

Fake News: It's Just Not in the Bible

1 Peter 4:11, *"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God."*

Introduction: There are many religious phrases, Christian cliches, and superficial sayings which may be without Biblical basis at all. Some of these may be erroneous, misleading, or leave false impressions or half-truths about Christianity to both believers and unbelievers alike. It is not that we must always quote Scripture verbatim. Yet, it is important if we are going to paraphrase or lay down principles we claim are from Scripture that they actually be so in totality. Otherwise, we are at risk of leading both believers and unbelievers astray into what is merely pseudo-spiritual teaching. "Accurately handling the word of truth" is a responsibility of Christians (2 Timothy 2:15). Today, let's look at a few examples of these and be very careful to *"speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11).

#1) "Money is the root of all evil" (see 1 Timothy 6:10, 17-19; Proverbs 3:9).

A. This is only a partial quote of Scripture... the full quote is "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

B. If "money" is so evil, then why does God tell us to do good with it (1 Timothy 6:17-19; Proverbs 3:9)?

C. I fear when we only quote this passage in part we are at danger of demonizing those with money as if it is sinful, when truly we have many examples of commendable rich people in the Scriptures who did good with their money.

1. Joseph's wise financial governance of Egypt led to his ability to help his brethren when they came asking for help.
2. Boaz's fields were used to help Ruth and Naomi as they gleaned.
3. Barzillai used his wealth and riches to provide King David and his army with supplies when he was going through a rough patch.
4. Several ladies in Scripture are credited with using their wealth to support Jesus in his ministry (Luke 8:1-3).
5. Joseph of Arimathea gave his new tomb to Jesus at his death, a costly gift.
6. Many brethren supported the apostles, like Paul, to do the work they did through their generous giving.

D. In each of these examples "money" is not a "root of evil" but a "root for good" ... the key is none of these people loved their money more than they loved God and God's people.

#2) “God helps those who help themselves” (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; James 1:27; Luke 9:10-17; 10:25-37)

A. This is only a half-truth. Yes, in some ways, God does help those who are willing to work (as 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 suggests).

B. However, could it be this quote is used to excuse ourselves from helping others in need?

C. Several instances could be supplied from Scripture of times God was willing to help and asked His people to help those who could not help themselves!

1. For example, in the Old Testament God required Israel to leave some of the crops in fields they owned and worked for the poor (Leviticus 19:9-10).

2. In the feeding of the 5,000 God supplied food for people who had not worked or earned the food themselves at all (Luke 9:10-17).

3. In the telling of the Good Samaritan, we see an individual helping his neighbor who was not able to help himself at all (Luke 10:25-37).

4. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul is urging the Corinthians to provide a generous financial gift so he can help the poor and needy in Jerusalem.

5. In James 1:27, “*pure and undefiled religion*” includes helping the “*widow and the fatherless*” who may have no help outside of God’s people.

D. So, yes, God does help us through instruction and by providing for us when we do His will but God also wants us to help those who may be in need for other reasons—tragic deaths, victims of divorce, natural disasters, widows, ex. Tornadoes in Arkansas, Kentucky

#3) “This too shall pass/Time heals all wounds” (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17)

A. This phrase is often used in reference to spiritual wounds inflicted upon us by those who have hurt us through their words or actions.

B. When we use this phrase in such a way, we ignore the commands Jesus actually gives in reconciling ourselves to those who have hurt us or those whom we have injured (see Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17).

1. If you realize someone is angry with you go to them and correct it... don’t just expect “time” to fix it... sometimes “time” only leads to more sin and bitterness (see Ephesians 4:26-27; Hebrews 12:14-15; 1 Corinthians 7:5).

2. If you feel as though someone has wronged you, go and try to correct it!
3. The responsibility of reconciliation is on both the offender and the offended. In either case, God's Word demands action, not just time.

#4) "God will never give you more than you can handle" (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Cor 1:8-10)

- A. If God does not give us more than we can handle on our own, then why do we need God anyway?
- B. A more accurate version of this quote might say: "God does not give us more than He can handle" (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:8-10).
- C. David may be a perfect example in Scripture of someone who was given more than he could handle... hunted down like a fugitive by Saul for merely being a loyal servant his Psalms reflect not a reliance upon HIMSELF, but a reliance and trust in GOD to deliver him! He knew it was more than he could handle and this is what led to his dependence upon God (see Psalm 18:1-3 for an example).

#5) "Unity is not uniformity" (1 Corinthians 1:10 vs Romans 14)

- A. That sounds comforting, but it is not necessarily true. Seems like I heard preachers using this phrase more during COVID to suggest we could still be unified despite being disagreed about whether we should wear masks or not, get vaccinated or not, etc. And, yes, when it comes to our opinions we must remain united despite our differences (Romans 14).
- B. Yet, where this phrase can be misleading is when we begin to think it is okay for us to lack uniformity to the truth and still be united (see Philippians 3:16)!
- C. When it comes to Scripture, we must have uniformity to God's word (1 Corinthians 1:10).
 1. When Jesus clearly says something about MDR we have no choice but to agree (Matthew 19:4-9).
 2. When Jesus clearly says something about worship we have no choice but to agree (John 4:24; cp. Colossians 3:16).
 3. When Jesus clearly speaks on the topic of baptism and salvation we have no choice but to agree and obey (Mark 16:15-16).
 4. When Jesus or His apostles speak about the church we must agree (Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6).
- D. We are leaving false impressions with our audiences if we are leading them to believe we can "agree to disagree" on the inspired word of God! Be careful.

