

Week 1

Daily Bread For Unexplainable Power

“It’s not the good you do occasionally but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

The Big Idea: *The Bible is too powerful and too important to neglect daily, even when its words don’t excite us.*

Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Psalm 119:89 (NIV)

May my tongue sing of your word, for all your commands are righteous. Psalm 119:172 (NIV)

I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Mark 13:30-31 (NIV)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. Acts 13:48-49 (NIV)

THE PATHS OF THE SEA

In the 1800s, Matthew Maury, an officer in the United States Navy, believed his Bible. As a Christian, he loved to read the Bible. One day, Maury was reading about the dominion man was given over the animals in Psalm 8. He was amazed that verse 8 spoke of the fish and all creatures that swim in the "paths of the sea." "Paths of the sea"— how could this be? He never knew there was such a thing. He was determined to find them. Maury discovered that the oceans have many paths or currents, which were like rivers flowing through the sea. Maury wrote the first book on oceanography and became known as "the pathfinder of the seas"— "The father of modern navigation." Maury received his idea about ocean currents from reading [Psalm 8:8](#) which was written about 3,000 years ago by King David. David wrote as he was moved by the Spirit of God and probably never actually saw an ocean. Psalms 8:8 speaks of fish in the “paths of the sea”. Fisherman all know their most successful fishing occurs in the “paths of the sea.”

PLAY VIDEO NOW

“Voltaire expected that within fifty years of his lifetime there would not be one Bible in the world. His house is now a distribution center for Bibles in many languages.”- Corrie Ten Boom

One of the consistent messages of Christianity is, “read your Bible,” “have a daily quiet time,” and “know God’s word.” Yet in a study released September, 2012, Lifeway Research surveyed more than 2,900 Protestant churchgoers and found that while 90 percent “desire to please and honor Jesus in all they do, only 19 percent personally read the Bible every day.”

Of Professing Christians surveyed it was found that 37% had read *The Life of Pi*...

...22% have read *Hunger Games*,...

...19% have read *Shades of Grey*,...

...18% have read *Game of Thrones*,...

...and 16% have read *The Hobbit*.

Fourteen percent say they read the Bible “once a week,” 22% say “once a month” or “a few times a month,” and 18% rarely or never read their Bible.

I suspect the reason that more of us don’t pick up our Bibles and read more often is because the Bible can be hard to understand and, in many places, just not appear extremely interesting. It’s not like magazines, newspapers and periodicals that are full of relevant stories. It doesn’t appear, at first glance, to be a book telling a simple story that one can easily follow by reading it from cover to cover. The point here is not to shame us for not reading our Bibles more but to step back and examine whether the choice to forgo daily Bible reading is the right choice in spite of the very real barriers to enjoyment.

“The Bible is too powerful and too important to neglect daily, even when its words don’t excite you.”

- Psalms 119:89 says that God’s word is “eternal.”
- Psalms 119:172 says the commands of scripture are “righteous.”
- Jesus said in Mark 13:30 that his “words will never pass away.”
- Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that the scriptures are “God breathed”
- When non-Christians heard the Bible’s message in Acts 13:38, “They were glad and honored the word of the Lord.”

Napoleon Bonaparte said, “The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it.”

John Wesley, British religious leader who founded the Methodist Church wrote “This book had to be written by one of three people: good men, bad men or God. It couldn’t have been written by good men because they said it was inspired by the revelation of God. Good men don’t lie and deceive. It couldn’t have been written by bad men because bad men would not write something that would condemn themselves. It leaves only one conclusion. It was given by divine inspiration of God.”

George Washington, the first president of the United States said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and Bible."

Douglas McArthur, the famous Five-Star General in World War II, said, "Believe me, sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired, but I read the Word of God before I go to bed."

So whether this Bible is as easy follow along with as the latest novel, or is as initially compelling as the latest periodical, is irrelevant. The Bible is too powerful and too influential for us to neglect it. The Bible is the Big Story about God, God's people and you. The Bible is the Big Story about how God thinks about all the important subjects that make up your daily life. The Bible is the Big Story about where we came from and where were all going. So, it really doesn't matter that we might find a story about a current event or a fictional account more interesting than the scripture. The Bible, unlike the novels and stories of current events, has a supernatural message and supernatural power.

OUR FIRST CHALLENGE IS NOT TO FIND THE BIBLE INTERESTING BUT TO FIND IT NECESSARY.

If you will commit to being a student of scripture you will eventually find it interesting, but we can't afford to wait until it's riveting before we read it. Would you take that attitude toward food? Food is too necessary to wait until you can get gourmet food before you eat. A simple and boring meal will leave you nourished, elevate your blood sugar and improve your mood. In fact the cultures with the best health are those that have simple diets without all the rich food and saturated fats that Americans enjoy.

1. BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF ABOUT YOUR LIKE OR DISLIKE OF READING THE BIBLE.

If you would rather be on Facebook, watching television, talking to your friends or even doing household chores, face that fact, and, at least for now, don't try to change your feelings. If you find the Bible difficult to grasp and confusing, admit it. If you really don't like to read anything beyond news headlines, or perhaps documents related to your work, be honest about that, too.

Truth is always the beginning of freedom. If you find it difficult to get into reading the Bible, then you have a lot of company. Eighty percent of churchgoers feel the same way you do. I love reading the Bible...I really do...but I have developed an appetite for scripture. It wasn't always this way.

2. FACE THE REALITY THAT OUR LACK OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BIBLE IS HURTING US.

Like it or not, we are worse off because we don't have daily interaction with the word of God. Because we don't know the Big Story we are often uninformed about what God is doing in the world, clear moral standards and how to handle a lot of situations the Bible talks about. Also, like it or not, we are disobeying our Heavenly Father when we neglect his word.

My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. Hosea 4:6 (NIV)

3. FIRMLY COMMIT TO A JOURNEY YOU EXPECT TO SUCCEED AT.

You're not getting ready for a root canal, or major surgery. You are getting ready to start spending regularly planned time with your Heavenly Father. If you are blessed enough to find the first day exhilarating, great! But, if not, that's okay. You can be sure that those 10, 15, 20 or 30 minutes you set aside are going to honor God and he is going to bless you for that. When you begin to read the scripture, God will be with you. God is going to be speaking to you. You may not recognize his voice at first but this is a skill you will develop. Here are five basic questions that will help you to hear what God is saying. Pick a section of scripture, read it through slowly a couple of times then do the following.

1. Pray this prayer, "Dear Jesus, I long for your presence. I sit before you to clear my mind of all the things that battle for my attention. I humbly sit at your feet asking you to minister to me through your word." Mention a few things that have happened over the last 24 hours you are grateful for. Mention a few things you are concerned about and how you would like God's help.

(Writing the prayer out is helpful for some, but not necessary.)

2. Think through the scripture you have just read in your own words. Listen to the voice of God speak to your heart.

(You can type it out in your words or write it down if you like.)

3. Ask yourself, how is the Lord revealing himself to you? Quietly reflect on the words and phrases the Holy Spirit is revealing to your heart.

(You may want to highlight those words or phrases. You may want to write them down.)

4. Take what you have meditated on and pray it as a prayer to God. Tell God your praise, confession, gratitude, sorrow and comfort.
5. Examine how you can align your actions, attitudes and choices with the truth of scripture you are reading.
6. Finish with the Lord's prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Share with the group Bible passages and Bible stories that have been important to you. Don't worry that you may not be able to quote the passages verbatim or remember all the details of the story.
- 2) Do you recall the time and place a Bible passage or a Bible story became significant to you? Please share those circumstances with the group.
- 3) Many books of wisdom have been written besides the Bible. Why do we think the Bible is the most powerful? What causes the Bible to stand apart from other writings that claim to be sacred?
- 4) The Gentiles in Acts 13: 48 & 49 "were glad and honored the word of the Lord." How do we show enthusiasm or indifference to God's word? How do we show honor or dishonor for God's word?
- 5) What happened in a community when people showed enthusiasm and honor for God's word?
- 6) To increase your daily joy in the word you are being given an exercise to do as in your daily quiet time. If you have the time in your Life Group meeting finish up by selecting a passage and talk through the 5 steps you are given at the end of the lesson.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENT

Use the 6 Steps to feeding on God's Word plan daily or as many times as you are able. Be prepared to report highlights of your results to the group.

Week 2

Daily Bread As A Healthy Habit

“It’s not the good you do occasionally but the good you do daily that will improve your life.”

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 1) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 2) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 3) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 4) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 5) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 6) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week.

The Big Idea: *The historically proven first step in putting God and his will first in your life is through daily Bible reading.*

I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word. Psalm 119:147 (NIV)

I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. Psalm 119:16 (NIV)

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. Job 23:12 (NIV)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE LITERARY CONSISTENCY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible contains 66 books written over 1,500 years by 40 different authors of difference backgrounds. They were shepherds, fishermen, doctors, kings, & prophet. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, on 3 different continents, Africa, Asia and Europe. However these books tell one “Big Story” of the creation, fall, and redemption of God’s people; a common theme- God’s universal love for all of humanity; and a common message- salvation is available to all who repent of their sins and commit to following God with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength. Professor Jason Carlson said, “I challenge you to go to any library in the world, you can choose any library you like, and find 66 books which match the characteristics of the 66 books in the Bible. You must choose 66 books, written by 40 different authors, over 1500 years, in 3 different languages, written on 3

different continents. However, they must share a common storyline, a common theme, and a common message, with no historical errors or contradictions.”

PLAY VIDEO NOW

"So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year." - John Quincy Adams, the 6th President of the United States.

"I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God. I want to know one thing: the way to heaven. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. He has written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book! At any price give me the book of God. Let me be a man of one book."- John Wesley

We are creatures of habit. We are wired for routines. Your brain and your body crave predictability. That's not to say we can't get bored and need to shake up our routine once in a while, but that's not giving up the habit it's just acknowledging that you also crave variety; some more than others. You might have a routine of eating a granola bar and a glass of milk every morning for breakfast, but bacon and eggs can be a real treat to break things up every once in a while. You still get hungry at pretty much the same time everyday.

Our soul needs a relationship with God that is consistent and has a pattern to it. We're not saying you should become rigid or feel condemned if your routine gets interrupted, neither should you feel shame if you miss your quiet time, but success at anything requires a regimen and a strong commitment to daily practice.

Rather than thinking about, "I wonder if my Bible reading is going to be fun today, or will I enjoy it, or even get to focus on it?", "Will it tell me how to solve that big problem I have?", let's focus on the benefit of a healthy routine.

1. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT TELLS GOD EVERYDAY THAT I HONOR HIM AND LOVE HIM.

I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. Psalm 138:2 (NIV)

2. I READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT REMINDS ME THAT GOD IS MY #1 PRIORITY IN LIFE. THERE IS A TYPO IN THE STUDENT'S GUIDE HERE...IT READS: FACE THE REALITY THAT OUR LACK OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BIBLE IS HURTING US –THIS IS A POINT FROM LESSON ONE

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you

will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. Proverbs 2:1-6 (NIV)

3. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT COMMUNICATES THAT MY SPIRITUAL APPETITE FOR GOD IS AS IMPORTANT AS MY PHYSICAL APPETITE FOR FOOD.

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. Job 23:12 (NIV)

4. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO INCREASE MY FAITH.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

5. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT DECREASES THE CHANCE I WILL MISS SOMETHING IMPORTANT GOD HAS TO SAY TO ME.

The mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and calls the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Psalm 50: 1

6. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE IT'S THE BEST WAY TO GROWN IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH.

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. 1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV)

7. I SHOULD READ MY BIBLE DAILY BECAUSE EVERY WORD OF GOD IS POWERFUL AND SIGNIFICANT.

"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Proverbs 30:5 (NIV)

Just like physical disciplines, spending time daily in the Word requires that we establish a place and a time. Once we have established the place and time, decide the plan. Our lives are too busy and chaotic to wait until your Bible time to decide what you are going to read. There are several plans that are available, some that take you through the Bible in a year, others that cover less ground but give you more time to mediate and commune with God. IF you are new to devotions or haven't done it in a long time we recommend you read less and meditate more. Getting fed is more important that reading large sections of scripture that you have to digest. Whichever path you take, the important thing is to get started and launch a long-term commitment. God's

promise is that if you will commit to his Word he will show up again and again and again and again.

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. 98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. 99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. 100 I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. 101 I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. Psalm 119:97-101 (NIV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Are there people in your life who often seem very interested in what you have to say? How do you feel about those people?
- 2) How do you feel about people who communicate that they aren't at all interested in what you have to say?
- 3) How do you think God is feeling right now about the importance you are placing on what he has to say?
- 4) What is the message you are sending to God when you make daily bible reading a top priority in your life.
- 5) Of the 7 reasons for reading the bible daily, which ones stand out to you and why?
- 6) What are some other ways that God will speak to you daily other than through the bible? Why is so important not to replace the bible with another way of hearing from God?
- 7) We speak of being fed by God's word. Describe a time in your life when a thought, story, or passage from the bible filled you with meaning, a sense of purpose, joy, hope, a sense of direction or some other powerful emotion.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENT

Take a picture of the place or places where you are doing your bible reading and prayer during this series. Bring that picture to the group next week for everyone to pray over.

Week 3

Daily Bread As A Journey To Joy

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 7) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 8) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 9) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 10) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 11) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 12) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week.

The Big Idea: *God has amazing moments of life-changing revelation occasionally for those who show up daily. A normal day in God's word is good, but a special day in God's word is an experience that can't be surpassed.*

Psalm 119:105: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalm 119:133 (NIV): Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.

Psalm 119:169 (NIV): May my cry come before you, O LORD; give me understanding according to your word.

Proverbs 7:2 (NIV): Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.

Proverbs 4:4 (NIV): He taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live."

