**Dear False Teacher: The Puritan Thomas Brooks Would Like a Word with You**

**Date:**[**June 2, 2023**](https://thelogcollege.wordpress.com/2023/06/02/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you/)**Author:**[Rosaria Butterfield](https://www.reformation21.org/posts/Rosaria%20Butterfield)
https://thelogcollege.wordpress.com/2023/06/02/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you/

Dear Mr. False Teacher,

Permit me to write boldly to you. You have repeated your shallow shibboleths in sermons, blogs, and conferences, and you have tried very hard to pretend that secular society is a neutral playground, a marketplace of ideas where Christianity is welcome to flourish.

You punt for nuance every time and have made every clear teaching of the law and gospel a grey area of ambiguity.

You have sought the middle road on every issue: gay marriage, transgender normalization, Black Lives Matter, and abortion.

You always seek the third way.

But it’s getting harder for you to persuade your flock because some of them see that a raging spiritual war has washed out the middle road and the third way.

I believe that you are at a crossroads.

So let me put it straight: if you are a true Christian who has fallen into some bad theology, I’m throwing you a rope. Why not grab it?

Your rhetorical strategy was to yield the moral language to the left–using transgender pronouns, normalizing all things LGBTQ+, and generally asking, “Did God Really Say?” anytime biblical clarity came with a cost. Maybe you tell yourself that you mean well. Perhaps you truly believe your innovations are better than God’s word because you fancy yourself more merciful than God. You and your friends redefined the biblical concepts once foundational to all Christians, like being born again, forsaking sin, and finding liberty in Christ.

By redefining biblical words through secular definitions, you almost persuaded yourself and others that:

* Being “born again” meant coming to grips with your personal truth.
* “Forsaking sin” meant not offending unbelievers with God’s word.
* “Finding liberty in Christ” meant doing whatever your feelings dictate.

Believe me. I understand your dilemma. Let’s not forget that I once promoted garbage ideas, such as “pronoun hospitality,” and garbage aphorisms, such as “homosexuality is a sin, but so too is homophobia.” I repent before God and men. Christians “repent of their particular sins particularly,” as the Westminster Confession of Faith XV.V teaches. As God’s Word says, “If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” ([1 John 1:7-9](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/1%20John%201.7-9)).

Perhaps you think I am exaggerating the problem?

Did you miss the federal government program that puts LGBTQ+ in all government schools as part of an anti-bullying mandate?[[1]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn1) But instead of warning your flock of danger, you told them that “Love is Love,” therefore, the Christian’s responsibility in the government schools is “Love, Don’t Leave.”  (Way to go using an aphorism instead of the Bible. It’s catchier; you can say it around unbelievers without offending them, and you won’t risk bringing God into the equation.)

Did you miss that after the State of Tennessee passed a law protecting minors from self-mutilation under the Frankensteinian umbrella of “gender-affirming surgery,” the Biden Administration’s Department of Justice leveled a lawsuit against the state of Tennessee?[[2]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn2) Did you catch that? My friend Andrew Branch put it best: “It’s official: A 14th Amendment claim by the federal government over castrating minors.”

And although by now you are likely “feeling triggered” –as your peer group likes to call it–I suggest you man up, Mr. False Teacher, because Mr. Thomas Brooks would like to have a word with you.

In *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices (1652)*–a book that every Christian should read, especially those in the dangerous predicament of having compromised biblical doctrine for pluralistic nonsense—Thomas Brooks provides the medicine for what ails broad evangelicalism.

According to Brooks, knowing a wolf by his characteristics is needed to kick him to the curb, so he provides seven.

*1). False teachers are men-pleasers. They preach to “please the ear,” and not to “profit the heart”* ([Isaiah 30:10](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/Isa%2030.10)); they “handle holy things rather with wit and dalliance than with fear and reverence. False teachers are soul-undoers…[they] skin over the wound, but never heal it…. Not bitter, but flattering words do the mischief.”[[3]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn3)

* False teachers use therapeutic language to describe the transgression of sin. They see themselves and others downstream from Genesis 3 as victims needing sympathy, not sinners needing a savior.[[4]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn4)

2). “False teachers are notable in casting dirt, scorn, and reproach upon the persons, names, and credits of Christ’s most faithful ambassadors.”[[5]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn5)

* They claim their place among conservative Christians but write elegant columns in well-heeled secular journals that throw biblical truth and the Christians who proclaim it under the bus of pluralism.[[6]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn6)

3). “False teachers are venters of the devices and visions of their own heads and hearts.”

