

Is the Bible Relevant?

Joe Slater

Relevant: 1. bearing upon or connected with the matter at hand; pertinent. 2. having practical value or applicability. (Random House Webster's College Dictionary)

Is the Bible relevant? The most recently-written portion of it was penned over 1900 years ago. Its oldest book, Job, dates back over 1500 years BC. None of the Bible writers ever set foot on the North American continent.

Multitudes would say that the Bible contains good moral principles that might be applicable to people living today; but aside from that, they deem the Scriptures to be largely irrelevant. "Paul and Moses didn't commute 30 miles to work each day; Isaiah and John didn't have to juggle mortgage payments along with braces for the children, so what could their writings say that would be relevant?" the world asks.

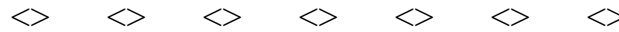
Even some Christians speak and act as though large portions of the Bible (especially the Old Testament books) are irrelevant. I've heard boasts of elders and preachers who take great pride in being on the cutting edge: "If it isn't relevant, we don't study it!" I submit that their ignorance is surpassed only by their arrogance! Would one of these sophisticated folks please enlighten this hopelessly backward preacher as to which places in God's word are irrelevant?

I freely grant that some sections of Scripture hold our attention more easily than others. The gospel accounts of the crucifixion and resurrection are more engaging than the genealogies in First Chronicles. But are those genealogies irrelevant? Hardly! Among other things, they document that we are dealing with real people, not fictional story-book characters. They

meticulously trace the line from which Jesus, our Savior, was born. Without such documentation, we could have no confidence in the fulfilled prophecies, and thus no certainty that Jesus really is the Son of God.

Differences of time, place, circumstances, and culture make no difference as to the Bible's relevance. Times change, but people do not; they are still sinful and in desperate need of salvation. Sin is still sin, God is still God, truth is still truth. Those who insist that only writings dealing with modern conditions are relevant betray an unwillingness or inability to think outside of their own little world. To put it bluntly, they are full of themselves. By learning how others throughout history have succeeded or failed to serve God, and by observing how God dealt with them, we come to understand what to do in our own day and time.

The problem is not with God's word being irrelevant. It is with people who fail to take the time and trouble to see how it fits.



GETTING EVEN WITH EVILDOERS

How can you hope to get ahead of someone as long as you keep trying to get even with him?

If you must get even, try to get even with those who have helped you in some way.

Doing an injury puts you below your enemy. Revenging it makes you even with him; forgiving it sets you above him.

--via RSVP Newsletter

Does The Church Have Electricity?

A brother in Florida mentioned Saturday that the electricity in his home was supposed to be restored in a few hours, after Hurricane Matthew swiped the Atlantic coast headed north. A person asked, "Does the church have electricity?"

The person was referring, of course, to the building where the church met. That's unfortunate language, but you figure out how to get people to change their vocabulary.

Her question, however, invites reflection on the state of our congregations. If we take electricity in her question as a metaphor for zeal, life, excitement, enthusiasm, it becomes a wonderful exploratory assessment.

☒ Does the church have the life of the Spirit of God, having died to sin in order to live to God? Rom 6.

☒ Does the church possess the zeal for the truth of the gospel, not only to preserve it, but to proclaim it to the whole world? Gal 2.5; 2 Cor 6.7; 2 Tim 2.15.

☒ Does the congregation urge every saint to show the holiness of God and the love of Christ? 1 Thes 3.12-13.

☒ Does the family of God speak incessantly of its Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, putting him in the center of its attentions? 1 Cor 2.2; Col 2.2-3; 3.11.

☒ Does the body of Christ move quickly to deal with sin in its midst and restore those who err? Gal 5.1-2.

☒ Does the church put away the ways of the world and let itself be transformed in the image of Christ by a constant renewal of the mind? Rom 12.1-2.

☒ Do the people of God nurture among themselves the sharp hope of salvation in the coming of Jesus Christ, looking to their eternal life in heaven? 2 Pet 3.1-13.

The Lord supplies his people with a constant stream of electricity, if only they are plugged into his source. He gives us every reason for joy, zeal, power, and life as members of his body, 2 Pet 1.3-4.

Do *you* have it?

Randal Matheny (via fellowshiproom.com)