Matthew 7:24-29 (NIV): "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." 28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 I will show you what he is like who

comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." Luke 6:46-49 (NIV)

John 15:7-12 (NIV): If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty. Jeremiah 15:16 (NIV)

They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. Psalms 19:10

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

STRENGTH IN THE NUMBER OF BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

The New [Testament](#) is constantly under attack, and critics often contest its reliability and accuracy. If the critics want to disregard the New Testament, then they must also disregard other ancient writings by Plato, Aristotle, and Homer. This is because the New Testament documents are better preserved and more numerous than any other ancient writings. Because they are so numerous, they can be cross-checked for accuracy... and they are very consistent. There are presently 5,686 Greek manuscripts in existence today for the New Testament. If we were to compare the number of New Testament manuscripts to other ancient writings, we find that the New Testament manuscripts far outweigh the others in quantity. There are 49 copies of the writings of Aristotle, 7 copies of the writings of Plato, 10 copies of the writings of Caesar, 643 copies of Homer and 8 copies of the writing of Demosthenes.

There are thousands more New Testament Greek manuscripts than any other ancient writing. The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is about 99.5% textually pure. That is an amazing accuracy. In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages. The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 24,000.

PLAY VIDEO NOW

"I believe that the one chief reason that I have been kept in happy useful service is that I have been a lover of Holy Scripture. It has been my habit to read the Bible through four times a year; in a prayerful spirit, to apply it to my heart, and practice what I find there. I have been, for sixty-nine years, a happy man; happy, happy, happy." - *George Muller*

"The longer you read the Bible, the more you will like it; it will grow sweeter and sweeter; and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the spirit of Christ." - *Romaine*

"The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts." - *A. W. Tozer*

We started this study by making it clear that, like food, the Bible can be dry, but nourishing. Having said that, we need to also acknowledge that just like food, enjoyment is one of the benefits of reading the Bible. We just want to be clear that if you are not willing to plow through some boring times in the Word you won't be there for the day that the joy of the Lord will explode in your soul at some amazing insight you discovered, or when you will read a passage that addresses specifically what you are going through at the moment.

Of course, it's a wise person who understands the value of reading the Bible as a discipline and not for continuous pleasure, but make no mistake about it, there will be times in God's word that will fill your senses with pure joy.

1. THE JOY OF HEARING FROM GOD

When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty. Jeremiah 15:16 (NIV)

Sure, we hear from God anytime we read the Bible, but sometimes everything is aligned in such a way that you will be emotionally moved by what you clearly hear God saying in a passage. It may be that the circumstances of your life make the passage extremely relevant. It may be that the Holy Spirit will use the passage to give you special encouragement or even clearly convict you of sin. Yes, hearing clearly about what you are doing wrong can be an extremely joyful experience.

2. THE JOY OF UNDERSTANDING

Psalms 119:130: The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

By reading the Bible you will come to understand world events, the nature of people, God's moral code and why it works, God's plan for your finances, and sometimes a clear way to improve your life. You will experience the joy of understanding yourself and relationships. The Bible is the greatest source of wisdom on planet earth. Within its pages are the secrets of the Kingdom of God.

3. THE JOY OF BEARING FRUIT

When God wanted to see his people go into the new land and be successful he sent them to read and meditate on his laws. He knew that if his people knew the promises, the warnings, the guidelines and the teachings of scripture they would reach their potential. Here's what he said to them.

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Joshua 1:7-8 (NIV)

We do not claim that knowing scripture guarantees earthly wealth and prosperity as the culture defines those things, but we can say confidently that a person who daily focuses on scripture and that diligently follows its instruction will be everything that God intended for them to be. God intends for everyone to bear fruit.

4. THE JOY OF EXPERIENCING REWARD

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:11

In a negative sense people talk about "chickens coming home to roost," meaning the consequences of a bad action is realized. The opposite is also true. There will be times in your life when attention and obedience to the principles you have learned in the Word, usually followed with a great deal of sacrifice will be rewarded. Those are moments of overwhelming joy. People who live humbly before God's Word will have blessings that will follow.

5. THE JOY OF STABILITY IN THE STORMS OF LIFE

Matthew 7:24-29 (NIV): Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

People who daily immerse themselves in scripture have the same problems and issues that everyone else does, but a life that is built on scripture will be ready for the storms of life. Even the most feared enemy, which is

death, doesn't destabilize a family that is grounded in the hope of Christ's word. This is God's promise to those who make God's word their daily bread.

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. **3** For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. Isaiah 43:2-3 (NIV)*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you trust that reading the Bible will become a pleasurable experience? Do you fear that reading the Bible will be a boring obligation? Why do you feel that way?
- 2) Do you trust that the directives in God's word will take you to a place of happiness or do you fear they will take you to a place of loss of sorrow? Why do you think you feel that way?
- 3) Can you think of either historical figures or people who you know who get great joy from reading and studying the Bible? What do you think their secret is?
- 4) Explain why you think Jesus made a connection between obeying the Father's commands and joy? Don't we generally associate being commanded with negative emotions?
- 5) Explain why you think Jesus made a connection between obeying the fathers commands and being in love with God and people? Don't we generally associate being commanded with a lack of love?
- 6) How can you relate the 5 types of joy promised to us for following God's Word to your own life? Give a personal experience if possible.
- 7) In what area of your life might you be avoiding God's Word because you're quite sure God's counsel couldn't possible bring you the results you want? Why is that way of thinking irrational?
- 8) Is your concept of God big enough for his word to work?

