

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – November 25, 2009

I have never been in a church that did not express the need and desire for revival and spiritual awakening. We pray for it, and we plan a series of meetings & events to accommodate it, but does it really come? We'll explore that question in today's Templates of Truth.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the entire Bible. It is interesting that the longest chapter in the Bible is a chapter about the Bible itself. More interesting is the fact that 11 of the 176 verses in this Psalm mentions revival; and more specifically that the Bible is an impetus for revival – *Revive me according to Thy word* (119:25); *Thy word has revived me* (119:50); *I will never forget Thy precepts, for by them Thou hast revived me* (119:93), are just a few examples. Since the Holy Spirit inspired the writer to make this distinction 11 times throughout this Psalm, there must be a significant truth God wants us to grasp. I believe that truth is this: revival and spiritual awakening will never come to the church at large until a greater percentage of believers make God's Word, the Bible, a passion and priority in their life.

Surveys conducted by various research organizations over the past decade, including Barna and Gallup, reveal some sobering statistics:

- Less than 10% of professing Christians have ever read the entire Bible.
- 35% of born-again Christians do not read their Bible at all, and the majority of those who say they do indicate it is only during the one hour in which they attend a weekly church service.
- Among Americans in general, only 16% read their Bible every day; 41% say they rarely or never read their Bible.

Such conclusions have led Pollster George Gallup, Jr., to say: "Americans revere the Bible – but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of Bible illiterates." More serious than that, we have become a nation of compromising values and moral decay. A 2003 Barna research project revealed that the percentage of Americans who believe living together before marriage was "morally acceptable behavior" was 60%. Among those surveyed, 42% believed that adultery was "morally acceptable behavior;" 30% for homosexuality, 45% for abortion, 38% for pornography, 36% for profanity and 61% for gambling. Among born-again believers, 10% believed people are reincarnated, 29% believed we can communicate with the dead, and 50% believed that one can earn salvation through good works. All these things are held in firm belief among both Americans and Christian Americans, despite the teachings of Scripture to the contrary.

The proper climate for revival and spiritual awakening will never come until these conditions change. Those who genuinely profess faith in Christ are going to have to make His Word, the Bible, a passion and priority in their life once again (if ever). It is clear from the writing in this Psalm that God's Word was a passion in this man's life: *O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day* (119:97); *I love Thy commandments above gold, yes, above fine gold!* (119:127). It is obvious that he loved the Word of God more than anything in his life. He would

rather have God's Word than all the wealth in the world. The church has yet to know the kind of spiritual awakening and revival the world could experience if all believers in Christ would hold that kind of passion and priority for the Word of God.

This Psalmist had no problems accepting the authenticity and authority of Scripture. He declared: *I esteem right all Thy precepts concerning everything* (119:128). In faith, he simply accepted: *the sum of Thy word is truth* (119:160). Throughout the Psalm he reiterates how much he loves and delights in God's Word, the difference it made in his life, how often he read it and meditated on it, and how much accountability he held to living obediently to what the Word of God taught him. Too many believers today spend too much time debating the accuracy and authenticity of the Bible, rather than just accepting in simple faith its authority, reading it and living by it.

The church and individual believers are like a dry, cracked sponge desperately needing the moisture of God's Word to make us pliable and effective once again. Many will discover that if they will commit to a daily time in an intimate study of God's Word, they will begin to feel the thirst of that dry sponge in their life taking in the rich moisture of God's truth. I don't believe we will ever see the kind of revival and spiritual awakening in America that we long so much for, until God's people are saturated with a passion and priority for God's Word.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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