

Can You Handle It? (Part 1)

The handling of the Word of God is among the most important facets of any individual's development and understanding. Many people use God's Word, but they do so without comprehension of how it is to be approached, considered, and retained. Though many people have ways of handling the Scriptures, consideration must be given as to whether those ways are correct and proper before God. Answering three questions should direct us to desire proper usage.

Can you handle it correctly? Any tool that an individual has can be used in many different ways. However, as a general rule, there are only a few ways it can be used correctly and as intended. The same holds true with the Scriptures. Paul wrote, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). As students of God's Word it is imperative that we learn how to use it correctly. That means using it as it was intended, not to our own means and devices.

Peter emphasized the necessity of handling it correctly when he wrote, "As also in all his (Paul's) epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). If one does not know how to use the Scriptures correctly, they can wrestle them into something they were never intended to be and bring about their own destruction. Unfortunately, that has been the outcome for many in the religious world.

If we are to handle God's Word correctly, it must be done by allowing God to do the talking. Many people approach God's Word believing they already know what God said about a subject or a passage of Scripture. Therefore, the only effort that is placed involves validating what is already believed. However, to handle the Bible correctly one must retain the attitude of the Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily to see whether the things they had been told and believed were so (Acts 17:11). That requires God doing the talking and man the listening. As James said, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). (... *To be continued*) ~~ Adam Cozort

Can You Handle it? (Part 2)

(Continued from last week...) **Can you handle it honestly?** One of the hardest things for an individual to do is admit when he has been wrong. Yet if one is to handle the Scriptures properly, it must be with honest assessment of what it says. Paul wrote, "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2). Paul emphasizes the importance of handling God's Word honestly for all to see. Without such forthrightness, man cannot have confidence in what he is to believe or the direction he is to go.

There are those who have argued you can make the Bible say anything you want if you try hard enough. That is true, not just with the Bible, but with any writer or speaker who has ever lived. However, it is only true if the individual cares nothing about honesty. If one is honest with God's Word, its message is undeniably clear. Anyone can use the Bible dishonestly, but it takes a loving, caring, serious individual to put forth the effort to use the Scriptures honestly. That takes time, integrity, and intention.

Can you handle it completely? Over the course of history mankind has had the inclination to approach the Scriptures like a man at a buffet table. They pick and choose the things they like, refuse the things they dislike, and leave proclaiming their satisfaction with the Bible as their source. This approach leaves a great deal to be desired. Paul reminded Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). If all Scripture is given, and all Scripture is profitable, then all Scripture must be implemented. The psalmist wrote, "The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever" (Psalm 119:160).

No matter what business or sport you consider, an incomplete rulebook does not mean the missing rules do not apply to you – it simply means that when those rules are applied to you it will come as a surprise. The same holds true with God's Word. Man is going to be judged by the content of the Scriptures (John 12:48), whether he has taken the time to accept them or not.

Just as having a kitchen does not make one a cook, so having a Bible does not mean one knows how to use it. Can you handle it? If not, it is time to learn. ~~ *Adam Cozort*