the stake because he revealed truth to ordinary people.

William Tyndale (1494-1536) & Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English was printed under the continual threat of discovery and persecution and had to be smuggled into England. The Roman church worked hard to stop the Bible being circulated. They burnt every copy they could and people found with them faced death. The Roman church eventually managed to capture Tyndale and he was burnt at the stake in October 1536. He prayed aloud that God would 'open the eyes of the King of England'. In 1538 Cranmer advised the king to order that a copy of the Bible was placed in every church in England. Thus Tyndale had his last prayer answered. Henry VIII was succeeded by his son Edward VI but he was soon dead and Mary became queen. She made a determined effort to re-impose Roman Catholicism and a period of persecution of the Protestant believers began.

Over three hundred people were burnt at the stake. This included Thomas Cranmer. Under pressure he recanted his Protestant faith but he was still sentenced to be burnt at the stake. But on the verge of glory Cranmer denounced the Pope as the Antichrist.

William Hunter (1535-1555)

William Hunter was publicly burned in his home town of Brentwood in Essex because he was found reading the Bible in English for himself. He was 19 years old.

It must not be forgotten that many Roman Catholics have also been martyred, by Protestants, in this country and elsewhere. Martyrdom does not justify a cause or belief, but the question is **what is it** that we are standing for and prepared to die for?

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Graphics sourced from the internet

Bible Study Series

We continue our series on 1 Peter, and start chapter 2.

We're joined together as Living Stones, to Jesus, the Cornerstone of our faith and the Temple of God.

Read the passage, and go to www.tfgministries.org.uk/podcasts and join in.

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just flow with the tide or do we know clearly what the Bible says?

Do we look back on the likes of those martyrs and think they were just ignorant, they wasted their lives standing up for things that are not important?

As one Pope resigns, and a new one is chosen, there won't be any significant changes in Catholic teaching. I'm not saying there aren't Catholics who are truly born again and saved, but the Catholic religion is not biblically true. Sadly, some of its errors have gained a larger audience amongst protestant Christians.

That can only be because we have lost sight of the Bible as the key and fundamental doctrine of our faith. It has stopped being the source of all that is.

Article 6 of the Church of England's 39 Articles, written by Cranmer and others to refute Catholic heresies, says

VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that **whatsoever is not read therein**, nor may be proved thereby, is **not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith**, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church."



So, as Lent starts, commit to reading the Bible more. Try to make yourself think about what you have read at least twice during the following day. And write things you learn on our facebook pages (tfgministries.org.uk/facebook) to help us all. The more we know scripture, the more we are protected from untruths that come from both ends of the 'church', and outside it.

I've used something that is a major news item this week (incase you missed it, the Pope's resigned) to make a point about how well we know the Bible. I could have written this around the debate on marriage, or whether or not it is right to live together before marrying, or what we believe about X or Y.

The point is, we all need to give Scripture a higher place in our thinking and minds. None of us have it high enough. Psalm 119 says many things about God's Word – for instance
43 Never take your word of truth from my mouth, for I have put my hope in your laws.
97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

It always challenges me when I read it, for my devotion to God's Word (and hence Him Himself) is so much less committed than the writer of that Psalm.