

The Bible Says ...

For 75 years the Reverend Billy Graham traveled the world, preaching the truth. But whose truth did he preach? It seems like a simple question, but our tendency is to want to create our own truth.

In my college years I frequently utilized “cliff note” study guides of my text books. They summarized the key points that might be asked on the final exam. There were also cliff note publications that provided a synopsis of novels and other readings. The feeling was, if you read the cliff notes you didn’t have to read the book itself. But what are the cliff notes? In effect, they were one person’s opinion of what I should have read in the actual book. They were a substitute for the book.



Billy Graham didn’t believe in cliff notes. When he quoted scripture he pointed directly to the Bible as the source of truth. There is no substitute for the actual Word of God. Billy Graham identified the source by saying, “The Bible says,” and then continued to read the passage. He made it clear that there was no human interpretation or watering down the message of his scriptural quotes. “The Bible doesn’t just *contain* God’s Word – the Bible *is* God’s Word.” We may look at Billy Graham as a trusted authority and scholar of the Bible, so we think we could trust Graham’s word for it. When people asked Billy Graham what he thought about a topic Graham would point to the Bible for the answer. Franklin Graham said of his father, “It mattered not what he thought, but rather what God thinks.”

Whenever Billy Graham was asked why the Bible was so important to him, he would often say, “God speaks from heaven through the Bible. That is why I use the phrase, ‘The Bible says.’ I would not have the authority to say what I do in sermons unless it was based upon the Word of God.”

In our own lives we are tempted to paraphrase or read the Bible with indifference because we want to live by our own modified version – to be in control and to bend the passages to fit our own desires. Mankind’s changing culture endorses a different set of values as acceptable, over time. God’s Word never changes. The Bible is not subject to human intervention.

A friend of Franklin Graham, David Lee Hill, inscribed the following message in a Bible he gave to Franklin Graham. Graham was a teenager when he received it. It said:

*The Bible reveals the mind of God,
The state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers.
Its doctrines are holy, its precepts binding, its histories are true, its decisions are immutable.*

*Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.
It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.*

It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s character.

*Here paradise is restored, heaven opening, and the gates of hell disclosed.
Christ is its grand object, our good is its design, the glory of God its end*

It should fill your memory, rule the heart and guide the feet.

*Read it slowly, frequently and prayerfully.
It is given in life, will be opened in the judgement, and will be remembered forever.
It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all those who trifle with its sacred contents.*

In honor of Billy Graham the scripture readings in my devotions usually begin with the phrase, “The Bible says.” When seeking to understand God’s Word accept no substitute. Receive its direction straight from the source.

The Bible Says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning (John 1:1-2)*

Question: How often do you go to the source of God’s truth to guide your life?

Prayer: Dear Lord. We are tempted to seek the easy way out. We are tempted to listen to others for guidance on the direction for our lives instead of the actual source. We pray that we will go our Bible as the source of truth, Your Word. Thank you for speaking to us through the scriptures. Amen.

Quotes from Billy and Franklin Graham and the inscription from David Lee Hill are from Franklin Graham’s recent book, [Through My Father’s Eyes](#).