* They lie about what the Bible actually says and then quote from their lies as though the Bible comports with their deception. Take, for example, “gay Christian” Matthew Vines, who so outrageously twists Scripture as to assert, “To affirm same-sex relationships would not change the Bible’s core truths about sin, repentance, and redemption. In fact, given that same-sex orientation is consistent with God’s image, affirming those relationships is the only way to defend those truths.”[[7]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn7) Reminiscent of [Jeremiah 14:14](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/Jer%2014.14), “And the Lord said to me, the prophets are prophesying lies in my name.”

4). “False teachers easily pass over the great and weighty things both of law and gospel and stand most upon those things that are of the least moment [of the least importance].”

* Matthew Vines says, “Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people have inestimable dignity and worth. So how could the suffering that they endure when they are not affirmed by their families and churches express God’s intentions toward his creation?”[[8]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn8) The tremendous and weighty matter of sinning against a holy God is of no consideration to Vines. What matters is that we must “affirm” all sin to avoid hurting feelings. Hellfire is a small matter to Vines; hurt feelings are colossal.

5). “False teachers cover and color their dangerous principles and soul-impostures with very fair speeches and plausible pretenses, with high notions and golden expressions.”

* The mantra of the gay rights movement in defense of gay marriage was Love Is Love. But love only has the integrity of its object. Loving sin is satanic; Satan and his minions want you to love it with idolatrous confidence.

6). “False teachers strive more to win over men to their opinions, not better them in their [Christian walk].”

* James Brownson, in *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church’s Debate on Same-Sex Relationships*, writes, “The church is faced with gay and lesbian Christians who exhibit many gifts and fruits of the Spirit and who seek to live in deep obedience to Christ. Many of these gay and lesbian Christians seek not to suppress their sexual orientation but rather to sanctify it.”[[9]](https://www.reformation21.org/blog/dear-false-teacher-the-puritan-thomas-brooks-would-like-a-word-with-you?mc_cid=2f92c14a5f&mc_eid=b2d508b357#_ftn9) Mr. Brownson wants to persuade you that sin can be sanctified and that you can live in “deep obedience to Christ” while trampling on his blood. Brownson explains that he changed his position on the Bible when his son came out as gay, and his book intends to work the same wiles on you.  False teachers want you to forget that the sin of homosexuality is rebellion against the creation ordinance (which is the same sin leveled by letters of the alphabet soup, LGBTQ). Rebellion against God’s created order, which he calls good, isn’t erased because the person committing this sin is someone you love.

7). “False teachers make merchandise of their followers…. they eye your goods more than your good.”

* False teachers keep up appearances, especially on social media. They encourage shows of solidarity around causes, not Christ. If your pastor tried to convince you that Christian unity required marching with Black Lives Matter, you have a problem. Atheistic social justice programs cannot serve Christ or His Church. They deny both law and gospel simultaneously. Instead, the Bible witnesses that peace comes from God, from above, not from man: “Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes” ([Psalm 133:1-2](https://biblia.com/bible/kjv1900/Ps%20133.1-2)).

If you read this list and see your pastor in it, flee. Sheep can’t redeem wolves. Perhaps you tell me you want to stay and be a “soft presence”?  Here’s a News Flash: You carry water for the other team by being a “soft presence” here in Sodom.

Dear False Teacher, I want you to know that the gig is up.

