

Ps. 25:4-12 (WCF 1:2-5) "Witness to the Word"

For the Children: If a good friend of yours was wrongly accused of lying, you might want to defend them. But that can be hard to do if you were not there to witness what happened. You might then simply say that your friend wouldn't act that way, because they're not that kind of person. Your friend will be the one who has to explain what happened and defend himself against the false accusation. When people accuse God's Word as being full of mistakes and wrong ideas, God Himself is the best Witness to defend His Word. He gives that Witness in the Bible and through the work of His Holy Spirit. We can add our voices, but our witness is weak compared to His. **Questions:** What would you say to someone who said that the Bible is full of mistakes? What parts of God's character guarantee that His Word must be true? What help do sinners need in order to learn the truth?

Introduction:

First Point: The Lord Instructs Sinners in His Ways

- 1) Request and Assurance: David asks the Lord to instruct/teach/make him know His ways/paths/truth (vss. 4-7). There is then an assurance that God does indeed teach His people (vss. 8-12).
- 2) The Instruction Manual: The Lord instructs by supplying the truth in objective form by His revelation, through inspired human authors – which is now recorded in Scripture. For this to provide us with the instruction we need, the Scripture must contain all necessary information, in an infallible and reliable way. It was also necessary to gather all the various revelations over the centuries into one Book, which the church accepted - while rejecting false claims to revelation. This is the process of "canonization" – the church recognizing God's "rule" for our lives. Canonization is overseen by God in His Providence.
- 3) Help to Follow the Manual: God's objective Word is applied subjectively to us so we can apply it to our lives – "He will instruct you in the way you should *choose*." We need this help because we are sinners (vss. 7-8). Therefore, the Lord sent His Son to deliver us from sin. The Lord Jesus then sent His Spirit to give us a new nature so that we could receive and believe His Word; to give faith and illuminating grace so we can understand and apply the Word. He also arranges things in His providence so that we come into contact with that Word and grow in it.
- 4) Dependency on the Lord: We are utterly dependent on God's grace to enable us to receive His Word. That is why David asks the Lord to "make him know" (v. 4). We need to keep on depending on the Lord's help for our instruction – to learn to "wait" upon Him (v. 5).

Second Point: The Ground for Our Certainty in This

- 1) The Lord's Good and Upright Character: The reliability of God's Word and the certainty that He will instruct His people derive from the fact that He is "good and upright" (v. 8). His Word reflects His character.
- 2) His Merciful Character: The Lord is eternally compassionate and loving-kind (vss. 6-7, 10). He is the God of salvation (v. 5). To show that mercy in the salvation of sinners through the Gospel, His Word must be reliable and sufficient for salvation.
- 3) The God of Truth: All God's paths are "truth" (v. 10). That, too, is reflected in His Word being inerrant and infallible.
- 4) The Source of Our Confidence in the Bible: David's confidence in both God's Word and in the way His Spirit enables us to accept it, comes primarily from God's character. Thus the primary witness to the truth of the Bible comes from God Himself – from His Word (what He says there about His Word) and His Holy Spirit (Who enables us to recognize and receive the Word). WCF 1:4-5 takes the same approach in regard of the canonization process. While the early church used various evidences to decide which Books to include (consistency, authorship, subject-matter etc.) – and we can explain this to unbelievers – the greatest assurance that the Bible is God's Word comes from His own witness in the Word and by His Spirit. The church did not "create" the Bible; it *recognized* God's Word, from the witness of the Word, with the Spirit's help. See Jn. 16:13.

Conclusion: