

# TOO MUCH SCRIPTURE?

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Over the years, we have received feedback and input on a variety of areas and we appreciate everyone sharing their thoughts, concerns, and ideas with us. Recently a concern was expressed that we are using too much scripture in our lessons and it was suggested that need to shorten them and use less scriptures. As always, we need to examine everything, including rebuke, in light of doctrine (2Tim 4:2).

Paul warned young Timothy that, *“the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables”* (2Tim 4:3). The direct context is after he told him in verse 2 to preach the word and reprove, rebuke, and exhort with both longsuffering and doctrine but then warns him that there will be a time when some reject doctrine.

Let’s first understand that Satan is exceedingly deceitful. God told Hosea, *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...”* (Hos 4:6). If Satan can wean us off God’s word and onto man’s wisdom then his mission will be much easier to accomplish. Jesus said, *“...man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matt 4:4). And Paul said, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom 10:17). Only those who have been deceived could suggest that we can and should seek to increase our faith, knowledge, and understanding of God’s will and ways, by using less of God’s Word. Just as there is a long history of those who tire of hearing God’s words, there is an equally long history of those who are willing to supplant God’s words with their own wisdom or man’s wisdom but the duty for the faithful is the same.

God challenged the speakers of Jeremiah’s day when he said, *“The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord”* (Jer 23:28). There were many then, as there are now, who were quite willing to be unfaithful speakers of God’s word so that they might please the hearer. It’s certainly a temptation to anyone who desires to teach God’s Word. Remember young Samuel who had the burden of telling Eli about the terrible things that would befall his house but it is recorded that, *“Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words*

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*fall to the ground*” (1Sam 3:11). Samuel’s job wasn’t easy because the things he was to proclaim were not always pleasant or easy to endure but he proclaimed God’s words faithfully. The command in the New Testament is clear: “*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God*” (1Pet 4:11).

God has made it clear that His words don’t need changing and they are not extraneous. Many of his ministers were not particularly gifted speakers (Exod 4:10, 1Cor 2:1) but they were faithful speakers. But maybe it’s not a matter of quality but volume. Let’s understand that when we desire to receive less of God’s words it means that:

- We desire a dim lamp and light for our pathway (Psa 119:105)
- Our ability to cleanse our ways (Psa 119:9), sin against God (vs 11), to be strengthened (vs 28), to answer the gainsayer against God (vs 42), to be quickened (vs 50), to stay on the right path (vs 67), and to speak God’s words (vs 172), will be greatly diminished.
- We desire less of the God we proclaim to love (John 1:1)
- We will have a weak spiritual foundation that lacks in knowledge (2 Pet 1:5)
- Our spiritual freedom is in jeopardy (John 8:32)
- Our faith will be weakened (Rom 10:17)
- Our victory over the world will be at risk (1John 5:4)

...and the list could go on.

It is sad but no surprise when one desires and seeks to worship God but to do so with less of His words. I believe the Lord would challenge all of us to look deep within our hearts to consider whether 10 minutes of extra preaching is justifiable cause for consternation and discontent and whether the solution is to hear less scripture or to have a stronger hunger and thirst for righteousness. As one who desires to speak as God has commanded, there is no option to diminish the scriptures and we must say kindly but firmly that if an abundance of scripture from the pulpit is bothersome, then this congregation is a place you will be bothered. But we would also urge you to consider the words spoken long ago about a situation that may even be common today but one we have no plans to perpetuate: “*A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?*” (Jer 5:30-31).