

Continued from Page Three, "God Did Not Get Distracted!"

22:12-16, we will have the true understanding for what it means to "call upon the name of the Lord." It is quite different from the modern-day understanding of "calling," that is for sure!

We could add many other passages to our list of passages misused, abused, and taken out of context by men. Our point is that God did not get "distracted" while inspiring the men to write (**II Pet. 1:20-21**). He did not inspire men to write on a certain subject, and in the middle of the context, throw "random" thoughts in for people to find like one would in a scavenger hunt!

A similar manner of misuse of the Scriptures occurs when folks read a verse, find a "key" word or thought they want to emphasize, and then use this verse as a "jumping off point" for their doctrine. This happens more often than perhaps we care to admit. As an example, go back to **John 3:16**, and imagine someone reading this and focusing on the word "gave" in the passage, and from this, developing an oral or written lesson on the need for people to give of their means for a certain work in the church. Such teaching based on **John 3:16** is being dishonest with the text! Christ was not distracted! He didn't started talking to Nicodemus about God's love and sacrifice, and the need for being born again, and then say, "Wait, that reminds me, let's talk about giving money and time to me."

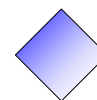
Another example of this misuse of Scripture can be seen when folks read **Matthew 5:34** ("But I say unto you,

Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne") and then apply this to the "swearing" or "affirming" which takes place in a court of law when one is asked to the witness stand! Please read the context of **Matthew 5** and supplement our study with **23:16-22**! Jesus is correcting the practices of folks who were following the hypocritical actions and traditions of the Pharisees rather than God's word (**v. 17-20; 6:2, 4, 18**). Let us respect this context! Jesus was not talking about the practices of the Pharisees, and then stopping in mid-thought to say, "By the way, I also don't want you to swear when called to testify in U.S. Courtrooms." Christ was not distracted when He spoke!

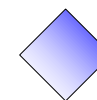
Many other examples could be given. Unfortunately, folks teach like this at times, and it does a disservice to the Scriptures. It is not right that we take a word or phrase from a context and essentially "run with it" to teach what we please! Where is the respect for the context? God was not distracted when he had the Bible written, neither should we get distracted when reading the Bible!

Please understand, this is not to say we cannot teach the truth from a single verse or paragraph in Scripture. We can. Our point is that the context of that verse must be respected when teaching others about it! God did not inspire men to write about one subject, and then in mid-sentence inspire them to start talking about something else! We cannot "cherry-pick" verses and place them within a context we want. We must respect the context in which these words and phrases are found! Friend, God did not get distracted; let us not get distracted!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦



The Voice of Truth



December 19, 2010

"Stand Up For Jesus" By Jimmy Pettigrew

Jesus is the one we should follow (**Revelation 14:4**); whose steps we should pursue (**1 Peter 2:21**). Jesus is the great pattern for everyone to follow (**Luke 9:43**). We all need to "Stand up for Jesus." Why? He did no sin (**1 Peter 2:22**); He is the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**); He lives forever (**Revelation 1:18**). Salvation is in His name (**Acts 4:12**)! Eternal life is found in Him (**Romans 6:23**). All spiritual blessings are in Him (**Ephesians 1:3**). He tasted death for all mankind (**Hebrews 2:9**), and gave His life a ransom for many (**Matthew 20:28**). Truly the Lord is gracious (**1 Peter 2:3**). These are some of the reasons why we should stand up for Jesus, the perfect pattern that we should follow. Let us then think of the ways that we may stand up for Jesus.

We stand up for Jesus when we live as we should. We should never bring shame and disgrace upon the Lord's name. The world points a finger of scorn at us and says that if that represents Christianity then it wants no part of it. We cause the good and honest people to stumble; we have set a bad example for others to follow. All of this hurts the cause of Christ. Remember the words of Paul, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). Christ wants us to do all in His name to His glory (**Colossians 3:17**). We need to magnify Christ (**Philippians 1:20**), so others can see Christ living in us (**Galatians 2:20**). The manner of life of the Christian is "becoming" to the gospel (**Philippians 1:27**). The life of the Christian can adorn or beautify the teaching of Christ (**Titus 2:10**). The life of the faithful, dedicated Christian magnifies the doctrine of Christ and glorifies the Father (**Matthew 5:16**).

