

Contents

Introduction	5
What are Absolutes?	7
Absolute 1:	15
<i>God's will for man is that he be perfect in Christ Jesus</i>	
Absolute 2:	33
<i>The knowledge of good and evil does not produce godly believers or healthy Christians</i>	
Absolute 3:	47
<i>The natural man does not receive the things of God</i>	
Absolute 4:	61
<i>Every believer must know the voice of Jesus</i>	
Absolute 5:	83
<i>The Holy Ghost is the teacher sent from God to indwell every believer</i>	
Absolute 6:	111
<i>Once we repent of our sins, we become His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus</i>	
Absolute 7, Part 1:	133
<i>The Bible was written both historically and spiritually</i>	
Absolute 7, Part 2:	155
<i>The Bible was written both historically and spiritually</i>	
Answer Key for Study Questions	175
Glossary	195

RONALD RICLEY

The Absolutes of God

**Principles for Building a Solid Foundation
in our Christian Life**



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Introduction

It would be a miracle if a single book could confront the present confusion in Christendom and make a difference. Nevertheless, God is a God of miracles! This book is about the Word of God and its building blocks of truth that have been forgotten or misplaced. The writer of Hebrews calls them "the first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. 5:12).

Our everyday lives find structure in the thousands of things we accept as truths, from the numbers we use to the names of colors and textures. Christ introduced His disciples to absolute truths as He added spiritual understanding to the things that He wanted them to know. There are absolutes in the Bible, and they are constants in the spiritual realm, as "2+2" is a constant in the physical realm. The problem we have with understanding spiritual things is excluding God from the equation. Only God can establish meanings for the things He says. Without the voice of His authority, values can be changed arbitrarily. Because the natural man knows nothing about spiritual things, any man can proclaim himself an expert.

The Bible is the Word of God and, therefore, the foundation of the Church. Because we fail to acknowledge the Spirit of God as the *only* authority able to interpret the Word, the absolutes get lost and truth becomes conjecture. With an eroded foundation, the Church is now in a place where any idea is as valid as the next. Relativity has infiltrated the Body of Christ.

The Bible is a compilation of holy, inspired writings. As such, it constitutes the revelation of the divine personality of the One and only Creator, God. The Bible is written to the Church, not to the world, because the same heavenly inspiration is required to read it as was to write it, (and the world had no access to divine inspiration outside of God). God gave the Bible to the Church because it is there the great truths of Scripture are to be lived and declared to the uninformed and lost.

My prayer is that this book be received as a gift from God to His children. The very premise of this work is too large a task for any man to undertake.

The Bible stands over and above any other book, because it is not just *a* book, it is *the* Book! It is an eternal declaration of light. By that light, we can see a God who is Spirit. The Word is the only place in the expanse of the universe where a man can stand and see God.

God's desire is that the words He spoke become alive in His people so that He is seen in His Church. God wants to be visible, not only to His Church but also to the whole world. He wants to see truth believed in and lived out in front of the entire world.

The Bible is not like the writings of mere mortals—intellectual critique of it has no value. It is the voice of God, age after age, crying, "Adam, where are you?" After the lost are found, it is the fellowship of the Spirit, long talks with the Father as we walk the road home. From its pages, we hear the voice of God for the first time and encounter the precious fragrance of His love. He touches us through its message. Because of its promises, we reach up and cling to an amnesty so vast and free that our earthbound minds cannot take in the depth and breadth of His mercy and grace. He births us anew of His Spirit, knowing that we need His indwelling in order to understand what we see and hear and feel when we encounter His presence in the message that He sent—the precious revelation of God.

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What Are Absolutes?

The twenty-first century Church of Jesus Christ is divided by opinions and adrift upon a sea of doctrines. Anyone who claims to be an expert or a critic can hold court and sway opinions. Believers have grouped themselves together in clusters of opinion, distrusting anyone who does not see things their way. No one seems to know how to resolve the confusion.

Meanwhile, the world looks on in dismay, waiting for answers that the Church does not provide. Religious fervor is not the same thing as Christianity, and substitutes for true faith will never do. As truth gets lost amidst the clamoring voices of conflicting views, little else that is spoken to the world matters. The Church is trying to lift up Christ so that men are drawn to Him, but in all the confusion, Jesus is being misrepresented. It is time for a reformation.

Jesus said that the world would know His disciples by the love they have one for another. Instead of displaying love, we Christians have been busy congratulating ourselves for just sitting together in the same room without throwing punches! Have we forgotten Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, asking that we become *one* as He and the Father are one? God says that two cannot walk together except they agree (Amos 3:3). God is talking to the Church right now through what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:10:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Corinthians 1:10 (KIS)

This Scripture demands an answer from today's Church. Discussing religion, especially with a vision for reformation, has always been a

dangerous thing to do. Believers tend to be very protective of the doctrines they hold dear, and critics who are simply being critical abound. However, true love for the true Church of Jesus Christ does not demand silence. Quite the opposite, love demands judgment so that the Church can once again be pure. Truth is light and light dispels darkness. It is necessary to expose the problems so that we can seek God's answers. Denying that problems exist is no solution.