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**ANDY STANLEY’S PROBLEM WITH THE BIBLE by Josh Buice**

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(Josh Buice is pastor of Prays Mill Baptist Church in Douglasville, GA,  a west suburb of Atlanta.)
**Andy Stanley’s Problem with the Bible**
Andy Stanley knows the Bible. As the son of the popular Baptist pastor, Dr. Charles Stanley, he has grown up under Bible teaching and preaching. As a pastor of a very large megachurch, North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia, Andy Stanley has spent much time reading and studying the Bible. So, why does it seem that Andy Stanley has a problem with the Bible on so many different levels?
Over the past few years, Andy Stanley has managed to stay in the light of controversy regarding his positions on key issues of the faith. Is Andy Stanley operating by the old adage, “There’s no such thing as bad publicity”? While Stanley may not be seeking bad publicity, the fact is, he has managed to keep controversy stirred up around him in recent years. Exactly where did Andy Stanley go off course? As we examine the controversial statements made by Andy Stanley, there seems to be an undeniable connection between his errors and the manner in which he approaches the Bible.
**Is Verse-by-Verse Preaching Cheating?**
Andy Stanley is not an expository preacher. In an interview with Ed Stetzer in 2009 regarding his book titled, Communicating for a Change, Stetzer asked Stanley about preaching. The question was, “What do you think about preaching verse-by-verse messages through books of the Bible?” Andy Stanley responded, “Guys that preach verse-by-verse through books of the Bible– that is just cheating. It’s cheating because that would be easy, first of all. That isn’t how you grow people. No one in the Scripture modeled that. There’s not one example of that.” It’s quite clear that Stanley isn’t a fan of verse-by-verse preaching, but what does that communicate regarding his overall approach to the Bible?
**Is the Bible Sufficient for Church Growth?**
In 2010, at the pastors’ conference for the Southern Baptist Convention, Andy Stanley appealed to big corporations such as Chick-fil-A and Intel in order to drive home his church growth message to thousands of pastors in attendance. He repeated this phrase, “If you make your church better, they will come and make your church bigger.” His entire sermon was positioned squarely on pragmatism rather than the Word of God. In his sermon, Andy Stanley said, “We’ve created church for church people.” He then scolded church leaders for an unwillingness to make it easier for unchurched people to feel comfortable in our churches.
**Is the Bible Clear on Homosexuality?**
Andy Stanley’s seeker sensitive approach to church growth is perhaps the lightest problem in recent years. In 2012, Stanley was the center of controversy once again with statements (and a lack of statements) regarding the sin of homosexuality. In a sermon he preached titled “When Gracie Met Truthy,” he described a couple in his church that had to be asked to step down from leadership. Two men were engaged in a homosexual relationship, but the reason they were asked to step down was what Stanley called “just good old fashioned adultery.” Stanley explained, “You’re in a sexual relationship with someone else’s husband.” Stanley capitulated on the whole issue calling out the sin of adultery while refusing to call out the sin of homosexuality. Albert Mohler writes:
The most puzzling and shocking part of the message was the illustration and the account of the homosexual couple, however. The inescapable impression left by the account was that the sin of concern was adultery, but not homosexuality. [1] Although Andy Stanley wasn’t clear on the subject of homosexuality, we can be sure that the Bible is abundantly clear. So why does Andy Stanley continue to feel the need to distance himself from a clear and historically orthodox interpretative method of reading and applying the Bible?
**Is the Bible Authoritative?**
In 2014, Andy Stanley stood on a stage at Exponential, a church-planting conference and communicated to 5,000+ people that they should stop using the phrase “the Bible says” in their sermons. Andy Stanley said, “Don’t say the Bible says. Say the author’s name who wrote the book. Paul said… (by the way he hated Christians, but then wrote this) Give 2-3 sentences about who the author is.” Andy Stanley made his point in print through his book titled, Deep & Wide suggesting that his goal is evangelism and it keeps skeptics engaged. [2] With a goal of keeping skeptics engaged, we must ask an honest question, has he cast a shadow of doubt upon the authority of the Bible?