We stand up for Jesus when we develop and grow as Christians (**2 Peter 3:18**). There s no greater question to the sincere Christian than "Am I Growing?" Have I been growing in the past? Am I growing now? Am I becoming more of what God and Christ would have me to be? Yet, it is a recognized fact that many Christians are not growing. The Christian grows or dies spiritually. "For when by rea-

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:"

1 Peter 2:21 (King James Version)

*son of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men, (even) those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil" (**Hebrews 5:12-14**). To grow spiritually we must desire spiritual milk of God's Word (**1 Peter 2:1-3**). To stand up for Jesus we must grow and know the Book, so we will be able to defend it (**Jude 3**).*

We stand up for Jesus when we use our talents for the cause of Christ. The Lord has given responsibility to every servant. This responsibility is to use our talent in which God has given us. Therefore, each does not have the same degree of responsibility. We can see this idea in the "Parable of the Talents" (**Matthew 25:13 ff**). We do not have the same degree of responsibility, but each must be faithful (**1 Corinthians 4:2**)! God does not require me to be great, but God does require me to be faithful. Because in this parable these servants were judged on their faithfulness (**Matthew 25:21, 23**). Small ability does not justify a lack of faithfulness! "Will a man rob God?" (**Malachi 3:8**). God always requires the same faithfulness. Some have greater obligation, some lesser, but each must be faithful. God always demands our best. Let us not be like the one talent man, who had the idea of just barely making it, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion" (**Amos 6:1**).

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About the Hillcrest church of Christ		
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How to Contact Us	Our Address	Schedule of Assembly
Telephone: (920)499-5677 E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com  	1621 Hillcrest Drive Green Bay, WI 54313 	Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm* <small>*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month</small>
www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com		

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May the Lord help us to have more faith, love, zeal,

courage and determination to take a stand for Jesus
Christ and for the truth! Remember God is counting on
you!

No matter what others are doing, my friend,
or what they are leaving undone,
God's counting on you to keep on with the job
'til the very last battle is won.
He's counting on you to be faithful;
He counting on you to be true.
Yes, others may work, or others may shirk,
but remember - God is counting on you. ♦

"Fervent in Spirit" By Gene Taylor

As Christians we have work to do. We were created in Christ for good works (**Eph. 2:10**) and to be zealous for them (**Tit. 2:14**). Albert Barnes said, "An idle man and a Christian are names which do not harmonize."

The above text points out two basic attitudes the Christian can have in relation to the work of the Lord. One can be either "lagging in diligence" or "fervent in spirit." Of course, if one is going to please the Lord the latter is preferred.

"Lagging in Diligence"

The King James Version translates this phrase as "slothful in business." To be slothful is to be lazy or indolent. William Barclay stated, "There is a certain intensity in the Christian life. There is no room for lethargy in it" (The Daily Study Bible Series, Romans, p. 178).

God's people in the Old Testament were warned against having such an attitude. **Amos 6:1** pronounced woe upon those who were "at ease in Zion." **Jeremiah 48:10** says, "A curse on him who is lax in doing the Lord's work!" (NIV).

Diligence is required of Christians—God's people today. They are to give diligence to grow in Christ (**2 Pet. 1:5**); to abound in diligence (**2 Cor. 8:7**); and to be diligent, never becoming sluggish (**Heb. 6:9-12**).

Diligence is a product of commitment. The Corinthians' commitment to the Lord was demonstrated by doing what needed to be done in reference to the sinner they had in their midst (**1 Cor. 5:9-13**). 2 Corinthians 7:11 says, "For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of

courage and determination to take a stand for Jesus Christ and for the truth! Remember God is counting on you!

No matter what others are doing, my friend,
or what they are leaving undone,
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yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

"Fervent in Spirit"

The word translated "fervent in spirit" means to boil with heat, be hot. It is used of boiling anger, love and zeal for what is good or bad. As used in our text, it means to have a burning zeal to do the will of God.

An example of this attitude is Jesus Christ. **John 2:17**, in speaking of Him, says, "Then His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up'." Apollos is also an example of zeal. **Acts 18:24-25** states, "Now a certain Jew named Apollos...came to Ephesus...and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord..." Both Jesus and Apollos were successful in accomplishing their God-given tasks.

