

Reactions to Bible Teaching

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When a person reads or is taught Bible Truth, he must make a response. In fact, it is impossible not to respond, for a refusal to accept what one learns and to act upon it is a response itself. Responses may range from hostility on the one extreme to acceptance and obedience on the other and many other reactions in between. Human nature is so constant that the very same reactions that were registered in the first century to the preaching of truth are still seen today. We can probably see our own reactions mirrored in the following:

1. Jesus said, "And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition" (Mat. 15:6). Like the Pharisees and scribes of old, some today are so bound to religious tradition that minimizes baptism that they ignore what God says on the subject.
2. Peter wrote of some who, because of ignorance and unsteadfastness, were wresting (twisting) the Scriptures unto their own destruction.

...wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Pet. 3:16b).

The persons described here are those who forced their own meanings on the Scriptures, rather than altering their beliefs and practices to fit the Truth. Consider an example: a man believes devoutly in salvation "by faith only," thus he must either twist the scriptures that link baptism and salvation or give up his "faith only" doctrine. Please notice that Peter says that when one wrests the Scriptures, he destroys himself.

3. John described those who believed on Jesus, but refused to confess Him because they loved popularity with men more than with God:

Nevertheless, even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *it*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory *that is* of men more than the glory *that is* of God (John 12:42-43).

Lamentably, there are many today in both pulpit and pew who will admit their understanding of the Truth on baptism but will do nothing about it because they will be ostracized by family and friends if they do.

4. We are approved of God only if we give diligence to handle the Word of Truth aright:

Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

This includes obeying it and faithfully teaching it. Many are still so responding to the Truth, and it is our prayer that all would!

[**Note:** I wrote this article around 1978 for the "Bible Thoughts" column in the *Hood County News*. Publication date is unknown.

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