



The authority of the Bible means we should give the Bible the final say instead of anything else—instead of, for example, science, culture, family, friends, or feelings.

I'm not saying these things don't have value and shouldn't be given consideration. In fact, in many instances they *should* be given significant consideration. What I am saying, however, is that when there's a conflict between these things and the Bible, we should always go with the Bible. We should always give it the final word.

Science is one of God's gifts to us. It's a gift that can enrich our lives and help us to understand God, the world, and ourselves better. However, science is fallible, and it can and often does go off course; when this happens, it inevitably points not to God but away from God. As one example, today many scientists would claim that we got here by a combination of nothing plus time plus chance. So, nothing plus time plus chance equals everything. The Bible, of course, says that we got here because God made us and put us here; as we see in Isaiah 66:2, it tells us he created everything. So in many areas, modern-day science and the Bible are compatible, but when it comes to creation, they aren't. As Christians, we therefore must give the Bible the final word and affirm the Bible's superiority to science.

Consider culture. There are many good things that we can affirm about our culture; things we can use to honor God and in which we can find great enjoyment. Things like art and music and language and sports, amongst others. However, there are plenty of things in our culture that contradict what we find in the Bible. Things pertaining to sex, gender, marriage, money, and power. I could address each of these at length, but what we have to realize is first that our culture really does often contradict what the Bible says about these things, and that second, we need to affirm and submit to the Bible's authority no matter how strongly our culture says otherwise.

Let's consider family. Again, there can be a lot of good things about family. Many of us are fortunate to have good families. But reflect on this; every family has a shadow side to it. Every family, including mine, has its own culture that has at least a thing or two that's in conflict with the Bible. Things like how to deal with conflict, or how leadership is to be expressed in the home, or parenting, or church participation. It's hitting close to home now, right? But this is especially true here in the Midwest. We prize family, and that can be a great thing, but it can also be an idol. It's an idol when family gets the final word instead of the Bible.

All that said, here's the big one: feelings. Feelings aren't bad; in fact, God created us to feel; he created us with emotions. It's taken me a long time to come to this realization—and I need to talk with you more about this—but for now, let me point out that because of sin, our emotions are disordered, and they very often don't function the way God created them too. Because of this, we must be very careful not to be directed by what we feel but rather by the Bible. Or maybe better said, we need to allow the Bible to direct our feelings—sometimes to correct them and sometimes simply to point them in the right direction.

—Pastor Chris Carr, *A supplement to his "By the Book" message on September 19 on the authority of Scripture*