

(I include this article not even knowing if all are familiar with brother Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Brother Taylor is of the greatest preachers of the last two centuries and a Bible scholar in his own right. To me he is a role model and a friend. But this article, while it speaks solely of his study habits and busy schedule of work, was written with the purpose of providing an example of a true Christian after which all can follow.—Andy)

WHAT IS WRONG WITH ROBERT R. TAYLOR, JR.?

Robert R. Taylor, Jr., recently preached a Gospel meeting at the Jacksonville church of Christ. Sitting across the table at a fellowship meal prior to the final service, I asked him about a rumor I had heard about him. “Brother Taylor, tell me about your Bible reading program.” “Well,” he answered in his man-of-few-words style. “I try to read about ten chapters a day.” With a little prompting, he admitted that it has been his practice for over fifty years to read the entire Bible through each year, and the New Testament through each month. He also confessed that he “tried” to memorize “about ten” new verses each day.

“How do you find time to do that?,” was my next inquiry. [I had quizzed him at lunch one day as to how many appointments he had a year. He said that he usually preaches about fifteen meetings a year and speaks on about twenty-five lectureships. Many of these appointments require that he write a chapter for a book. He has also written about thirty books himself, a number of tracts, and been the local preacher for the Ripley (TN) church of Christ for over thirty years.] He replied, “I keep a Bible with me and snatch a few minutes here and there.”

His wife, Irene, was sitting beside him and volunteered a brief glimpse into their family life when their children were still at home. She explained that in their family devotions their son and daughter enjoyed playing a game with their father. They tried to stump him by reading a verse from somewhere in the New Testament (without telling him where) and challenging him to quote the verse that preceded it and the one that followed it. She said, “I can’t remember them ever stumping him.”

What is wrong with Robert R. Taylor, Jr.? Does his TV not have ESPN, CNN, and the History channel? Doesn’t he watch the news first thing in the morning and the last thing at night? Does his telephone not work? Doesn’t the man have any friends to talk to, for crying out loud!? Is he the last man in America without a computer and hi-speed Internet?

Doesn’t he have ballgames to go to and things to buy and sell? Doesn’t he have to mow his grass, carry out his garbage, hang his suit back in the closet, shine his shoes, and tend his garden? Doesn’t he have to go to the doctor, keep his dental appointments, stop by the cleaners, pick up “bread and milk” on the way home, or get a haircut before Sunday?

Don’t people expect him to teach classes and visit hospitals and print bulletins and preach sermons and attend meetings and promote events and set up Bible studies and go see the wayward and drop by to invite the visitors back next Sunday? Doesn’t he have a stack of mail that needs sorting and a desk that needs organizing? Doesn’t he have to make an appearance at graduations, weddings, and funerals? Doesn’t he frequent the local coffee shop to get that “man on the street” flavor, grandchildren to “spoil,” a wife to pamper, and personal interests, hobbies, and likes? Doesn’t he ever sleep in, go on a vacation, or take a day off?

Doesn’t he enjoy reading the daily paper and a couple of magazines each month? Doesn’t he keep up with the stocks and scores? Doesn’t he have a favorite NFL, NBA, and MLB team and a favorite NASCAR driver to follow? Doesn’t he know what despot invaded what country last night and what scandal on Capitol Hill is being rumored about in the blogs? Doesn’t he keep up with what Republican accused what Democrat of what ethics violation (or what it a Democrat who accused a Republican yesterday)? I venture the man doesn’t even know where Howard Dean and Ken Mehlman are scheduled to speak this week. Doesn’t he keep up with which politician’s poll is up by ten percentage points in the election that is “only three years off” now? Doesn’t he know what the latest study found will kill you if you eat it, or what will keep you alive if you take it? Doesn’t he have to keep up with the weather and the obituaries? Doesn’t he know what actor has the hottest movie, what song is number one again this week, or what author has written the latest got-to-read novel?

“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...” (Amos 7:8)

WHAT A BLIND MAN SAW

Text: _____

- I. He Saw the _____ of the _____
 A. _____ Lost
 B. _____ Lost
- II. He Saw the _____ of the _____
 A. _____ for his _____
 B. _____ for his _____
- III. He Saw the _____ in _____
 A. _____ for _____
 B. _____ for _____
- IV. He Saw the _____ of the _____
 A. _____ to _____
 B. _____ to _____
- V. He Saw the _____ to _____
 A. _____ over _____
 B. _____ over _____

A GENEROUS HUSBAND

Several men are in the locker room of a golf club. A cell phone on a bench rings and a man engages the hands-free speaker function and begins to talk. Everyone else stops to listen.

MAN: "Hello."
 WOMAN: "Honey, it's me. Are you at the club?"
 MAN: "Yes."
 WOMAN: "I am at the mall now and found this beautiful leather coat. It's only \$1,000. Is it OK if I buy it?"
 MAN: "Sure, if you like it that much."
 WOMAN: "I also stopped by the Mercedes dealership and saw the new 2006 models. I saw one I really liked."
 MAN: "How much?"
 WOMAN: "\$60,000."
 MAN: "OK, but for that price I want it with all the options."
 WOMAN: "Great! Oh, and one more thing... The house we wanted last year is back on the market. They're asking \$950,000."
 MAN: "Well, then go head and give them an offer, but just offer \$900,000."
 WOMAN: "OK. See you later! I love you!"
 MAN: "Bye. I love you too."
 He hangs up. The other men are looking at him in astonishment. Then he asks: "Anyone know who this phone belongs to?"

I suppose the answer to many of these questions is "yes." He lives in the real world just like the rest of us...except maybe he lives a little less in it than some of us...and lives a little better in it than most of us.

