

R.T. Kendall: We Must Return to Loving Sound Doctrine

“You are not responsible for being clever, intellectual, educated or brilliant. It is what your heart longs for.”

Renowned theologian R. T. Kendall pens these words in his book *More of God* to emphasize an often-forgotten truth: A love for God should mean a love for sound doctrine. We ought to desire to follow teachings that reflect truth. When we let ourselves be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, it indicates a lack of desire to follow true biblical wisdom.

“If any man desires to do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I speak on My own authority” (John 7:17).

Sound doctrine is what Kendall calls a ‘precious stone’ to use for building your spiritual house. He explores what it means when the apostle Paul says, “if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble, each one’s work will be revealed” (1 Cor. 3:12-13).

“Of these ingredients—wood, hay, straw, gold, silver, precious stones—what can burn up?” Kendall asks. “Wood? Yes. Hay? Yes. Straw? Yes. Gold? No. Silver? No. Precious stones? No.”

While we are already saved—the foundation for our “house” being Jesus Christ—the materials we use to build upon that foundation play a huge role in how we glorify God. Those materials consist of our works: if we lose our temper or demonstrate self-control, if we hold grudges or forgive others, if we help a person in need or turn a blind eye.

Performing good works edifies us, shares the love of Christ with others and even secures us a reward (1 Cor. 3:14).

Though the pursuit for sound doctrine constitutes as a work of gold, silver and precious stone, Kendall goes further to highlight another necessary material: the desire to evangelize.

As Kendall points out, God blessed Billy Graham, the Gideons, Jews for Jesus, Arthur Blessitt and D. James Kennedy. But were they after blessings? No. Rather, they were after the blesser, specifically that people would come to follow Him. These people and organizations obeyed Jesus' Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) and strove to see people convert to Christianity.

"Soul winning is, without a doubt, building your superstructure with gold, silver and precious stones," Kendall says.

He describes a time when he pastored at Westminster Chapel, and half of the deacons turned on him for one reason: an increased intensity in evangelism. During the height of controversy, Kendall was reassured that he would not be ousted.

"The entire issue was connected directly to the reason God sent His Son into the world to die on a cross—namely, for souls to be saved," he says.

In building your house on the foundation of Christ, Kendall exhorts you to remember Paul's words to Philemon:

"I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ" (Philemon 1:6, ESV).

Kendall's book *More of God* includes more ways to build a house of gold, silver and precious stones. He reminds readers how we are not saved by works (Eph. 2:8-9)—in fact, it may be safe to say that we don't do good works to draw closer to God. But because God has already drawn Himself closer to us, we strive to glorify Him in our works.

“Whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (Col. 3:23, MEV). {eo}

This article is based on More of God: Seek the Benefactor, Not Just the Benefits (Charisma House 2019) by R.T. Kendall. Kendall was the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, England, for 25 years. Born in Ashland, Kentucky, he was educated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (.) and Oxford University (.). Kendall is the author of a number of books, including Total Forgiveness, Holy Fire, It Ain't Over Till It's Over, Prepare Your Heart for the Midnight Cry and Whatever Happened to the Gospel?