

IT IS WRITTEN

Joe Slater

I have spent many hours looking at old photos of my immediate and extended family. In some cases we have no idea who certain individuals in those pictures are. How frustrating! Just a name would be helpful. Better yet, why didn't someone back then write down a word or two about the person. Memories fade, eventually dying with the person in whose mind they reside. Oral tradition becomes lost or corrupt. Written records best preserve the facts for future generations.

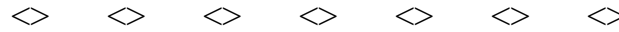
In His infinite wisdom, God committed His word to writing. Theoretically, He simply could have kept communicating directly with individuals through dreams, visions, angels, etc. (Some people mistakenly think He does!) Or He could have continued to inspire certain people miraculously to speak His will. (Again, some misguided folks think He does.) Instead, God chose writing. The very word "Scripture" means something that is written.

The apostle John said that he wrote the gospel account bearing His name *"that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name"* (John 20:31). When the apostles and elders in Jerusalem needed to deal with a controversial issue decisively, they wrote their Spirit-inspired directives and circulated the letter among the affected brethren (Acts 15:20-30). Paul said that the things he wrote were the commandments of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37). The same apostle said that by reading what he wrote, we can *"understand [his] knowledge in the mystery of Christ"* (Ephesians 3:3, 4).

Family histories are interesting; but how many people will suffer any drastic ill effects because they can't trace their roots? The gospel, on the other hand, is a

matter of life and death in the most important way possible. I can go to Heaven without ever knowing who my great-great-great grandfather was; but I can't go to Heaven without learning, believing, and obeying the gospel of Christ. I am thankful that I don't have to rely on faulty memories or oral traditions; God has preserved His word in writing, with literally thousands of manuscripts attesting to the accuracy of the text.

Let us demonstrate our gratitude for the Scriptures by reading, studying, obeying, and teaching them. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).



The XX Chromosome Never Lies

Even without the high heels, the lady was two hands taller than I am. I thought to myself, "Boy, she's got the shoulders of a Crimson Tide linebacker!" Passing by her, I discovered that she is a he. No pretty dress, deep red lipstick, or flowing locks of hair could disguise the XX chromosome.

I recently used this illustration in conversation with my son. Just because we call something by another name doesn't make it so. Obviously this is true with the current transgender fad. But what about other things like: a marriage which isn't, or unscriptural worship.

Just because an idea becomes popular or is renamed doesn't change the DNA of what it is or is not.

--Jared Jackson (Jackson, TN) via Jared's File Cabinet

I Could Have Done More

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Anyone who has seen the movie "Schindler's List" will remember the touching scene near the end of the movie. Leaving the factory where he had spent his fortune bribing the German SS in order to secure the lives of Jewish workers, Oskar Schindler breaks down as he looks upon the faces of the people he has saved (over 1,100 people) and then upon the car he is about to enter, he begins to weep, and mumbles, "This car...ten more people." He staggers and clutches at the gold lapel pin on his blazer, "This pin...two more people." He cries, "I could have done more. I could have done more...." Schindler had developed a mindset of redemption.

His situation was rare in that there was an actual tradeoff of people's lives for possessions. He could literally redeem people's lives in exchange for money or valuables.

Most of us will never face such a situation to the extent that Oskar Schindler did, but every day we have a choice of how to spend our lives, our possessions, and our finances. We can bring redemption to people's lives if we give our time, talent and treasures as Schindler did for the physical lives of people. Our lives are full of choices that determine our love for the souls of others.

To such an end, Jesus died. He gave everything that we all might live. He held back nothing. Have we sacrificed anything to reach the lost? Have we shared the good news with others who are dying in sin? Have we ignored opportunities for doing good, encouraging the faint hearted, repairing broken relationships? Have you missed enriching gatherings of the greatest people in the world, our Christian brothers and sisters? Have you failed to look deeply into God's word, His love letter to you or have you been content with worldly wisdom?

I do not want to hear my Lord tell me, "You could have done more." How about you?

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)