

The Bible ⁽⁶⁾

We have talked about worshiping and praising God in a multitude of ways. Now let us take a look at an extraordinary way in which we glorify Him by learning more about Him.

Psalms 119:11

Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.

- How do you think we can put God's word in our heart? _____

The heart is a symbol of the seat of emotion and reason. Therefore, to hide or treasure Scripture is to read it and think about it. In fact, Scripture is so important to God that He calls it *treasure*. This treasure is the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

By taking the words of Scripture and hiding them away in our hearts and minds, we grow closer to God by becoming more like Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- List the things that Scripture is profitable (or beneficial) for:

The Bible speaks about a relationship that God desires between Himself and mankind. In any relationship there must be two sides communicating with each other. We know that we can communicate to God through prayer, but how does God communicate to us? He does so through His word.

2 Peter 1:3

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him (Jesus) who called us by His own glory and excellence.

- Everything we need for life and godliness has been given to us through what?

- How do we gain the “true knowledge of Him (Jesus)?” Or put another way, where is the knowledge of Jesus kept and written down? _____

When we read the Bible and apply it’s teaching to our lives we gain the true knowledge of Jesus in our lives. There is often a change that accompanies this knowledge in us. Sometimes this change is in our actions, and sometimes it is in our thoughts and attitudes. This change draws us closer to Jesus Christ in heart and mind, and thus is everything we need for life and godliness.

Sanctification:
The process by which we become more like Jesus and less like the rest of the world.

Sanctification is an ongoing process.

The closer we come to Christ, the more we glorify Him with the life we are living by acting like Him. This is what Scripture means when it tells us to “abide in His word.” His word is the Bible, and abiding in it is the life we live for Him.

John 15:4

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

Here we learn of an important warning given to Christians. Do not try to live your life outside of Jesus. Doing so will lead to a fruitless, powerless life. This is **NOT** God’s plan for you.

- What does God want us to bear? _____
- Can we do this if we do not abide (read His word, pray to Him) in Him? ___Yes ___No

As mentioned before, there may need to be a change in the life you once lived before you believed in Jesus. Certain activities are harmful or distracting to the believer as they journey in life.

1 Timothy 6:11-12

11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Sometimes distractions are more dangerous than sins. Sins can be confessed and turned away from, while distractions in our walk with God often go unnoticed.

Scripture clearly defines what a person who is growing more like Christ will chase after and what they will flee from.

- List some things we are to chase after in our pursuit of godliness: _____
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This pursuit of godliness is a way of life found in Bible reading and prayer. It is a life that is not supported by the culture of the world around us. It is a non-conforming life. This is a life that must be chosen. God made us alive unto salvation and provides everything we need to live a fruitful life for Him, but He will not force such a life on His children. They must decide whether they will follow Him.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

A transformed mind is a mind that is saturated with the words of God found in Scripture. Understand, there will be times of personal failure, but this is not the defining characteristic of your life. Remember, we are a work in progress.

So how do we read the Bible?

1. Take time to read.

All the plans in the world make no difference if you never set aside time to do it!

2. Read with humility.

Even if you have read a section before, this does not mean that you understand everything there is to know about it.

3. Read bite sized portions.

There is a simple saying that helps illustrate this point:

Bible Trivia

- There are 66 books in the Bible
- There were about 40 human writers
- 39 books in the Old Testament
- 27 Books in the New Testament
- Written over 1400 Years
- It is the bestselling book of all time
- There are over 20,000 ancient documents verifying the accuracy of the Bible we have today.

“Quality is better than quantity.”

4. Learn the context.

Understanding the time-setting of the piece of Scripture you are reading, or the history of the people and why they act the way they do may make the Bible come alive with meaning for you. The cultural customs and figures of speech are extremely valuable in understanding Scripture.

5. Meditate on what you have read.

There is a lot of misunderstanding as to what meditation means. It simply means to think on the material you have just read. If Scripture really changes a person to be more like Jesus, doesn't it make sense to **Think** about this after reading it.

Which of these suggestions do you think you could start applying today?

