

I Like Bullet Points

by Carl McMurray

I like bullet points, when it comes to instructions. They're clean, they're concise, they break up instructions of any kind into bite size pieces. I think Paul would have liked them if the *Koine* Greek that most of the New Testament was written in had been modern enough to have them. I draw that conclusion from his making of lists which fit bullet points so well. His list of the fruit of the Spirit, as well as the works of the flesh in Galatians 5. his breakdown of sin from unthankfulness to reprobate immorality in Romans chapter 1. As well as his list of the types of people that had once lived of the world and now were citizens in the kingdom in 1 Corinthians 6. I'm just sure he wrestled with the most efficient way to put these lists, and others, in a presentable form. He was probably short on Papyrus at the time however, and bullet points had not been invented so Paul and Holy Spirit just had to make do.

We bullet point salvation, much like Paul did the fruit of the Spirit. Nowhere that I know of are the five steps of salvation listed together in an orderly fashion, delineated by commas, in one verse to memorize and paint on bed sheets to be displayed over the wall of baseball games. Maybe that's why some make the mistake of seizing on singular verses and declaring THIS ONE the plan of God. They might grab hold of John 3:16 to proclaim that belief is the key, or Romans 10:9-10, to hammer home the fact of confessing Christ. After all, no one wants to show up at the ball game with a blank bed sheet banner. The truth however is that the gospel can't be served up on a bed sheet in print large enough for the cameras. It is not one passage but several that explain the process of hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized. And that's just OUR part. We haven't even touched on God's part in sending his Son, watching Him die, counting his blood and sacrifice as grace manifested for us. No, a single verse on a bed sheet won't do it. God gave us 27 short books and letters and they're all important.

And another problem with bullet pointing, when it comes to the gospel? There are points between the points. There is human interaction that demonstrates and explains the love of God. There are friendly and open conversations where trust and relationship are built. There is study and time for meditation so the Spirit's word can have time to work on good and honest hearts. Sometimes there's even sacrifice. Sacrifice of time, sometimes of money in good works. And then there is the joint efforts and fellowship of helping brothers and sisters. You don't see that in a five point bullet point outline, but I have found them all to be necessary. I like bullet points, but sometimes it just takes a paragraph to get the message across.