



## A Simple and Pure Devotion to Jesus Christ

PART THREE

APRIL 2024

**Text: 2 Corinthians 11:1-15**

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:3

In this article, we continue looking at ways to maintain a simple and pure devotion to Jesus Christ. First, we said one must “Know and, by faith, cling to the truth of Scripture.” Our mission has been primarily among indigenous people. Although, as believers, they are small in number, one might be surprised at their knowledge of Christ and the Christian faith when most of them are ordinary men who only have a Bible.

One reason the church is declining in America is too much dependence on extrabiblical sources rather than the Bible itself. If we are just seeking knowledge, Scripture warns us of the danger of becoming prideful and even arrogant, and there goes our simple and pure devotion to Christ.<sup>i</sup> If we seek our knowledge from the Bible, it will build our faith,<sup>ii</sup> teach us, reprove us, correct us, train us, equip us<sup>iii</sup> and discern the thoughts and intentions of our hearts.<sup>iv</sup>

Looking beyond the Bible as a primary source of knowledge is not new and can be traced back at least to the Reformation. Horatius Bonar (1808- 1889) realized the problem when he wrote:

We have not duly studied and honored the Word of God. We have given a greater prominence to man's writings, man's opinions, man's systems in our studies and to the Word. We have drunk more out of human cisterns than divine. We have held more communion with man than with God. Hence the mold and fashion of our spirits, our lives, our words, have been derived more from man than from God. We must study the Bible more. We must steep our souls in it.<sup>v</sup>

This is not to say that there are no benefits in what is brought forth by scholars, theologians, popular pastors, and teachers, past and present, but as Bonar pointed out, this should not take precedence over what God has revealed. We easily forget that the best of men are still men.

Second, to maintain a simple and pure devotion to Jesus Christ, we must grow in our knowledge of Him. From Scripture, we read:

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. <sup>vi</sup>

“Knowledge of Christ and knowledge about Christ are... both the safeguard against heresy and apostasy and also the means of growth in grace.”<sup>vii</sup> The Lord set the example of simplicity both in His life and in His gospel. D.M. Lloyd Jones (1899-1981) writes:

The secret of the simplicity of the gospel is this. Jesus of Nazareth, being the Son of God and living in perfect correspondence and communion with His Father, had all knowledge. He knew what was important, and what was unimportant: and He ignored the unimportant, and gave Himself solely and entirely to the important things of life. He disregarded the irrelevant, and gave Him utterly and only to the relevant, and to that which ultimately matters. The secret of the simplicity of the gospel lies in the fact that He brushed aside everything but the one supreme question of the soul's need. That is, clearly, an utter contradiction of all our modern ideas and conceptions. We, today, tend to judge a man's greatness, not by his simplicity, but by his complexity. Yet here was the very Son of God, and even the little children got something from Him: ordinary fisherfolk followed Him- ‘the common people heard Him gladly’.<sup>viii</sup>

In the 1st century, Christians gloried in the fact that their message had been revealed by God in His wisdom and not to the wise and highly placed, but to humble believing people. It did not bother them that they were seen as uninstructed, ignorant, despised with a message only for the simple, women and children.<sup>ix</sup> Yet it was these common people who turned the world upside down for Christ in an empire that was totally depraved.<sup>x</sup>

To continue in a simple and pure devotion to Jesus Christ we must be "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith." <sup>xi</sup> We are to “keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”<sup>xii</sup> The Lord is the theme of both the Old and New Testaments. You can find Him there every day!

Next: The Third Line of Defense

*All articles in this publication are written by Pastor Tom Watson unless stated otherwise.*

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<sup>i</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:1

<sup>ii</sup> Romans 10:17

<sup>iii</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

<sup>iv</sup> Hebrews 4:12

<sup>v</sup> Horatio Bonar, Words for Winner of Souls P. 43, 44

<sup>vi</sup> 2 Peter 3:18

<sup>vii</sup> Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary, quoting M. Green p. 348

<sup>viii</sup> D.M. Jones, Evangelical Sermons, The Banner of Truth Trust.

Quoted in The Evangelism Mandate, David Larsen p. 96

<sup>ix</sup> Michael Green, Evangelism in The Early Church p.44-51

<sup>x</sup> Acts 17:6

<sup>xi</sup> Hebrews 12:2

<sup>xii</sup> Colossians 3:1