

When God's Word Will Not Help You

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

Did you know that God's word cannot help everyone? In fact, God's word can only help a very few people. That may sound shocking, but it is the case. Examining the conflicts in Jesus' ministry demonstrates that the word of God simply did not help some people.

Discussion:

- I. When you do not know it.
 - A. In **Matthew 22:23-33**, God's word had the answer to the Sadducees question. But God's word did not help them, because they did not know it.
 - B. Today is not different. Many people have questions and opinions, but they do not know what the Bible says. The key to their salvation and the answers to the questions of life lay on their coffee tables. God's word cannot help you when you do not know it. Never forget the ominous warning of **Hosea 4:6**, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."
- II. When you twist and pervert it.
 - A. Were you aware that Satan knows God's word? In **Matthew 4:6-7**, Satan tempted Jesus based on **Psalms 91:11-12**. Satan knew God's word, but it was no help to him, because he twisted it.
 - B. For various reasons, many people twist and pervert the scripture. They know it and quote it, but they do not abide in it. These people may take passages out of context or set passages against one another. I am often amazed to see people twist **Romans 10:9-10** to teach that we do not have to obey **Acts 2:38**. They twist the last half of **Mark 16:16**, to say we do not have to obey the first half. These are just the beginning. God's word will not help you if you twist it.
- III. When you do not care what it says, having preconceived ideas.
 - A. In **Matthew 21:23-27**, the Pharisees challenged Jesus regarding the authority He had to teach. Through questioning them, Jesus discovered that these men did not care what the truth was. They were dishonestly following their preconceived ideas. God's word could not help them.
 - B. You can often tell when people are following after preconceived, scripturally unsupported ideas, in two ways. The first is if, like these Pharisees, they are unwilling to answer simple questions. The second is if their only defense against what you show them in the Bible is to say, "That's just your opinion." A brother in Arkansas concluded a prerecorded radio message by quoting **1 Peter 3:21**. However, when he listened, the quote was not aired. When he called the station manager to find out what was going on, he was essentially told that they did not want him preaching his opinions about baptism. God's word will not help you when you will not allow it to get in the way of your preconceived ideas.
- IV. When you want something special and God's word is not enough for you.
 - A. In **Matthew 12:38-42**, some scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign. Considering the signs that had already been done by Jesus, this request is astounding. But for some people, what God has offered is simply not enough. God's word cannot help these people.
 - B. I remember studying with a young woman once about modern day miraculous gifts. She admitted to seeing what the Bible said. Did she obey it? No, she decided that what she read just could not be right. Why? Because that would mean she was not special to God. The fact that God's Son died for her and that God's Spirit revealed the word for her was not enough. God had done that for everyone. God's word will not help you when you want something special.
- V. When you look for loopholes.
 - A. In **Matthew 15:6-7**, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they had nullified the command of God. How had they done it? "Why, if we dedicate our money to God, then our parents cannot expect it." They had found a loophole. In actuality, they simply rendered God's word ineffective.
 - B. You can often tell when someone is looking for a loophole, because they will say, "You can't find anywhere in the Bible where it condemns ... or where it says I have to ..." I do not know how many times I have heard, "You can't find anywhere in the Bible where it says I have to be at the Sunday night assembly." They know as well as I do that the scripture says not to forsake the

assembly. They have worked up a loophole, saying that **Hebrews 10:25** only refers to the Sunday morning assembly. Every other assembly is not really the assembly. Consider another, "You can't find anywhere in the Bible where it condemns going to the school dances." These Christians know as well as I do that the Bible specifically condemns lasciviousness (**Galatians 5:19**). Lasciviousness is that which is inclined to, indicates or arouses sexual desire and thoughts. But they have found a loophole. No verse says the dancing in those dances is lascivious. But you are fooling yourself if you believe those dances are not inclined to, indicating or arousing sexual desire. When you look for loopholes, God's word will not help you.

VI. When you serve something other than God.

- A. The rich young ruler in **Matthew 19:16-22** came to Jesus to learn how to go to heaven. He heard God's word, but it did not help him. Why? Because he served possessions above God.
- B. Some people serve money (**Colossians 3:5**). Some serve themselves and their own passions and lusts (**Philippians 3:18-19**). If anything comes above God in your life, then rest assured that God's word will not help you. The rich young ruler deceived himself, believing he had kept the commandments from his youth. Do not allow yourself to be deceived. If you serve something above God, then God's word will not help you.

VII. When you love the praises of men more than the praises of God.

- A. In **John 12:42-43**, we are told of many who believed Jesus' teaching. However, their belief did not help them at all, because they could not bring themselves to confess Him. That is, they would not let others know of their faith or to even try to convince others to believe. Notice, this was not caused by fear. Rather, it came from a desire to be praised by men.
- B. If we desire the praises of men, then God's word will not help us. The fact is, if we follow God's word, men will hate us, even religious men (**John 15:20-21**). I sat in my office one day talking to a brother in Christ. He assured me he taught people baptism was essential to salvation. However, he said he simply could not tell other people that God would not save them some other way. If they believed they were saved, who was he to say otherwise? After all, the Bible does not say God won't save people some other way. Why did he take this position? Allow me to explain that our study came about after I heard him as a guest on a local radio program in which he was proclaiming unity with the host, a false teacher who said we could be justified by faith alone. Why was a Christian waffling on the essential nature of baptism? Because he would receive no praise from the religious circles he admired if he taught the truth.

VIII. When you are more concerned about keeping man's traditions than God's traditions.

- A. In **Matthew 15: 2-3**, we see that God's word did not help the Pharisees, because they were far more concerned with keeping their traditions of washing hands than with keeping the traditions handed down to them by God that they honor their father and mother.
- B. Let's face it, Christianity has been around for nearly 2000 years. Just as with the Jews, lots of manmade traditions have arisen. Like the ancient Jews, modern Christian religionists have written books to explain how they believe things should be done and govern churches with them. But we must never succumb to such traditionalism. Do not misunderstand, there is a place for traditionalism. We must make sure that we are being traditionalists when it comes to the traditions handed down to us through the word of God (**II Thessalonians 2:15**). But God's word will not help you when you are more concerned with man's traditions than with God's.

Conclusion:

Of course, the question remains, if the word of God cannot help so many, who can it help? It can only help a very few. Allow me to explain that the word of God will only help you when you want to serve God more than anyone or anything else. It will only help you when you want to go to heaven more than you want anything else. It can only help you when you are willing to sacrifice all in order to press on for the prize to which God's word directs you (**Philippians 3:12-16**). When you do that, people will not like you, you will sacrifice a great deal, you will lose the respect and praise of your peers, but you will gain the praise of God. Only you can decide to let God's word help you.