#6) “The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints” (Matthew 9:11-13; Hebrews 11)

A. There is no doubt in my mind the church is a “*hospital for sinners*” and we ought to avoid a country club mentality that lacks mission (Matthew 9:11-13; 28:19-20). Thus, I make no qualms with the first half of this phrase.

B. However, is it not also true that the church is comprised of examples of those people of faith (saints) from both the past and present who we should commemorate as examples?

1. This is what the author of Hebrews does with many characters in Hebrews 11—he places men of faith into the museum of our minds so we might learn from them!

2. Paul said we should “*note those*” who walk in an exemplary manner, such as the apostles (Philippians 3:17).

3. One of the purposes of elders is so we might have an “*example*” to follow, a model of genuine Christianity (1 Peter 5:1-4).

4. Likewise, the church should lift up those “*older men*” and “*older women*” who provide spiritual mentors to the younger generation (Titus 2).

C. To admit the church is both a “hospital” and a “museum” is to see the church as both a resource for the lost in evangelism and for the saved in edification!

#7) “Jesus is the reason for the season/Happy birthday Jesus!” (Luke 2:1-20)

A. A key text concerning the birth of Jesus is found in Luke 2:1-20.

B. Where in this text do we find the following common ideas many believe are Biblical truth?

1. Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey.

2. Jesus was born the same night Mary rode into Bethlehem.

3. An innkeeper told Mary and Joseph there was no room in the inn.

4. Jesus did not cry as an infant.

5. Three wise men named Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar on three camels came to visit Jesus.

6. Jesus was born on December 25th.

C. There is a simple lesson here: make sure your beliefs are founded on God’s Word and not stories, skits, traditions and the influence of the arts (songs, dramas, plays, movies).

#8) “Cleanliness is next to godliness” (Galatians 5:19; Acts 10:9-16)

- A. John Wesley is said to have popularized this statement. Yet, it is not from the Bible.
- B. Even so, the concept of “cleanness” is found in various contexts...
 - 1. In the Old Testament, there was ceremonial cleanness through various washings and a purification process.
 - 2. Yet, in the New Testament, Peter is told not to call any man “common or unclean” thus dropping these ceremonial requirements (Acts 10:9-16).
 - 3. It is likely these physical ceremonies were pointing to a deeper spiritual meaning under the new covenant (Hebrews 9:9-14, 27-28).
- C. Even so, there is a moral sense to the term “clean” or “cleansing” we ought to heed as “uncleanness” is one of the “works of the flesh” in Galatians 5:19 (see Ephesians 5:25-27).

#9) “We all sin daily” (1 John 1:8-2:1; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:34).

- A. There is little question as to whether we have “*all sinned*” (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8-10).
- B. Yet, where does the Bible say Christians sin “daily?”
 - 1. This leaves the impression we cannot help but sin and we are powerless to overcome sin—not true at all (John 8:11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:34; 1 John 2:1).
 - 2. When we leave this impression it may cause one to believe Satan is more powerful than Jesus... let’s quit saying “We all sin daily” and start saying, as Christians, “We all conquer sin daily with the help of Jesus” (1 Peter 4:1-4; Romans 6:17-18; 8:37).

#10) “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all” (Matthew 7:5; Galatians 2:11-14)

- A. This statement from Walt Disney has some good intent behind it but can also be misused.
- B. After all, some believe any form of criticism is not being “nice.”
- C. Yet, there are times when courteous silence must give way to helpful words and critical questions (Matthew 7:5; Galatians 2:11-14; Proverbs 9:7-9; 27:5-6; 2 Timothy 4:2).
- D. It is the evangelist’s job to “rebuke” (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

#11) “It can’t be wrong if it feels so right” or “Just follow your heart” (1 John 5:6; Isaiah 55:8-9; Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 17:9).

A. Feelings/heartstrings are not a reliable guide to truth (Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 55:8-9; Proverbs 14:12).

1. Feelings are fallible.

i. You may “feel” as though your team is going to win the game, but feelings can be wrong.

ii. You may “feel” as though this person your dating or married to would never do you wrong but your feelings may be overturned by reality.

iii. You can “feel” as though you did well on the test only to find out your confidence was mistaken and your ignorance was revealed.

iv. Likewise, choosing a moral path or following a certain teaching or preacher because it “feels” right is not as important as knowing it is right because your “truth” is founded in God’s Word!

2. All of Samaria was “astonished” by Simon the Sorcerer and “claimed” he was a great power of God until Philip came to town and exposed Simon as a fraud! Their feelings about Simon were fickle and faulty.

B. The Spirit does not work through feelings, it works through the Word (1 John 5:6).

#12) “Preach the Man, not the plan” (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:36-39)

A. This is often used by those who just want us to preach salvation in Jesus as if it can be disconnected with the plan of salvation!

B. Truth is... we cannot preach “the Man” without preaching “the plan” He endorsed—which includes repentance and baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:36-39).

Conclusion: Words are important. It is how God communicates His will to us (Acts 11:14). It is how we convey God’s will to others (Romans 10:14-17). Let’s make sure we are speaking accurately.