There are some things you didn't tell me, but I'd like to speculate are true about Robert R. Taylor, Jr.:

- I suspect that somewhere along the way you came to *enjoy* your time in the Word and can no more imagine going without it than you can imagine skipping your daily meals (Psalm 119:97). I'd guess that your reading lost that "Oh, I've got to check off the chart" feeling many years back (cf. Psalm 1:1).
- I figure your children thought this was normal behavior for a daddy as they grew up (Proverbs 17:6). (And, I'd be surprised if they are not daily Bible readers now, Proverbs 22:6).
- I doubt Sister Irene has ever begrudged the time you spend in Bible study, knowing it is what makes you the man she respects, and the husband she loves (Luke 1:6; I Peter 3:7).
- I doubt you have ever gotten into the pulpit at Ripley with a sermon that seemed "off the shelf" (II Corinthians 4:13).
- I suspect you have a long list of sermon ideas that you "just can't wait to preach" (Hebrews 11:32) while some of us are scrambling around on Saturday night for something to "get us by" promising ourselves that "we'll do better next week."
- I'd guess that you still learn something every time you read the Bible through (Romans 11:33; Ephesians 3:8).
- I would venture that the devil has less success at tempting a man so full of Scriptures than he does those of us who still have a little trouble finding Galatians on the fly (Psalm 119:9-11; Matthew 4:1-10).
- I doubt that you watch as much TV (about five hours a day) and read fewer newspapers than the average "man in the pew" (and "man in the pulpit" for that matter) (Ephesians 5:16). I would imagine that if you are in a room where a TV is on that it seems so silly and vulgar compared to what you are used to (Ephesians 5:12).
- I figure you thought about heaven more last week than the rest of us (Colossians 3:1-2).

**What is wrong with Robert R. Taylor, Jr.?
 NOTHING!!!**

Note: Brother Taylor has no idea this is being written. I'm sure that if I'd asked permission, his humility would have insisted that I "leave his name out of it." So, Brother Taylor, as you read this, please take consolation in knowing that your example is inspiring a new generation of preachers to be "men of the Book" and countless members far and near to rededicate themselves to reading the Bible. This article is not really about you. It is really about us, and our need to follow as hard after heaven as you are. We give God the glory for having such a servant as you.

-Allen Webster

REMOVE NOT THE OLD LANDMARK

There was a sad but ancient custom among the ungodly criminals of olden times of going into the fields, out where no one could see them, and moving the boundary marker of the neighbor's land so as to increase one's own possession. When Solomon wrote the proverbs, he was familiar with this unrighteous act and gave the warning to "*Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless*" (Proverbs 23:10). This one command was given as that of humanity from man to man as to how neighbors should treat one another. Provided, however, in that statement is a valuable lesson for all mankind today.

Just as in ancient times, as well as today, there are boundary markings, giving the dimensions of a plot of land, God has provided boundary markings when it comes to His divine will and way. God's will is as old as God Himself, and as it has been and is unchanging in God He expects it to remain that way among His creation as well. Contrary, though, to the will of God is the will of carnal man. And in the absence of a physical presence of God among this world, man has allowed his will in most, if not all, areas to supersede the will of God. The result of this is Protestant denominationalism and other world religions, atheism, agnosticism, organic evolution, theistic evolution, immorality, and even much of this even within the body of Christ itself. How is it that amidst a creation able to know God and his will that there can be such a large separation, for the most part, between God and man? Those old landmarks no longer are respected as proper boundaries, thus man has removed them.

There is a very famous "Christian" author (whose name will not be included so that no more attention will be drawn to him than is necessary) who has made the statement that for most of his life he viewed the Bible as a blueprint, but now in his latter years has come to view it as a love letter instead. That appears to be a sentimental statement from a weary soldier of the cross. However, rather it is a statement rejecting the obvious design for the lives of man that God has provided through His word. Is the thought that the scriptures are a book whose theme is love rejected? NO! The clear stipulations, though, which God has provided as a means of regulating man's decisions and lifestyles cannot be ignored.

Three different places scattered throughout the Bible give the same warning as it relates to God's revealed and written will for man:

Deuteronomy 4:2 – "*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*"

Proverbs 30:6 – "*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*"

Revelation 22:18-19 – "*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*"

In these three passages is a very strong, united urge for each individual throughout each generation to give respect to the scriptures as to what they are: the all inspired, plenary, and inerrant word of God (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3). And in such that boils down in its simplest form to one decree: "REMOVE NOT THE OLD LANDMARKS."

Is any man smarter than God? Is any group of men smarter than God? Obviously the answer to these two questions is no. God by His divine nature is omniscient, or all-knowing (Psalm 147:5). Therefore because He is all-knowing, there is nothing in knowledge that He lacks. Man, however, is not all-knowing. Then comparatively it is concluded that man is not smarter than God, thus any work which God has produced cannot logically be altered by man, or else it automatically becomes imperfect.

There is one thing that absolutely irritates most people, and that is when others do not respect their property. This world is full of lazy con-artists who, unwilling to earn an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, prey upon the property of others, taking what is another's and making it theirs'. Just as much as we desire for other's to respect the boundaries of our land and the possessions which we have obtained, God has one request. His request is to take what He has provided for the eternal benefit of all mankind and leave it alone. The Bible is a beautiful combination of sixty-six works, written by some forty men, over a period of some 1,600 years. It is perfect just the way it is. As one who dearly loves and respects the Bible as the complete word of God, I too have but one request: "REMOVE NOT THE OLD LANDMARKS."

-Andy Brewer