

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – September 4, 2009

If you were standing near the edge of the Grand Canyon, by Niagara Falls, or viewing a blazing sunset in some tropical paradise, you might hear someone say, “How could anyone look at something like this and say there is no God?” King David would agree, but he compels us to look past the creation and see the Creator in today’s Templates of Truth.

The 19th Psalm opens with this declaration: *The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands* (19:1). There is no question that the reality of God’s presence and power is made manifest in creation. While secular science insists that all we behold on land and sky is the result of some natural evolutionary process, the Bible maintains that it is the handiwork of God. It serves as the tangible evidence of His existence and majesty. Even so, many people take that to an unwarranted extreme.

Some religions worship nature and find solace, strength and guidance for life in the stars, the seasons and build great philosophies on the nature of animals, plant life and the Earth’s gravitational patterns. I once witnessed such a person sitting beside a lake beating an animal-skin drum and chanting non-linguistic sounds before the setting sun. While most people would find that strange, there are those just as exotic who spend their weekends in the woods or at the campgrounds insisting that they don’t have to be in a church to worship God; they can worship Him very meaningfully in the sanctuary of natural beauty. Even though we can acknowledge God in creation, creation is not meant to be our substitute for worshipping God. That is what Paul was referring to when he identified those who *worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator* (Romans 1:25).

In Psalm 19:7-9, David draws our attention away from creation to the Creator. We may see God in nature, but we cannot enter into a relationship with God through mountains, streams and wildlife. God manifests Himself in creation, but He reveals Himself through His Word. If we want to get to know God, we do so through the Bible, not the setting sun or a shooting star. We can gaze forever into the heavens, but we will never get there until we look intently into God’s Word. It is through the Bible that we find salvation for our soul, discover wisdom, truth & righteousness, and learn how to live clean, pure and acceptable to God. That is achieved in many meaningful ways, not the least of which is corporately together with God’s people Sunday after Sunday in the fellowship of His church.

David helps us to understand that God speaks through creation, through His Word, and in verses 12-14 of this Psalm, he reveals that God speaks to our hearts. God sees our *hidden faults*, and graciously forgives our *presumptuous sins* and *great transgressions*. As gorgeous as the orange sky is reflecting like a mirror on a peacefully still lake, it does not have the power to forgive a person’s sins and impart to him eternal life. Only God can do that. David’s prayer was, *Let the...meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer* (19:14). As meaningful as it is, meditating on the beauty of nature & creation is not acceptable to God. Meditating on Him and His Word is what pleases God.

Fall is in the air. The sporting goods stores are stocked with guns, bows, deer stands and duck calls getting ready for the hunting season. Soon outdoorsmen will be glittering the woods with camos and safety vests. Such recreational pursuit is certainly not condemned in Scripture; in fact, it is often referenced. What is displeasing to God is when a person has all the time for hunting and fishing, and no time for worship and church ministry. One would say, "But I read my Bible and meditate while I sit on my deer stand." That's great! Keep on doing that. Just don't do that in substitution for worshipping God on His day, with His people and working together with them to conduct the business of His Kingdom. Worship and serve the Creator – not His creation!

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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