

# Thursday Devotional

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Today's devotional is an article I found, and I thought it was appropriate and helpful for our discussion on the Word of God. A few application questions to help you think through this devotional:

1. How can you apply these three practices to your life personal?
2. How can you apply these three practices to your family?
3. How can Shiloh APR Church apply these three practices to the life of the Church?

## **Sola Scriptura Briefly Explained**

*By Barry York*

“Reformed churches say they believe in sola Scriptura, or Scripture alone. This phrase means they teach that the Bible alone is sufficient as the ultimate authority for the Christian. How might this doctrine be briefly explained to another? Here is an attempt to do so.

We must be careful to distinguish what we mean when we make the statement that God's Word, the Bible, is our only authority. Many well-meaning Christians make statements such as "We have no creed but Christ" or "We do not follow confessions, only the Bible." These statements are usually intended to mean that we do not need - or even should disdain - church creeds because they are "the teachings of men." We agree that insofar as a doctrine is not faithful to the Scriptures, it should be avoided.

However, the Lord has blessed the church down through the ages with Spirit-filled teachers of His Word. Where they have given us teachings that are faithful to what God says in His Word, those doctrines should be received with gratefulness by the church. Many churches use a historic summary of these teachings, called a confession, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith or Belgic Confession as a foundational document to explain what they believe and to give guidance to their practices. These time-tested confessions accurately summarize what the Bible teaches on important subjects. We use these confessions because the church is to be the "pillar and support of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). Such confessions should always be viewed by the church as subordinate to the Bible, meaning it only has authority in so much as it agrees with Scripture. Only the Scriptures can bind the individual's conscience (Matthew 4:4; 15:3-9). Having the Bible alone as our authority then means we have the following three practices.

### **1). The Word of God is Central to Our Life**

The Cambridge Declaration states that "The evangelical church today has separated Scripture from its authoritative function....Therapeutic technique, marketing strategies, and the beat of the entertainment world often have far more to say about what the church wants, how it functions and what it offers, than does the Word of God." One chief way a Reformed congregation seeks to build its life on God's Word is by being ruled by the Biblical office of elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9). The elders are to faithfully shepherd the congregation according to the Scriptures through providing Biblical preaching and accountability. They should actively encouraging God's people to participate in a life devoted to the Bible through such means as personal devotions, family worship, and Bible study.

## **2). The Word of God is Central to Our Faith**

One cannot know Jesus Christ, who is called the Word (John 1:1,14), without knowing the Scriptures (John 5:39). One cannot love Jesus Christ without loving and obeying the Scriptures (John 14:14,21). Indeed, the only way to clearly know and follow Him is through knowing and believing the Bible (John 5:24). Doctrines from God's Word must be central to the Christian faith. Congregations that hold to sola Scriptura are committed to educating their members through such means as memorizing Scripture, catechizing, having Bible studies, encouraging family worship, reading sound theological books, and promoting conferences and other materials that are helpful to growing their faith. People should have access to those resources that will put them in deeper touch with the truths of the historic Christian faith.

## **3). The Word of God is Central to Our Worship**

In the worship of the Holy God, only His Word is to guide us to worship in a way that is pleasing to Him (Hebrews 8:4-6; 9:1). Churches holding to sola Scriptura should be evident by the way they worship the Lord. They should seek to read eagerly the Word of God (I Timothy 4:13). Congregations should listen obediently to the whole counsel of God as it is preached in an expository fashion (II Timothy 4:2-4). They sing joyfully the Biblical songs God has given us for worship (Psalm 95:1-2; Colossians 3:16). We seek to worship God as He has commanded. Loving God by loving His Word, or living sola Scriptura, is what being Reformed is all about (Psalm 119:97)!”

**Go back and reread the application questions now that you have read the article.**

<https://gentlereformation.com/2019/04/15/sola-scriptura-briefly-explained/>