
Words of Truth

“Hear What You Want”

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There is a commercial that has been on television the last few months. The commercial has featured many different, well-known athletes. The commercial features the song “I’m The Man”, sung by Aloe Blacc. The commercial has variations of fans screaming at the athletes, throwing things at them, different criticisms, etc. At the end of the commercial, you read the statement, “Hear What You Want” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ttsx5squWg>). It is a commercial that is marketing high end earphones that cancel out noise around you. In many ways, the commercial is powerful.

Each time I see this commercial, I understand fully that the marketing behind the commercial is all about selling earphones. I am not trying to say there is some plot to do otherwise. However, the undertones and statements of the commercial stand out to me even more than the marketing ploy. You see, we live in a world that most often has promoted a “hear what you want” mentality. That worldly promotion has never been about selling earphones that cancel out noise so you can hear music either. We live in a world that has long sought to silence anything that reproves, rebukes, and exhorts men in a way different than what people want to hear (Acts 4:5-18 and Acts 5:17-40). That, by the way, is exactly what the teaching of the word of God is supposed to do (II Timothy 4:1-5).

When people are wrong, they often do not want someone telling them that. Notice these Scriptures that show us this is not a new problem: *“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices”* (Proverbs 1:20-31).

Most of the people who will read this article are Christians. Thus, we don’t want to focus solely on the world. We should know that is where wickedness dwells (I John 5:19). What you and I need to think about is how we listen to criticism and correction. Do we get defensive? Do we close our ears? Do we look for ways to block out the noise? Do you and I just hear what we want to hear? Shouldn’t we hear what we need to hear?

Having Ears Open To What Needs To Be Heard

If you and I reach a point wherein we are not receptive to the truth, we're going to perish (II Thessalonians 2:10). We have to remain hungry to learn (Matthew 5:6 and Colossians 1:10). We have to keep desiring to grow (II Peter 3:15-18). We have to be humble enough to know that, even though we may have grown a lot, we are not "know-it-all" (Proverbs 3:5-7, Proverbs 28:26, and I Corinthians 4:1-4). Considering our God, we're really the "know-nothing-at-all" (Job 38:1-41:34, Isaiah 55:7-9, and Romans 11:33-36). It doesn't matter how long you study either. There are some people that are ever learning, but never come to know the truth (II Timothy 3:7). It doesn't matter how much you teach or want to be a teacher. There are teachers, sinfully so (James 3:1), that have known nothing (I Timothy 1:3-7).

The desire to be saved has to be joined hard to a sincerity for learning. We cannot be caught in the mindset that you or I are right without a sincerity in considering the possibility of being wrong (I Corinthians 11:31-32). We are preparing to be right when we stand before our Lord when He judges us (Romans 14:11-12). With the Scriptures open in front of our eyes (John 5:39, Acts 17:10-11, and II Timothy 2:14-18) and our hearts open to the truth (Deuteronomy 30:2, Luke 8:4-15, and Romans 6:17); we need to be ever willing to be doers of what we learn (Luke 6:46, Luke 11:28, and James 1:21-25).

Now, with all matters of truth there are extremes that people take. I wish it were not the case, for teaching would be much easier without having to try to close doors of error in every hallway of truth. Therefore, we must also consider in this study that there are times wherein we can KNOW the truth and we should NOT be open to hearing other things.

This Is Not To Say You Cannot Know The Truth

Jesus said: "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). We can (and should) know that we are saved (I John 5:13). That fact is coupled with the fact that we can know and understand these things (I John 5:20). We should not be a people of doubtful minds (Luke 12:29). However, we must balance all of that with an understanding that knowledge can puff us up (I Corinthians 8:1). If that happens, we will fail (Proverbs 16:18).

As we all grow and learn, we will be sure of things more and more (John 6:66-69). This is right, as we have seen. What we have to keep in mind with that is, even as we become sure about some things, we still have to be ready to hear (Ecclesiastes 5:1 and James 1:19). We just have to be sure we're not listening to false doctrine (Colossians 2:8; 18-23).

Conclusion

Many of us can quote Scriptures, know some verses like the back of our hands, etc. Yet, if you're honest, you will admit that even when you look at some of those Scriptures you know so well you can make an application you hadn't thought of before. The word of God is very much alive (Hebrews 4:12) and often applicable in ways we still are growing in. As God's people, we have to have the right attitude towards learning. The inspired penman of the book of Hebrews wrote this: "*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip*" (Hebrews 2:1).