

Why Do People Think the Bible Is ‘Practical’?

You have no idea the number of pastors who tell me that their unique gift is *to teach the Bible from a practical perspective*. They focus on helping their congregation understand the Bible *inpractical* ways. I assume they mean like the owner’s manual of a car, or the instructions for operating a computer. But the problem is – **the Bible may be the least practical book ever written**. In fact, I wonder if you’re teaching the Bible from a practical perspective, you may not be grasping the Bible at all.

The drama of a God who allowed His Son to become a sacrifice to redeem the entire human race is the least practical thing I’ve ever heard. The story of redemption isn’t practical at all. If you want practical, then you’re looking in the wrong place. The incarnation, the mystery of salvation, the power of miracles, how the Gospel message transforms lives – all those things aren’t the least bit practical. And how about the Sermon on the Mount? And turning the other cheek?

It wasn’t remotely practical for William Tyndale to spend his entire adult life on the run from authorities, living with smugglers and hiding out so he could translate the Bible into English.

German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer didn’t defy the Nazis to keep preaching a practical message.

When Jim Elliot and four other missionaries were slaughtered in the Amazon jungle, it wasn’t for practical reasons that their wives continued trying to make contact, and eventually won the tribe’s hearts – the same tribe that killed their husbands.

The Bible is SO much bigger than “practical.” The Bible is a

mystery. It's an unfolding, eternal drama. It's the power of life and death. It's the unexplainable love of a God that looks beyond our sin and sees something worth making the ultimate sacrifice to redeem.

Do Biblical principles help you get a better job, get out of debt, become a better leader, or help pay off your mortgage? They can – but if that's what you're preaching, then you're giving your congregation candy when they need steak. This is my beef with the fringe TV evangelists who drone on and on about one thing – money. Wow. You're reading the Bible and that's the best you have to offer?

God is big. God is mysterious. God is beyond anything we could imagine or dream. Preach that. Preach deep. Preach a message that isn't practical at all – because that's the message that will change people.

Today's culture knows *practical*. What they don't know, is *something beyond*.

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