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENT

Memorize Isa. 41:10 "10 Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

Look up the meaning of "afraid," "discouraged," "strengthen," and "victorious." Think about daily.

Week 4

Daily Bread As A Pause for Clear Thinking

“It’s not what you do occasionally but what you do daily that will change your life.”

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 13) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 14) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 15) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 16) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 17) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 18) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week.

The Big Idea: “Lord our hearts are prone to wander, prone to leave the God we love.” A daily shower of God’s thoughts through the Bible curbs our natural inclination to go astray.

Psalm 119:37 (NIV): *Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.*

Psalm 119:105 (NIV): *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

Proverbs 6:23 (NIV): **For** *these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life,*

Proverbs 10:8 (NIV): *The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.*

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes... The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:7-11 (NIV)

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, Ephesians 5:25-26 (KJV)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ARCHEOLOGY AND THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

“No archeological discovery has ever overturned a Biblical reference.” Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*

The number of archeological support for the Bible continues to grow, year after year. Today, well over 50,000 digs at 30,000 different locations have been excavated. These finds continue to provide substantial support of the Bible's written record. Belshazzar, King Darius, and King Cyrus' are mentioned by name. What were once thought to be mythological empires mentioned in the Old Testament, like the Hittite's, have been found to exist after all. King David's reign was found recorded on ancient Egyptian inscriptions, evidence of the Regal House of Nebuchadnezzar, and a stone tablet bearing Pontius Pilate's name.

Some of the finds include Egyptian Chariot Wheels in the Red Sea. Numerous chariot wheels have been discovered in the Red Sea near the place where the Israelites crossed. Horse's hoofs were also found even though horses have been absent from this area for thousands of years. Archeologists have discovered four, six, and eight spoke wheels that match those used by the Egyptians during the Exodus time period and there were hundreds of human bones found in this same area. The chariot wheels, the horse's hoofs, and the bones date from around 1446 B.C., the time in which the Exodus took place

PLAY VIDEO NOW

I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take this entire Book that you can by reason and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man. It is the best Book which God has given to man. - Abraham Lincoln

There are so many voices in the world, all clamoring for our attention, all screaming our name, that say, "here's how you're supposed to feel," "here's what you are to think," or "this is what you have to do." It can be overwhelming. Television commercials remind us that we don't have what we need to be truly happy. The latest poll numbers about the current moral issue probably informs you that you are not in step with the way the majority seems to be feeling.

Add to this external pressure the reality that you have inner desires that aren't always pure, holy and righteous, either. Most of us experience desires, passions, irritations and anxieties at toxic levels in our own souls at times. This is not because you are a bad person; it's just because you are human and like all humans, you are Adam's son and Eve's daughter. That means you are a sinner saved by grace.

What happens if you don't have a safe place to take a break from the storm? While "what happens" may differ from person to person, none of us are our best in this mad world if we don't have a clarity break once in a while. This is where daily "quiet time" becomes essential. You better learn to come apart before you come apart. You have big decision to make that relates to important things like, morals, marriage, people that look up to you and people that are depending on you. You better get a regular baptism of clear seeing.

Daily time with God's word is the only place on planet earth to have a true clear thinking break. Let's re-read Psalms 19:7-11

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making

wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes... The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:7-11 (NIV)

Can't you just feel the calm that passage brings? Can't you just feel the confidence those words of the Psalmist generate.

By taking a daily break to spend time in God's word...

1. YOU CAN GET PERFECT DAILY DIRECTION IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD.

"The Law of the Lord is perfect ..." Verse 7

2. YOU CAN BE SPIRITUALLY RESUSCITATED EVERY DAY.

"...reviving the soul." Verse 7

3. YOU CAN DAILY BE REDIRECTED TO THINK & DO THE RIGHT THING.

"The precepts of the Lord are right..." Verse 8

4. YOU CAN HAVE YOUR JOY RENEWED DAILY AT THE DEEPEST LEVEL.

"...Giving joy to the heart." Verse 9

5. YOU CAN BE BRILLIANT AND BLESSED WITH CLEAR SEEING

"The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes." Verse 9

You see, we're not blind, but we're darkened. We have the equipment to see how to navigate relationships, control our emotions, make wise financial decision, raise great kids, manage our health and stay calm in a tumultuous world, but just need some light on the subject. Good news, you've got a lamp in your hand; it's called the "Holy Bible" and it's the Big Story of your life, even before you've lived it.

