

Why I Embrace the Bible...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. -John 1:1-2.

I embrace the Bible because it is truth. It is authoritative and it is God's word. Most important of all, the Bible is the record of the divine revelation of God: God's word, the Bible, points us to God's Word, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the divine revelation of God. There is a powerfully significant difference between the word and the Word, and if we're not careful, we can unwittingly slide into a kind of idolatry with the Bible. Here's what I mean:

I recently read an interview with one of the world's most influential Bible translators, Eugene Nida. Called the "premiere linguist and translation consultant" by the *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, Nida may not be a familiar name, but he has influenced the Bibles read by most Christians around the world, including the 1976 *Good News* Bible and its 1995 Contemporary English Version, as well as the New Living Translation.

When asked what further is needed when it comes to Bible translations, Nida replied, "What is really needed is for people to take the message seriously and share it with other people... So many Christians love to argue about the Bible rather than take it seriously as a message that is important to their lives... [Many people] have grown up worshiping the words more than worshiping God... And as long as they worship words, instead of worshiping God as revealed in Jesus Christ, they feel safe."

This got me to thinking: Can we read the Bible— holding its words in the highest of esteem— and yet miss its message? Sadly, I think the answer is yes. And here's part of the reason why: For years, we've lived in a world where reason and science and logic— measurable things— told us what was valuable. The modern world hoodwinked us evangelicals into approaching the Bible the same way it did: through a kind of scientific methodology in search of truth. And so, as Robert Webber writes, "liberals used reason to demythologize the Bible, while conservatives argued for the exact correctness of everything in the Bible. In this vicious circle the liberals tore the Bible to shreds with biblical criticism while the conservatives followed along behind trying to put the pieces back together with rational arguments. In the meantime, for many the message was lost..."

"The issue in a postmodern world is not to prove the Bible, but to restore the message of the Bible, a message which, when proclaimed by the power of the Spirit, takes up residence within those who know how to hear... The mystery of the person and work of Christ proclaimed is the starting point of faith, not rational argumentation that seeks to prove the Bible to be correct."

The Bible doesn't need defending— we don't have to prove that it is correct. It is truth. It is authoritative and it is God's word. Most important of all, the Bible is the record of the divine revelation of God. The Bible is a living signpost: It points us to Jesus. Its words are precious and true. Its message is life.

And that's why I embrace the Bible.