

Statements attributed to the Bible but probably aren't Bible teachings

- 1) The poor you will always have with you Matthew 26:11
time. Was Jesus quoting Deut. 15? The reason debts were cancelled every 7 years—to give everyone a fresh start.
 - 2) Spare the rod and spoil the child
It's from the long 17th-century poem *Hudibras*, written by **Samuel Butler** (1612-1680), a British poet who enjoyed mocking religious extremists
Similar to Proverbs 13:24
 - 3) This too shall pass.
Perhaps the concept found in Eccl 3:1-20 To everything there is a season
But the actual statement can best be attributed either to the fable of a wise king or to an Old English Poem
The Fable of a wise king – ring with this phrase on it to remind him in times of sadness, they will end; and to enjoy times of happiness, for sad times will come again
The Lament of Doer (Old English poem) Each refrain ends: “that passed away, so may this”
 - 4) God helps those who help themselves
Aesop's fable “Hercules and the Waggoner”
 - 5) Hate the sin, love the sinner
Mahatma Gandhi 1929 – Hate the sin and not the sinner
 - 6) Money is the root of all evil
The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil 1 Timothy 6:10
- True** or False Both the Old Testament and the New Testament identify events that can be labeled “Pentecost”
Old Testament: 7 weeks after Passover (Lev. 23:15-21) 50 days after First Fruits
New Testament: Coming of the Holy Spirit, everyone heard the good news in their own language (Acts 2:1-12) 50 days after Jesus' resurrection

What do we know about scripture? About God, Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit? How does what we know shape the way we live our lives?

1 Corinthians 3:2 I (Paul) gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, (for you are still worldly—living according to human emotions, desires—jealousy, quarreling)

As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, most of us are still babies in our understanding of faith.

Intentional Faith Development

Intentional
Lasting a lifetime
Taking place with the Body of Christ—the church and
Taking place in our individual lives through prayer, meditation, study

What's the problem with NOT intentionally growing in faith, knowledge and wisdom. What's the problem with NOT growing spiritually?

Eph 4:14-16 – tossed about like children

We are to grow up in Christ; not remain children

Our relationship with God must be strong, firm.

Ps. 119 – what are GOD'S precepts, not man's, not man's interpretations

Ps 119:12 Be blessed, God, train me in your ways of wise living (Message)

Ps 119:14 I delight far more in what you tell me about living than in gathering a pile of riches (Message)

We learn to establish God's priorities in our lives

As with Radical Hospitality, we are to welcome the stranger

As with Extravagant Generosity: give God the first portion of our time, talent, treasure

Matthew 5:38-48 – You have heard it said...but I say to you....

We learn to understand OT commandments through the lens of Jesus' teaching

We can do this only as our faith develops, as we grow spiritually

What is the benefit of faith development? Of growing spiritually?

- Trust in God – as we grow, we are learning to depend upon God more and more. We are learning how to live as Jesus taught.
- Seeing beyond ourselves to a larger reality, God's reality
- Seeking to understand the Bible in its totality rather than using it as “proof-text”
What's “proof-text”?—“Proof-texting” is finding a verse that “proves” the point you're trying to make.

We used to do this when I was a college debater: find a statement that supported the argument we were making. We sometimes failed to say that the context in which the statement was made contradicted the very thing we were claiming.

Example: It is easy to find verses about judgment: “thou shalt not” and what happens when we disobey a particular commandment. So we make every effort to follow that one particular commandment.

But then we read toward the end of the NT in James:

James 2:1-13 James is warning believers to not show favoritism to the well-dressed and wealthy when they come to worship

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all.

13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

We have to be very careful not to pick and choose verses that condemn the behavior of others while avoiding those verses that point to our own faults, sins.

I have one additional application of what I’m saying about intentional faith development. Several churches host bazaars and craft fairs within their buildings. Some of us grew up hearing that it was wrong to sell anything in the church; that somehow we are disobeying Jesus’ teachings by holding a bazaar or craft fair. And, as far as I can tell, this objection is based on Jesus’ actions to overthrow the tables of the money-changers in the temple. It is an account that appears in Matthew, Mark and John.

The temple was a destination for Jews from all parts of the world—a pilgrimage they were expected to make. When they arrived in Jerusalem at the temple, they would have had to exchange their money for the half-shekel required to pay the temple tax, as commanded in Exodus 30:13-15. And they would have had to purchase the two doves or other animals for the sacrifice. So I sought discernment as I read scripture and then read about the temple complex during Jesus’ time.

This is what I understand—at this time in my life

This is the story behind the story: the context for Jesus’ actions that day, the first day of Holy Week.

Skit – 2 pilgrims, a money-changer and an animal seller

Jesus expressed his outrage at the actions of the money-changers and the animal sellers this way: “My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a den of robbers.” Luke 19:46

Was Jesus angry that there were money-changers and animal sellers in the temple complex? No: There was a place within the temple complex designated for the moneychangers and the animal sellers, the Royal Stoa. So it wasn’t that these people weren’t allowed to sell animals or exchange money. Rather Jesus’ anger was directed at the greed and fraudulent dealing of these money-changers and animal sellers. They had a captive market and could charge whatever they wanted to charge, and did.

From what I can read, from what I understand, there is no commandment against something like a bazaar or craft fair. It was the price-gouging that led to Jesus’ actions in the temple and to his outrage.

There is support in scripture for not selling items within the sanctuary or other area of worship in the church. At Passover Festival, and other very large festivals, overly eager money-changers and animal sellers moved their tables outside the area designated for vendors, the Royal Stoa, and into the Court of the Gentiles, the only place in the temple Gentiles were allowed to worship. Vendors’ presence in the Gentiles’ worship area, most likely, also angered Jesus.

Before we take any statement we heard years ago and apply it without question to our lives today, let’s take time to pray, read, study. Does that statement really mean what I was taught it meant? Does it truly convey Jesus’ teachings? And does it help me live my life as God wants me to live?

Why do we need to be intentional in our faith development? In our spiritual growth?

As our faith grows and deepens, we draw closer to God.

As our faith grows and deepens, we live the lives God has designed for us to live.

Intentional Faith Development, spiritual growth, is the foundation for living as lives as Christ commanded: love God first, love our neighbor as ourselves. Living as Christ commanded includes radical hospitality—welcoming and accepting the stranger, extravagant generosity—giving God the first portion of all we have, risk-taking mission and service and passionate worship.

Do instructions come with being a Christian? Definitely!

Our faith grows and deepens, we draw closer to God, when:

- We choose to do what is necessary to help us grow in faith
- We are ready to commit our entire lifetime to growing in faith
- We choose to worship and meet together to grow in faith
- We choose to spend time alone with God