All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Psalm 139:16 (NIV)

6. YOU CAN BE CONFIDENT & CLEAN

The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. Verse 10

The song sung by the masses is that nobody really knows what they're doing, but follow the crowd anyway and everybody is dirty so go ahead and be filthy with them. The Bible takes you by the hand every day and lifts you out of that yucky way of thinking. By a daily dose of divine reality you and I can be "sure and altogether righteous." This is not arrogant self righteousness but humble assisting righteousness by somebody bigger than you or me.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Does the culture we live in have reliable and accurate messages for the important decisions of life? Why or why not? Give examples.
- 2) What are some of the messages of movies, commercials, music and news media that conflict with your Christian values?
- 3) Are our emotions reliable guides for our thoughts and decisions in life? Give examples.
- 4) Are the thoughts and opinions of friends & family always helpful in showing you the best course to take in life?
- 5) Give some examples of a time in your life when you really believed something was right and true, but later you found out it wasn't. If possible tell the group a time when a thought or passage the bible corrected your thinking.
- 6) Do you ever feel overwhelmed by all the voices in the world telling you what to think, feel and do with your life? How can the bible become your reliable shelter from the storm of information coming at you every day?
- 7) Ever hear the statement, "don't think apart from God?" What do you think it means? What daily habit will help us to consistently think with God?
- 8) What is the reward of taking a break to "think with God" and what are the consequences if we don't? What are you currently doing to make sure you daily take a "clear thinking break?"

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENT

Identify a message you hear from a public figure, a media personality or a celebrity that disagrees with scripture. Identify a message in a song, a television show, a movie or an advertisement that disagrees with scripture.

Week 5

Daily Bread As A Connecting Language & Ultimate Truth

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 19) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 20) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 21) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 22) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 23) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 24) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week.

The Big Idea: *The Bible provides language and belief, the two great unifiers of humanity. So the benefits of the church are dependent on a people's relationship with scripture.*

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (NIV): These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3 Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. Acts 2:42-43 (NIV)

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. 6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Genesis 11:5-6 (NIV)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

FLAT VERSUS ROUND

For thousands of years people believed the earth was flat. If one went too far, he would fall over the edge. This was taught in both Hindu and Buddhist scripture. When the first ship sailed around the world in the 1500's it proved them wrong. But the round earth was recorded in the Judeo-Christian Bible long before man scientifically knew this. The prophet Isaiah (40:22) spoke of the "circle of the earth." Solomon wrote, "He [God] set a compass [circle] upon the face of the deep." [Pr.8:27](#). In our century, Arabs spoke of infidels being pushed over the edge into space, but 3000 years ago the Bible said the world was round.

PLAY VIDEO NOW

"Suppose a nation in some distant Region should take the BIBLE for their only law Book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged in conscience, to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence toward Almighty God... What a Utopia, what a Paradise would this region be." - **John Adams**

Back in July we welcomed over 40 Chinese Students to our church for a summer camp. Perhaps you were there for the opening ceremony. One of the things that Cheri McCutchen did was have our new Chinese friends teach us a few Chinese words. Those Chinese words were difficult to say, they didn't naturally roll off our tongues and they were even more difficult to remember. Somehow, those strange sounds didn't stick in our brains the way a new word from our mother tongue English would. But it's difficult, if not impossible, to have a good working relationship and real meaningful accomplishments with a group of people that you don't share language with.

Well, this power of language is no different for people who share the same faith. This is why the first order of business for the newfound Christ-following community in Acts chapter two was that they devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching. Of course the Apostles teaching was based on scripture. This point is really brought home in Acts Chapter 17. The Apostle Paul had gone to a place called Thessalonica to preach the Gospel. Look at what it says.

*Now the Berean's were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. **12** Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Acts 17:11-12 (NIV)*

The Bereans understood that the scriptures were the connecting truth and the connecting language for those who would follow Christ. Even in their very elementary understanding of Christ they knew to compare Paul's words with the words of scripture and the teachings of Paul with the teachings of scripture. It sounds really simple to say, "let's all accept the Bible as our guide then we will live together as a church happily ever after." But what are the barriers we must overcome in order for a group of people to become bonded together by this common document called scripture.

BARRIERS TO MAKING THE BIBLE OUR CONNECTING LANGUAGE AND OUR ULTIMATE TRUTH

1. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF IGNORANCE.

Acts 17:11: The Bereans received and examined the scriptures EVERY DAY to see if what Paul said was true.

2. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF WILLFULNESS.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (NIV): These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe ...

Command: to require authoritatively; demand

3. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF MISTRUST.

Dt. 6:1: These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

They were being prepared to enter an environment of nations that didn't honor God's commands, decrees and laws, but instead trusted their idolatries. Trusting God's word wasn't going to be encouraged or popular outside of the faith community.

4. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF APATHY TOWARD ONE ANOTHER.

Acts 2:42: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship.

What keeps us digging into the scriptures to find agreement about the meaning of important passages is the burning desire to be together and to support one another. When we understand the importance of our faith community we embrace the priority of finding common biblical principles that will govern our lives.

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. 6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Genesis 11:5-6 (NIV)

5. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF PERFECTIONISM.

We don't have to be in perfect agreement about every single passage of scripture or every single principle of scripture. 2 Timothy 2:15 sums up this matter of ongoing effort to understand God's word very succinctly.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

There's plenty of clear and non-controversial understanding of scripture to keep us busy connecting with one another for the rest of our lives. It is completely unnecessary to divide over a difference of opinion about disputable matters. Love will prevail and Christ will be exalted when we work together in spite of differences.

Mark Twain said, "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand."

6. WE MUST OVERCOME THE BARRIER OF LAZINESS.

Dt. 6:4-9: Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

There's no way around it, learning a new language is hard work. R.C. Sproul can be a little harsh at times for our taste but he hit's the problem of scripture illiteracy and our avoidance of hard work head on in the following quote.

"Here, then, is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy. "--R. C. Sproul

We are not rejecting the world around us when we come together as a church around the authority of scripture. The opposite is true. In the words of scripture, "we are preparing an ark for the saving of their souls." Like a successful retail business or restaurant, we must get better to serve them better. It's not about becoming a weird cult that talks a strange language, but it's about becoming a unified force that loves the larger community of non-churched people more effectively. Let's give them a shelter from the storm by becoming the shelter in the storm. Only God's word can equip us to be all that we can be for those who have lost their way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the value of being connected in unity and truth with other Christians?
2. Why is it so important to have a document such as the Bible that a community of Christians (a church) comes into agreement around?
3. What document has been the glue for the United States of America to stay together for over 200 year and how does the Bible function the same way for Christians?
4. When is the last time another Christian used specific scripture to encourage, advise, challenge or correct you? What was your response?
5. Do you think Paul was annoyed at the Bereans for checking out his claims to see if they lined up with scripture? Do you use the scripture as the measure of all things? Why? Why not?
6. Of all the barriers mentioned in the lesson, which one do you think most keeps Christian from coming into agreement around the scripture?
7. One of barriers for making the Bible our connecting language and ultimate truth was “perfectionism.” How do you respond to the logical objection that there will always be some things in the Bible that sincere Christians will disagree on? Should this make us abandon the Bible altogether? What should we do?
8. What do you think it would be like for a group of Christians to wholeheartedly embrace the Bible as their standard for all things.
9. The Bible says we are to “speak the truth in love.” Is it possible to have unity with other Christians that is not built on truth? Is that a problem? Why or why not.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENT

Think of an important core value or standard you deeply feel and see if you can find one or more passages of scripture to support it. All research tools are fair including internet search engines.

Week 6

Daily Bread, The Way Of Making God's Story Your Story

REVIEWING A WEEK IN THE WORD

- 25) Share with us a passage you read in your own words.
- 26) What is something that the Lord revealed about himself to you as you read the Bible during this past week?
- 27) What is something that the Lord revealed to you about your circumstances and the world around you as you read the Bible this past week?
- 28) Tell us a meaningful meditation that came from your time in the Bible this past week.
- 29) Tell us a prayer that you prayed, praise that you gave or confession you made on what you read in the Bible this week.
- 30) Name specific actions, attitudes and choices that you intend to change based on what the Lord revealed to you in your Bible reading over the past week.

The Big Idea: Through a relationship with God's word and obedience to it we are in the center of whatever God is doing in the earth.

Deuteronomy 15:5-6 (NIV): *If only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. 6 For the LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you.*

Joshua 1:7-9 (NIV): *Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*

Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." 8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ... 16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." 17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy

city, which are described in this book. 20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.
Revelation 22:7-21 (NIV)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WHAT HOLDS THE EARTH UP?

Three thousand years ago the Hindu scriptures recorded the earth was resting on the backs of several huge elephants. The elephants were resting on the back of a very large turtle that was swimming in a sea. Greek mythology claims that the god Atlas was holding the earth on his shoulders. But our Bible says in [Job 26:7](#) — "[God] hangeth the earth on nothing." What a remarkable statement of fact. The earth is suspended in space and is held up by nothing. The book of Job was written about the same time the Hindu Scripture was written. How did Job know this scientific fact? Only God could have revealed this to Job. The Old Testament prophets wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit ([2 Peter 1:21](#)).