First, a Look at Some of the Problems

The Church has committed two evils: she has forsaken the fountain of living waters and has hewn out broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13). **The fountain of living waters is the spontaneous flow of the presence of God. Jesus is the Fountain of living waters!** Today, the cloud of God's presence is not even expected, and the spontaneity that allows Him to work has been cut off. We forsake the Fountain to our own demise. It is only when God's will is sought and followed in our lives and in the assembly of the saints that the enemy's lies are effectively confronted and strongholds in our hearts torn down. God's specific word for any given occasion is what the Church should be seeking, for it contains a life-giving flow that man cannot duplicate.

Think of any gathering of God's saints as a grand banquet. From a heart that has all wisdom and understanding, our loving Father desires to feed us exactly what we need at the time. He wants to nurture us and protect us, to admonish us and mold us. The minister's job is to simply be a vessel God can move through in order to lead His people on.

Ministers learn to make good sermons in Bible school. Sprinkled with Scriptures, such sermons sound like heaven's own message. However, more often than not they are only broken cisterns. Such sermons may be full of enticing words of men's wisdom, but they lack divine power (1 Cor. 2:4). Sadly, worldly wisdom is often passed off as God's message to the Church. Old sermons are reheated and writers are hired to replace the anointing oil of God with quips and quotes and jokes. Sunday after Sunday, God's power is nowhere in sight. We need to let the Holy Spirit do His job!

The Holy Spirit is the "Teacher sent from God." Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of Truth. Again, in John 10 Jesus said, "My sheep

hear my voice, and the voice of a stranger they will not follow." By the Spirit's anointing, the Word of God becomes more than words. It becomes the voice of God.

The human intellect has replaced the Holy Ghost as teacher with disastrous results. In the absence of divine guidance, the Bible's spiritual precepts lose their simplicity. Religious knowledge becomes tangled webs spun by mental gymnastics. These webs become so twisted and intimidating that they may go unchallenged for centuries. This does not happen when the Holy Ghost is the one doing the teaching. Religious knowledge is not the same as revelation knowledge.

Not content to usurp the office of the Holy Ghost, man has also made himself the head of the Church. Man took over the daily operations of the Church, but it was a hostile takeover. Without reference to God's will, men have decided the course for the Church and policy meetings have become political power forums. Men have increased the speed of travel but they are going away from God.

Under man's leadership, the world has seen many churches built. Unprecedented numbers attend Bible schools around the world. For every Bible school there is another school of thought. Man can certainly build but he cannot unify. We have fooled ourselves into believing that red-hot programs and exciting headlines can change lives. They cannot. The Church has lost her expectation of the miraculous. Week after week of "self-help" theology can never replace prayer that seeks God's intervention. The Church must return to the Fountain of living waters.

The transition from theocracy to democracy has changed the attitude of the Bride and put the vote where submission should have been. Man's arrogance stands in defiance of the established order of God and the woman (the church congregation) can hire or fire the man whom God sends to minister. The Church is not supposed to operate that way.

The only Head ordained to lead the Church is Jesus Christ. His banner over her is love. He spoke His word *about* her as much as *to* her because His word has creative power. The Church is not about running a business or building awe-inspiring cathedrals, it is about light coming out of darkness and order out of chaos. The gospel of Jesus was not sent to influence man, it was sent to impregnate the soul. The Church is not an organization it is an organism. God is not after a worldwide corporation He wants a Bride.

Self-righteousness is pandemic in the Church, and that is not what Jesus is after. The Bible promises a victorious Church without spot or wrinkle, a Church the gates of Hell will not prevail against. God is now awakening that Church. Under the rightful leadership of Jesus, she will triumph over every obstacle. The victorious Church walks in absolute truth because Jesus is absolute truth.

Another problem is that the Church has forsaken the absolutes of truth. Truth anchored the Church of Acts. She had knowledge from on high and walked in the Spirit of revelation.

The atoms of knowledge are the fundamental building blocks that must be absolutes. Where there are absolutes a foundation is formed that clears the way for deeper understanding (i.e., $2+2=4$). Absolutes demand consistency and produce predictable results. Dividing 7,256 into 9,385,145 produces only one true answer. The beauty of constants is that anyone in the world can solve that problem the same way.