Fervor and enthusiasm are the keys to success in the Lord's work. The church at Laodicea was chastised because of their lukewarmness (**Rev. 3:14-16**). Barclay says, "The one man whom the Risen Christ could not stand was the man who was neither hot nor cold" (Ibid.). He added, "The Christian may burn out, but he cannot rust out."

Sadly, though, this spirit is lacking in some who claim to be God's people. There are those who put off, sidestep, maneuver out of, or procrastinate with respect to that which needs to be done in the kingdom of the Lord. It seems impossible to move some "Christians" into action. The fire and enthusiasm of the first century church is missing from their lives. They may have restored the truth, but they seem to have forgotten the spirit.

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Conclusion

Ephesians 6:6 counsels us to be, "doing the will of God from the heart." May none of us drag our feet but instead

"God Did Not Get Distracted!" By Jarrod Jacobs

This may seem like a strange title for an article, but I believe it is a good reminder to those of us who are interested in Bible study and learning the truth (**Jn. 17:17; II Tim. 2:15**). When we read the words of Christ, or the prophets, or the apostles in the Bible, please understand that they did not begin speaking on one subject, and then simply change their thoughts in "midstream" as it were, and start talking about something else! The books, paragraphs, and verses of the Bible have a context. There is a consistency in flow and context to the Bible! When respected, it opens up our understanding of God's mind (**I Cor. 2:7-11; Eph. 3:4**).

Perhaps part of our problem in thinking God got "distracted" and switched subjects at times in mid-sentence comes from the chapter and verse divisions in the Bible. If we are not careful, we might find ourselves more reliant upon chapter and verse divisions than we ought to be. Let us remember that chapter divisions were made by men. In recent centuries, we know that Stephen Langton began in 1227 A.D. to devise our modern chapter divisions. The Wycliffe Bible (1382) was the first to have chapter divisions in it. Our verse divisions were also the invention of men. The current verse divisions were the work of a man named Robert Estienne (or Robert Stephanus) in the mid-1500's. Beginning with the Geneva Bible, every Bible version has used these verse divisions.

Chapter and verse divisions literally divide the Bible into single sentences or phrases. While this certainly aids us in finding a certain thought, phrase, or teaching of God; the disadvantage is that it promotes the idea of thinking of the Bible as individual sentences or phrases, and lifting things from their context to teach "pet theories" rather than people recognizing complete paragraphs and complete thoughts in the Bible.

To lift a verse from its context results in being dishonest with the Bible itself. In studying the Bible, it demands that we respect all the Lord has said concerning a subject (**Ps. 119:160**), even though it is divided into chapters and verses. This is a warning that I need to heed as much as

give ourselves enthusiastically to doing the work of the Lord. Such a life of service will grant us the best life here and in the hereafter. *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

anyone! All of us need to listen to the Lord's word and respect what has been revealed in the entire paragraphs, chapters, and books!

I am writing these things because I have observed folks who used individual verses to "prove" a certain point. Sadly, they essentially had no regard for the context of the Scripture, and therefore used a passage in the wrong way. If they read a certain sentence or thought that they felt promoted their "pet theory" or false doctrine, then they used it in their own context rather than respecting the context in which the passage was found.

Some examples of this include using **John 3:16** as a "proof-text" that baptism is not necessary for salvation. When we fail to read the context of **John 3**, and see that Christ had talked about baptism back in **verses 3** and **5**, and instead simply read one verse alone, then folks fall for this false doctrine of salvation by "faith-only"! **Acts 16:31** ("And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house") is used in a similar way. Without any respect for the verses before and after that enlighten us on what **verse 31** truly means, people have been duped by a false doctrine.

Another passage often taken out of context is **Matthew 7:1** ("Judge not, that ye be not judged"). To hear some talk, we might think Jesus said no one can judge anyone ever on anything. Yet, what happened to the context? When we respect the context, and supplement our study with parallel passages like **Luke 6:37-42** and **John 7:24**, we see a very different message being taught by Christ than the "popular" thinking!

Romans 10:13 ("For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.") is also a popular verse that is taken out of context by men. To listen to some folks talk, we might think **Romans 10** ends at **verse 13**! This is not the case though. When we read **Romans 10:14-17**, and then supplement our study with **Acts 2:21-38** and

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