Someone may ask the question: Why study the Bible at all? The answer is in the relationship that we have with God. God has a plan for the way we should live our lives. His way of doing things will bring us joy that we cannot get for ourselves, and will fulfill our design and purpose in this world. God has written His expressed will in the Bible and desires us to seek it out for our own life. This journey that we embark on will educate and protect us against the schemes of the devil.

John 8:44

He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.

Our adversary is the devil. He is intelligent and knows the Bible himself. He has even tried to use it to trick others. God has not left us without a defense.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

God allows us to put on His armor so that we may stand firm in our faith. Take a moment and read Ephesians 6:11-17 then answer the questions below.

Please list the Armor of God

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Memorizing bible passages is an excellent way to treasure God's word in your heart. Whether you have your bible with you or not, memorization will keep His words on your mind all the time.

What will it take for you to memorize verses from God's word?

The last item mentioned in the armor of God is the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. It is interesting that God would consider His word to be a sword with which to defend yourself, yet, this is exactly what it is. His word protects us from lies with the truth, guides our way through the darkest of times with His light and pierces through false motives of a sinful heart and judges men's intentions.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The bible is obviously no ordinary book. It is the written word of almighty God. Within its pages are life and salvation, and this is not from the mind of man.

2 Peter 1:21

for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

God inspired men to write exactly what He wanted. This is known as "Inspiration."

- It appears that the Bible was an invention of mankind. True___ False___
- Who moved men to write the Scriptures? _____

Through His Spirit, God inspired men to write the 66 books of His bible using their individual personalities and writing styles to communicate what God desired man to know. This is a tremendous revealing of God to man. Through the bible men have a written record of God's love for them, and His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Is it any wonder that God desires us to read His word and abide in it! The more we read the bible the more in tune with the Holy Spirit we are. Why?

- What member of the trinity inspired men to write the bible? _____

God believes His Spirit is so important to your life that He even commands us to be filled with Him.

Ephesians 5:18

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

- What are we **not** to be filled with? _____

Wine/drunkenness can greatly influence a person and even control their actions. This fact is so important that alcohol is legislated by our government. This verse of Scripture compares the control alcohol has over people with the influence/control the Holy Spirit should have over us.

Being "filled with" means to be influenced or controlled by.

- What **should** we be filled with? _____

Being filled does not mean getting more of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a mist or a cloud or power which you can get more of. He is a person. You either have Him (all of Him) or you don't.

Being filled is all about the Holy Spirit having more of **YOU!**

If you were to invite someone into your home and then stuff them into a closet, you can truthfully say that they are in your home. However, they don't have much influence over you. Now, if you were to give them the freedom of going where they wanted and making themselves at home (the T.V., the fridge, whatever they liked) then they would truly be a welcome guest and probably have influence with you. We need to do the same with the Holy Spirit. Allow Him full access to all the areas of your life: the mind, the emotions, even those areas that you are ashamed of.

So how do we get filled with Spirit?

Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be filled with the Spirit, but this is a difficult concept to grasp. Whenever you come across a puzzling section of Scripture, search to see if there is another section of the bible that may shed some light on it. The apostle Paul wrote the letters of Ephesians and Colossians at the same time. Both carry the same message. Let us look to see what the parallel passage in Colossians has to say about being filled with the Spirit.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,

- What is to richly dwell in you? _____

From this verse we understand that to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the word of God. Doesn't it make sense that the more we read the bible (which the Spirit inspired) the more in tune we will be with the Spirit? The more in tune we are with the Spirit the more effective our prayers will be. The more effective our prayers are the more joy the Father fills our lives with. Finally, the more joy our lives are filled with the more we praise His name, which is what we are created for in the first place. This is God's plan and command for us. However, it all starts with our choice to read His word.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. How could memorizing bible verses be helpful to you?*
- 2. Give an example of a distraction that may take your focus off God? How dangerous are these distractions?*
- 3. How much control does God want the Holy Spirit to have in your life? Why?*
- 4. What effect do you think reading more of God's word will have on you?*
- 5. What do you need to do to read more of God's word?*
- 6. Devise a reading plan that works for you. Make it realistic and set measurable goals. (If you're really serious, find someone to do it with you and keep each other on track.)*
- 7. Define the following terms*
 - Trinity:*
 - Tithe:*
 - Distractions:*
 - Inspiration:*