PLAY VIDEO NOW

"Sink the Bible to the bottom of the ocean, and still man's obligations to God would be unchanged. He would have the same path to tread, only his lamp and guide would be gone; the same voyage to make, but his chart and compass would be overboard!" - Henry Ward Beecher

The scripture is our guide to ending well. Ultimately, ending well is all that will matter. Unlike stories of mythical gods so popular among the Greeks during the time of the apostles, the Bible is as much about your destiny as it is God's. God's desire is clear: he wants to share his destiny with you and I. This shared destiny is all wrapped up in you and I agree with God's word regarding his plan for the planet.

Rev. 22:7: Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.

What does it mean to "keep the words of the prophecy in this book"?

The Greek word for "Keep" is "tereo" and is translated "observe," "reserve" and "preserve."

1. TO OBSERVE SCRIPTURE IS TO READ, STUDY, ANALYZE AND MEDIATE ON.

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, 21 so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (NIV)

2. TO RESERVE IS TO MAKE A PLACE FOR.

If you reserve a table at a restaurant for someone, you are making a place at the table for them. You are treating them with deference and respect.

3. TO PRESERVE IS TO KEEP SAFE FROM CORRUPTION.

To preserve our destiny we must preserve our message from corruption and from having it dismissed as irrelevant, which so many in society are prone to do.

The result will be that through the power of the Holy Spirit that lives in you, your life will be the story of God showing up in the events that make up your days. You will look back at a history of answered prayer and divine intervention. You will live presently in the knowledge that your very life is a God script being written for all to read.

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 (NIV)

Why would anyone want a “normal” life when you can have a super normal life?

The Bible is, among other things, the record of lives that were inter-twined with God. So your life is supposed to a continuation of the writing of scripture.

By making the scripture your source for life, you can enjoy divine alignment in all of your activities. Families should be fascinated with the divine destiny of their family. The biblical command to “love not the world” is because the destiny of the world is beneath the destiny that God has planned for his children and a biblical life is the key to a significant life.

Soren Kirkegaard said it so well when he said, “When you read God's Word, you must constantly be saying to yourself, "It is talking to me, and about me."

THE FEAR OF EXCLUDING OTHERS

Currently there is a great fear that we might align ourselves with a religion that excludes others. To claim exceptionalism & exclusivism is considered to be a modern social sin. So, talking about a destiny that differs from others may, in fact, be a turn off to some. Because of that, many find it uncomfortable to hold up the scripture and claim that within it's pages is the correct revelation that everyone should follow.

Here's the come back to these objections. The table of the Lord is now open to everyone. No one is excluded from being a participant in the destiny that is promised to those who observe, reserve and preserve God word. If God forced all of humanity to come to the table of scripture then he would be a tyrant and he is not a tyrant; he is a loving heavenly father. We can't help the fact that some refuse the privilege of being people of His word, but it makes no sense for us to discount the wealth of insight available to us because many don't see it's value.

What culture wants and what culture needs are two different things. All cultures crave conformity, but what all cultures need is truth and love. This is the unique role of people of the word. We believe we have the truth and we also can know we have the love.

Proverbs 23:23: Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding.

To be of value to the world around us we need to have right information. We need to have a prescription for life that actually works to make humans relationally connected, emotionally healthy and psychologically sound. We must have a story that is true, true in it's beginning and, more importantly, true in it's ending.

According to scripture, and it's well supported by prophetic accuracy so far, Christ is going to return and create a new heaven and a new earth. This new heaven and new earth will be a setting of peace, prosperity and perfection. This is the story of scripture that we are so fortunate to be a part of. We are called to invite others into our story.

Ephesians 4:15 sums up our assignment perfectly. It says we are to be "speaking the truth in love."

Welcome to the rest of your "Big Story," discovered by you every day as you feed on God's daily bread.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Someone said, "If we fail to plan, we plan to fail." How do you plan to daily "observe" your reverence for God's word and "reserve" a place for the Bible?
2. Have any of your attitudes toward the Bible been challenged in this series? If so what are those areas of challenge and how do you feel about that?
3. What do you think we mean when we say, "make God's story your own story?"
4. Do we need to guard the scripture from being distorted or displaced? How do you feel about become a defender of scripture?

5. Do you worry about excluding others that don't believe in the Bible as you do? How do you plan to include those who do not choose to believe the Bible in your life without letting them dishonor the word you believe?
6. Could 2 Cor. 3:2-3 relate to living a Bible centered life around those who don't believe or agree that the Bible is God's word?
7. Are you afraid God will judge you if you don't read the Bible or excited that you are going make God's story your own?
8. What are some of the exciting miracles that may occur because you become a partner with God through his word?
9. What are some of the ways that even your difficulties will take on special significance and meaning because you strive to live biblically?
10. Do we agree to make our daily relationship with the bible one of the ways we measure our relationship with God?

WEEKLY BIBLE ASSIGNMENTS

Call, text or email someone in the group this week to share with them something that you believe God showed you from the word. Agree who you are going to contact before you leave the meeting.