**Is the Bible True?**
In early 2015, Zondervan released a series of Bible study lessons by Andy Stanley titled Starting Point. You can see the first session on YouTube where Andy Stanley casts doubt upon the trustworthiness and reliability of the Bible in his opening statements. In fact, Andy Stanley went as far as to say, “We went off to college and discovered that even though it [the Bible] was sacred, it wasn’t scientific. Even though it was something to appreciate, it wasn’t necessarily something that was factual. Even though there were stories in here [the Bible] that were inspirational, they weren’t necessarily true.” Sure, it seems that Andy Stanley is playing along with the thought process of what the skeptics actually believe, but he spends more than 50% of his time dealing with such issues leaving him very little time to explain the text of Scripture from Acts. Why must Andy Stanley consistently cast doubt upon the inerrancy of the Bible? Isn’t he a Bible preacher?
**Are Small Churches (like the ones in the Bible) Bad?**
Recently, Andy Stanley hit the news again with statements about small churches. He called out parents who refuse to take their children to megachurches by saying, “If you don’t go to a large church, you are so stinking selfish…and don’t care about your kids.” Keep in mind, many of the churches in the cities that we see appearing in the New Testament are relatively small. Sure, some of these churches experienced great growth, but many of them remained small.
Andy Stanley sought to explain his point as he retracted the perceived meaning in a subsequent interview with Christianity Today. However, if you listen to the rant in the original sermon, it’s hard to imagine how a preacher could make such statements with profound conviction and not really mean it. What exactly does Andy Stanley think about small churches today? What about the small churches in the Bible?
**Is the Bible a Poor Starting Point?**
On Easter Sunday, Andy Stanley opened his sermon with a statement that was aimed mostly at the unbeliever. He said, “If you said to me one-on-one, ‘Andy, I’m not a Christian, I’m not a Jesus follower, but I’m going to let you take your best shot at convincing me to follow Jesus’ – Here’s what I wouldn’t do. I wouldn’t try to defend the history of the church, because the church has done some really goofy things and there’s some really embarrassing (not just weekends of church history) seasons of church history. And, I wouldn’t try to defend a lot of things that Christians have said or the ways that Christians have treated you….and I wouldn’t try to convince you with the Bible.”
Stanley went on to explain, he said, “There were thousands and thousands and thousands of Christians before there was a Bible.” He then went on to say, “I would start with the resurrection of Jesus.” Why is it that Andy Stanley seems to distance himself from the Bible? Is it possible to present the resurrection of Jesus without the Bible? Could it be that some other historic account of Jesus’ resurrection carries more authority than the Bible? How would Andy Stanley pull from the evidence of eyewitnesses of Jesus’ resurrection without using the Bible?
Paul, a man who had seen the risen Jesus, wrote 1 Corinthians 15. Before Paul went to the eyewitnesses and other supporting evidence of Jesus’ resurrection, he started with the Bible. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul said the following:
**For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures**.
Notice that Paul’s starting point is the Bible (as Paul said – the Scriptures). Apparently Andy Stanley and the apostle Paul have very different starting points when it comes to defending the Christian religion. Before appealing to evidence, point to the authority of the written record that was prophesied (Psalm 16) and validated (1 Corinthians 15) in the sacred account of the Scriptures.
Immediately after stating that he would start with the resurrection of Jesus rather than the Bible in order to convince people of Christianity, Andy Stanley said, “There were tens of thousands of people who believed in the resurrection of Jesus before there was a Bible.” Exactly what does that statement mean? Is that a true statement? Was Psalm 16 considered to be part of Scripture before the resurrection of Christ? What exactly was Paul referencing in 1 Corinthians 15 when he appealed to “the Scriptures”?
Andy Stanley is a gifted communicator and apparently a good leader. He has a stunning résumé when it comes to church growth and leadership. However, Andy Stanley has positioned himself to the far left in recent days regarding his approach to Scripture and his position on other key Christian doctrines. His method of preaching the Bible has led to his capitulation on biblical doctrines. We can all learn a great lesson from Andy Stanley. As a pastor and leader in the evangelical world, Andy Stanley has been gifted with a platform and a voice, but sadly he has consistently pointed people off course. For that reason, we must beware of Andy Stanley and his ministry. He has demonstrated an inappropriate care for God’s Word and God’s sheep. The person who casts a shadow of doubt upon the Word of God likewise casts a shadow of doubt upon himself.

**NOTES:**

1. R. Albert Mohler, “Is the Megachurch the New Liberalism?” (AlbertMohler.com – 5-1-12)
2. Kevin P. Emmert, “Should Pastors Stop Saying, ‘the Bible Says’?” (Christianity Today Magazine, July-August, 2014).