God gave the Church absolutes, truths that are like atoms of knowledge. In the early Church, the written Word of God revealed by the Spirit of God produced such a firm foundation that Jesus said, "On this rock (revelation from God) I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The Church must remember that she has an adversary who is the father of lies. One lie leads to another, and Satan knows that lies set the Church adrift. Without an anchor of truth, any wind of doctrine will blow her (Ephesians 4:14).

The word "absolute" is defined as the following: 1. being entirely without flaw and meeting supreme standards of excellence; 2. pure; 3. free from restrictions; 4. definite. It also means existing in or based on fact. Synonyms of "absolute" are factual, genuine, and perfect.

God is an absolute. He is pure, He is perfect, He is entirely without flaw, and He exceeds beyond comparison any standard of excellence. His existence is based on fact. He is free from restrictions, but He cannot lie. Not only is He a God of truth, He is Truth! He is a God of His word and He is the Word of God.

It is perfectly natural to trust in things that do not change. God does not change. Confidence in God, the unchanging absolute, inspires rest as nothing else does. The psalmist David described resting in God when he said, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" (Psalms 23:5). It would be impossible to sit down and eat in front of

our enemies unless we knew they were held at bay by a very powerful force.

Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). Trusting that He can conform us to His unchanging image gives us rest.

God has declared that He will have a Church that is an absolute. The Church is the glory of God's creation. Through His plan of salvation, man can return to the original pattern that God used when He made Adam in the Garden of Eden.

The Lord has led me to address seven absolutes that the Church has ignored, thereby leaving the truth she was to guard unprotected. These absolutes are the necessary building blocks of knowledge. Right now, the Church is in confusion because she has rejected God's knowledge and embraced man's knowledge. The difference between the two is vast. The Church is filled with man's knowledge today, and the absolutes of God confront accepted human wisdom.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Hosea 4:6 (KJS)

Below are a few of the absolutes of the Word of God. They will confront lies and illuminate the way for us to go.

- 1. God's will for man is that he be perfect in Christ Jesus.** *God created Adam as a perfect man. Until he became the judge of what was good and what was evil, Adam walked with God as a perfect son. Jesus succeeded in walking perfectly in the flesh to show God's ability to do such a miraculous thing in man.*
- 2. The knowledge of good and evil does not produce godly believers or healthy Christians.** *Adam could not eat of both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*
- 3. The natural man does not receive the things of God.** *Jesus told Nicodemus that unless you are born again of the Spirit you cannot see the Kingdom of God.*

4. **Every believer must know the voice of Jesus.** *Jesus said that His sheep will know His voice, and the voice of a stranger they will not follow.*
5. **The Holy Ghost is the teacher sent from God to indwell every believer.** *Jesus calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of Truth. Sent to indwell us, only He can teach every Christian the truths of the Word of God.*
6. **Once we repent of our sins, we become His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.** *Trusting that Jesus is truly working in us and for us every day, and that we are not our own workmanship, restores our peace with God and returns joy. Our faith grows, and faith can move things out of our lives that nothing else can.*
7. **The Bible was written both historically and spiritually.** *The spiritual aspect of the Bible was sealed. The Bible contains truths that we cannot understand unless a revelation of God opens them up. Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ and the Son of God by divine revelation. God must open the Bible to us in the same way.*

These absolutes are some of the atoms of knowledge that anchor the Church. Discussing them will doubtless produce an array of responses in Christians. Instead of receiving these truths by Holy Spirit revelation, the natural man regards them as merely religious jargon open to debate. The Church is in desperate need of a sure foundation. A willingness to know the will of God and seek it in our lives will cause these building blocks of truth to form that foundation.

Summary

We live in a world that is very hostile to the idea of absolutes. More than she knows, the Church has allowed the world's mindset to deeply infiltrate and corrupt the foundation God gave her to live by in His Word. God commands, "Come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17). We must ask God to reveal the worldliness in the Church and in our hearts if we are to receive the truth and return to the fundamental concepts necessary to live a normal Christian life. What most Christians today view as a "normal" walk of faith is far removed from what God defines as normal for His sons and daughters. If we can only forsake our wrong ideas and lifestyles and open our ears and eyes to embrace what the Spirit says to the Church, we can give God the liberty He desires to present a spotless Bride to His Son. He is waiting on us to believe His promises.

Not only is He waiting, all of creation groans for the manifestation of the sons of God (Romans 8:19-22)!

Study Questions

1. *Why is it so bad that the Church has forsaken the fountain of living waters and hewn out broken cisterns that can hold no water?*
2. *What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit and why do we need Him so much in our churches?*
3. *Why is man's leadership so destructive to the Church?*
4. *What should man's leadership be replaced with—and how do we do that?*
5. *Define the true Church of Christ.*
6. *Why is truth so important to the Church?*
7. *What is an absolute?*
8. *What will bring the Church back to a firm foundation?*

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231

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