

HANDLING THE SWORD (Ephesians 6:17)

I. Some neglect to handle it.

- A. One way that people handle the word of God is by letting it collect dust on a table or shelf in their homes.
 - 1. The Bible just sits there because its owner neglects to read it.
 - 2. It does its owner no good because the owner won't allow it do so.
- B. This method of handling the Bible shows in the life of the owner of a neglected sword.
 - 1. They still need to be taught because they are unskillful or unknowledgeable of God's word(Hebrews 5:12-13).
 - 2. They continually fall into sin because of neglect (Psalm 119:11).
 - 3. They fall into doctrinal error because they don't know when others mishandle the word of God (Ephesians 4:14).
- C. People often say they can tell when the preacher has or hasn't been studying.
 - 1. The preacher can tell when the members have or haven't been studying as well.
 - 2. Other spiritually minded people can tell when we haven't been studying.
 - 3. It shows in the comments we make, the way we dress and how we live our lives.
 - 4. Really, we tell on ourselves when we neglect God's word.
- D. There is a large number of biblically illiterate members of the Lord's church.
 - 1. This is seen by the number of problems in which we find ourselves.
 - 2. It is seen in the worldliness in the church.
 - 3. It is seen in the prevalence of false doctrine in the church.

II. Some handle it deceitfully.

- A. Notice 2 Corinthians 4:1-2.
 - 1. Because of the mercy given by God to place Paul in the role of an apostle, Paul would not give up the faith.
 - 2. Instead, he put away all dishonesty with God's word and refused to use it for his own benefit.
 - 3. Rather than that, he used it in such a way that commended him before God.
- B. Earlier he commented that he was not like some who corrupted God's word (2:17).
 - 1. He could have easily done that because those to whom he preached had never heard the word of God.
 - 2. They did not have copies of the word of God and he could have said whatever he wanted to say about it.
 - 3. He refused to do that though there were those who had come to Corinth and did that very thing.
- C. There are those today who handle the Sword of the Spirit deceitfully.

1. It has often been said that one can make the Bible say whatever he wants it to say.
2. And you can when you handle it deceitfully.
- D. Many handle God's word deceitfully in order to benefit themselves.
 1. Numerous are the televangelists that strive to reach into the pockets of their audiences.
 2. How many stories have we heard about these charlatans getting rich off of people they have duped?
- E. Some handle it deceitfully to justify their own sin or the sins of those they love.
 1. Much of the error about marriage, divorce and remarriage has come about in this way.
 2. We strive to find ways to make what we are doing okay and in doing so abuse God's word.
- F. Some handle it deceitfully to avoid clear meaning.
 1. I read from an article the other night in which the author used a great amount of thinking to get around the clear meaning of scripture when it came to the necessity of baptism.
 2. Others do the same with Matthew 19:9.
 3. People in Peter's day did this (2 Peter 3:15-16).
 4. This is done with regards to the Lord's return.
- G. Some handle it deceitfully to gain an audience.
 1. The perverting of the grace of God is done in order to be liked by many preachers.
 2. In order to get a larger crowd in the building scriptural teaching on worship is perverted.
- H. Did you notice what Peter said was awaiting those who mishandle God's word (2 Peter 3:16)?

III. **Some handle it properly.**

- A. Notice 2 Timothy 2:15 from the American Standard Version - "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."
 1. Paul knew Timothy would be tempted to mishandle God's word.
 2. We all are in some manner.
- B. Paul knew that it would take effort on Timothy's part to handle God's word properly, thus the idea of giving diligence.
- C. In order to handle it correctly, Paul encouraged Timothy to hold tightly to the words he had received from Paul (2 Timothy 1:13).
- D. Notice the encouragement to stay strong in the Lord (2:1-4).
 1. Hold tightly to the grace offered by Jesus, which one does by becoming dead to sin (Romans 6:1-2).
 2. Teach others what he had been taught.
 3. Endure the afflictions of this life.
 4. Don't get caught up in the problems of life so that the Lord will be pleased.
- E. Instead of getting caught up in problems, some things are to be shunned

in order to remain faithful (2 Timothy 2:16, 23).

F. The Sword of the Spirit is to be used to benefit oneself and others and is of great benefit when used properly.

1. It contains the gospel message which is God's only power to save mankind (Romans 1:16).
2. It contains the only message that will strengthen the weak (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
3. It contains the only message that allows us to be born again (1 Peter 1:23).