

## SHOULD I REALLY BE GUIDED BY GOD'S WORD?

Scripture used: [Psalm 119:103-105 \(NIV\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

In [Psalm 119:103](#), the Psalmist declares that God's words are sweet in his mouth, *sweeter than honey*. To illustrate something sweet in our mouth, Pastor Tilden had us enjoy a sweet treat like a Hershey's kiss. So often we fail to find God's word to be sweet, but instead allow it to be like a textbook on tax or criminal laws. We read it only to find out what we are doing wrong or what someone else is doing wrong to us. We lose the joy of engaging and savoring God's word. Pastor Tilden challenged us to ask: Is there a larger gift in the Word of God? Can we truly use the Bible to navigate our decisions and find wisdom?

### KEY POINTS

**1. The Bible is not primarily a list of rules, but a love letter from God.**

In [John 1:1-5, 12-14, 18 \(NIV\)](#), John tells us that the first and primary Word of God is Jesus. Jesus' primary purpose during His time on earth was to allow God to be known and to invite people into a personal relationship with God. As another source of God's Word, the Bible holds the same primary purpose. In His great love for us, Jesus sacrificed Himself so that we can enter into a relationship with God free from shame and penalty. Jesus fulfilled every law in the Old Testament so we don't have to do so. As God's love letter, the Bible presents us with the greatest love story of all found in Jesus Christ.

**2. The Bible is an authentic love letter.**

The Bible is a love letter that tells the true story of God's work. Truth is found in the details, and the many details in the Bible point to its authenticity. Pastor Tilden presented two such examples. The disciples are shown throughout the Gospels as being flawed and fallible. As eyewitnesses whose stories formed the Gospels, they had opportunities to rewrite the truth to make themselves look better. Instead, they told the truth in order to ensure that the accounts concerning Jesus were accurate. Another example is found in the women at Jesus' grave, who were the first to witness the resurrected Christ. Women in Jesus' time had low social standing and were not permitted to testify in legal matters. If the Church leaders had wanted to manufacture credibility, they would have left out the truth about the women at the grave. To learn more, Pastor Tilden recommended reading [The Resurrection of the Son of God](#) by N.T. Wright. The New Testament is a collection of eye witness accounts that provide a foundation for the authenticity of Jesus Christ.

**3. If the Bible is an authentic love letter, what does it mean to be guided by Scripture in the choices we make?**

**a. It can't mean:**

- i. Ignoring 95% of the Bible's story and focusing only on the 5% of rules and regulation.
- ii. Prioritizing some commands over others. [Ephesians 4: 2-3 \(NIV\)](#) commands us to *make every effort to keep unity of the Spirit*, but if we divide over commands, we fail to do so.
- iii. Focusing on the rules and losing why Jesus came to earth. He came to pay the penalty of our sins because we can't follow all the rules perfectly.

**b. It does mean:** The Bible can be broken into five acts: Creation, the Fall, Israel, Jesus and the final act is Us - the Church. Living under the authority of God means that we join Him and allow our tiny story to be part of His much bigger story of love, and we live in alignment with all the parts of God's Word that has come before us.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - As you reflect on the message this week, set aside time to hear how God is calling you to live under His authority found in His love letter to us. How did he shape you to be a unique part of His continuing story? How is He calling you to dream and to help others to see His love through you?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Reflect on your own perspective of the Bible. Do you view it as a boring book of rules and regulations, or do you delight in it like a sweet treat? What has caused you in the past to have your view of the Bible? What has been your personal experience in encountering God's love letter? What would it take for you to see the Bible as a source of joy and delight?
- 3) **DO** - Challenge yourself to spend time in the sweet word of God. Join a Bible study like Reveal Bible study online Wednesday from now until June 22. Or, Commit to reading one of the four Gospels. See you next Sunday!