

The Bible is Better than the Yellow Pages

Text: II Timothy 3:15-17

Introduction: It's a rainy day. You have the day off. There's a bit of chill in the air so you think, "I'll just stay home, brew some hot tea or coffee, find a comfortable chair, and read a book. What book shall I read? Oh, I know I'll read the Yellow Pages.

You would think that would be a good choice by the way it's promoted. Some years ago we would hear the deep resonating voice of James Earl Jones saying, "No book can match the Yellow Pages." If it's not here, it doesn't exist. Now it is touted as "The Better Book." Well it is a book that offers a lot of answers. And it could be a good resource for catchy business titles. But the book has its limitations. It is obsolete in a short period of time. In just one year a number of businesses move or fail. After a year it's like a used Christmas tree.

There is another book called the Holy Bible. Of it you can say, "**If it is in there it exists.**" I admit that the two books are written for different purposes and in that sense are not comparable. But it appears to me that some folks use the two books in similar ways. Say you have a need. You might say, "I wonder if the bible says anything about that need?" I want to find a word of comfort. Maybe there's a word about worry. Is there a word about temptation?

Then there are questions we want answers to. What does the Bible say about gambling? Does it prohibit eating pork? How does the Bible respond to war? So some look at the Bible like it's an encyclopedia of religious information. **The main purpose of the bible is not to serve as an answer book.** The bible is more than a **counseling resource**. Others see it as a jewelry box with choice verbal gems or jewels to dress up our day. The words of S. Maxwell Coder in his book, *God's Will For Your Life*, might be helpful: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT GOD HAS OFTEN BROUGHT A CERTAIN VERSE TO THE ATTENTION OF HIS CHILDREN IN AN UNUSUAL AND ALMOST MIRACULOUS MANNER, FOR A SPECIAL NEED, BUT THE WORD WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BE CONSULTED IN A SUPERSTITIOUS MANNER.

What then is the major emphasis? It is God's message to us. Information, inspiration and counseling can only come from the Bible to those who realize that the Bible is filled with God's questions to us. God is asking the questions and we need to come up with the right answers.

Man, woman, boy and girl, Where are you? Do you have any idea of my holiness and my perfections? Are you aware of the wide gap there is between my expectations and your performance? Do you know the high cost I've paid for your rescue from the bondage of sin? Are you ready to bury your pride and self-righteousness? To humble and joyfully acknowledge Jesus, my Son as your one and only Savior? Are you prepared to stand before an Awesome Holy God who cannot condone sin and explain why you have had no interest in Him or His gift of eternal life? Do you

know the consequences of death without Jesus as your one and only Savior? Are you aware of the frail and fleeting life that you have on earth? Do you know that I created you for a purpose and that your life needs an eternal and spiritual purpose?

My proposal to you is that many have not understood that they need to be reading the Bible because it was designed to either speak to us or about us. It is a proactive book and not a passive book. It isn't a matter of owning a bible, it is a matter of allowing it to search us and know us. One passage that shows the proactive quality of the Bible very clearly is Hebrews 4:12-13. The writer pictures the Bible as a fearless weapon. In Ephesians it is called "the sword of the Spirit." Do you find yourself nervous around weapons? A vial of nerve gas? A ticking time bomb? The Bible penetrates into the deepest crevices our minds, it judges our secret thoughts, and it criticizes our unholy opinions. ONE WOULD BE A FOOL TO RUN THEIR FINGER ACROSS THE KEENLY SHARPENED EDGE OF A KNIFE. [I would encourage the communicator to prepare an Invocation to the audience to begin a daily Bible reading Schedule. There are several on the internet that can be adjusted to reading the Bible through in a year or two years. This sermon may also lead the communicator to a second message where the Bible is shown to be The Father's Love Letters to His Children. I am persuaded that we need to enlist more daily Bible readers in the churches.]