

Can We Recommend The Bible?

Franklin Church of Christ
Edwin Crozier
December 19, 2004
PM Worship

Introduction:

One of my favorite fictional characters is Tevye from *Fiddler On The Roof*. He was a poor Jewish milkman, trying to raise five daughters and keep his family fed. Tevye constantly made reference to “the good book”. “As the good book says, ‘A bird may love a fish, but where will they build a home together.’” When his wife is jumping on him, he says, “As the good book says, ‘Heal us, O Lord, and we shall be healed.’ In other words, give us the cure, we have the sickness already.” One time he is even directing his words toward God and says, “As the good book says ... Why do I need to tell you what the good book says?” Tevye’s Bible was so important to him that it was a part of his daily thought and daily conversation. To him, his Bible offered guidance and advice for everyday situations. So, it was natural to recommend that people listen to it. My question is for us, are we this confident in our Bible? Can we recommend the Bible to folks today, making it a part of our conversations? If the Franklin Church of Christ is going to be evangelistic, we have to recommend the Bible and its teachings to people.

Discussion:

- I. Why some people do not recommend the Bible?
 - A. We have become convinced that we should not talk about the Bible in public. Some of us are afraid to mention the Bible and some of us just don’t think about it. But why?
 - B. No doubt different people have different reasons. Consider some of the following reasons.
 1. “I do not want to be old-fashioned.” The Bible is an old book with unpopular teachings that do not mesh well with modern thought. Therefore some of us, wanting to fit in, do not want to bring the Bible into our conversations because people may think we are out of touch.
 2. “The Bible is for little children.” After 9-11, I heard a song by Alan Jackson called “Where Were You.” On the one hand it is good because it recommends a Biblical principle to deal with that tragedy; show love to one another. But I am disappointed that the song says, “But I know Jesus, and I talk to God/ And I remember this from when I was young/ Faith, hope, and love are some good things He gave us/ And the greatest is love.” Why did he have to stretch back to his childhood to remember what the Bible said? Because the Bible has great stories for kids but most people believe it has nothing to offer adults.
 3. “I don’t want people to think I am a Bible-beater.” Some of us have been duped into thinking that only Bible-beaters and Jesus-freaks talk about the Bible. If we mention the Bible at all, we are certain our friends will accidentally mistake us for being really devoted to God and His Word and they may think that we want to persuade them to believe it too.
 4. “The Bible is great for church, but it has no place in public life.” Some of us have compartmentalized our lives. We do not mind reading the Bible at church and hearing about how helpful it is. But from Monday through Friday, we are at work, what possible good could our Bible’s provide us there. So we simply do not think about it.
 5. “Intelligent people do not believe the Bible.” Atheists in our society have been on a campaign. They want folks to think that if you believe in the Bible you probably also believe in fairies and leprechauns. So, many of us are embarrassed to bring up the Bible.
 6. “The Bible does not have any real help to offer people.” Some view the Bible as a philosophical book for theologians and preachers. But for everyday common people who are trying to make a living, raise a family and keep their grass cut every week, the Bible doesn’t have much to say. So why bring it up? It can’t help anyone.
 7. “I do not know the Bible well enough.” Some people do not recommend the Bible, because they do not know what it says. They have never turned to the Bible themselves for help or real guidance, so, they do not know what to say about it to other people.
- II. What is the Bible and what is it good for?
 - A. The answer to this question is summed up in **II Timothy 3:14-17** and **II Peter 1:20-21**. The Bible is the word of God. It is good for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness. Ultimately it explains to us everything that is good and right. As such, it ought to be commonly brought into our conversations and interactions with other people. Recognizing this leads us to several conclusions about the Bible which should drive us to recommend it.

- B. *Regarding history:* The Bible was given by the only one who has seen all of history. Additionally, the Bible was ordered by the one who has been sovereign over all history (**Acts 17:26**). As a reference for history, what other work could be more trustworthy?
 - C. *Regarding science:* Of course, the Bible is not a scientific book. It has not been given to us to teach chemistry, biology or any field of science. However, there are teachings that relate to science. The Bible has been given to us by the One who ordered our universe. The Bible was given to us by the One who established natural law. When we read **Genesis 1**, we can trust it. When **Genesis 10:25** says that the earth was divided, we can believe it.
 - D. *Regarding serving God:* People today want to be told they can serve God however they want to. But, if God has communicated to us this word, then it stands to reason that we can and must use it as a guide for serving Him. **John 4:24** says we must worship God in spirit and truth. How can we know the truth about worshipping God apart from His own teachings?
 - E. *Regarding wisdom and daily life:* We often struggle with the myriad choices that present themselves throughout our lives. We wonder about jobs, marriage, finances, family, etc. What are the best choices? How can we add value to our family and our community? How can we live a life that is satisfying and worthwhile? We read self-help books galore to answer the questions of life. But this book has been given to us by the one who made us! He knows what we need. What He says about life is relevant and will work. When He says we should seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all other things will be added to us (**Matthew 6:33**), we can trust that. When He says that we should always speak the truth (**Ephesians 4:25**), we should regard honesty as the best policy. When He says that it is better to give than to receive (**Acts 20:35**), then we should live by that.
 - F. *Regarding relationships:* Many of our biggest struggles come from dealing with other people. We have family relationships, church relationships, work relationships, friendships, etc. How do we get along with all those people? How can those relationships be most successful? Clashes and personality conflicts will inevitably come. How do we work through them? If God knows what makes us tick, He knows the same about others. We do not really need to know Dale Carnegie's advice for "how to win friends and influence people". We need to know God's advice. When He says we should not let the sun go down on our anger (**Ephesians 4:26**), then we should not. When He says that we should do unto others as we want them to do for us (**Matthew 7:12**), we should. The Bible is our greatest "self-help" book for relationships.
 - G. *Regarding eternity and salvation:* The Bible is the only book in the world that will help you beyond this life. According to **Hebrews 11:6**, it is impossible to please God without faith. But notice **Romans 10:17**. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Pleasing God only comes from hearing His word. Salvation only comes through the word of God.
 - H. Do we really believe in God and do we really believe God? God says we must not be ashamed of Him or His gospel. We must confess Him before men (**Matthew 10:32-33**). Using the Bible, talking about the Bible and recommending its teaching are all a part of confessing God. I know many people will think we are foolish (**I Corinthians 1:18-25**). But if we really believe God, then we will see His message as His power for salvation and we will want to share it.
- III. Recommending the Bible in practice (a few illustrations of recommendation opportunities).
- A. A co-worker says, "My wife and I got into an argument last night. We seem to be doing that a lot lately. I am really getting worried about my marriage." Let your friend know how the Bible has helped your marriage. Then offer to show him what it says.
 - B. A friend asks, "So, what have you done today?" You can respond, "Well, I started off my day with prayer and Bible study. You know I learned today that ..."
 - C. Someone tells you, "So-and-so just really makes me angry. They are always doing such-and-such." You can let them know what the Bible says about dealing with anger. Deal with problems quickly before they fester, but speak to people with love.
 - D. Listen carefully, you will find there are numerous opportunities to recommend the Bible.

Conclusion:

In ***Fiddler on the Roof***, mentioning "the good book" was played for laughs. In real life, it is serious and important for our souls. Can we recommend the Bible? Are we recommending the Bible?