

WHY SHOULD WE READ THE BIBLE?

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Today we want to talk about **THE IMPORTANCE OF READING THE WORD OF GOD.**
It is one of the most crucial spiritual discipline any follower of Jesus must build into our daily lifestyle.

WHY SHOULD WE READ THE BIBLE?

Maybe you tried, got overwhelmed,
Maybe you don't feel it makes any difference, or discouraged and gave up.

Today, many people keep the Bible a closed book.
Because we don't realise how much we need it.

If I ask you to stop eating for a few months — you'd definitely ignore me and rightly you should eat =)
We need food in order to survive, and without food we will grow weak and eventually die.

Yet many Christians are spiritually starved and weak because they ignore the spiritual "food" God has provided in the Bible.

Billy Graham responded in the same way:
**"The Bible is not an option; it is a necessity.
You cannot grow spiritually strong without it." — Billy Graham**

WHEN WE READ HIS WORD, GOD SPEAKS TO US.

People we know are those whose voices we've heard.
Hearing someone gives you access to their thoughts and their heart, both of which constitute the building blocks of a relationship.

When God hears my voice, it's a given that He knows me.
But when I hear God's voice, that's when I begin to know Him.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" - John 10:27 NKJV

This is the declaration of God's intention to be relational with us.
It is also His promise that he does actually SPEAK TO US.

The reason this is so important is that,
While **FAITH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH DECLARATION, IT IS RECEIVED THROUGH HEARING.**

- Yes we read the Word of God to understand God.
- Let's also try reading the Word of God to hear God.
- His voice comes through His Word. — it is **PERSONAL** and **RELATIONAL**.

THE BIBLE IS HOW GOD SPEAKS TO US.

- The great thing is we have a God that is alive.
- And He's never just after our liturgy or fulfilling our religious duty ("*Worship Me, serve Me, give Me...*")
- He wants to have a **RELATIONSHIP** with us.
- So imagine a 2-way street communication.
- I want to get to know you too, just as you're getting to know Me.
- It is how He speaks to us. It is how He reveals to us about who He is.

- It helps us anchored to the 'real' God — not some version that we have made up on our own about God, but through what the Scripture says.
- Not a second-hand revelation of who someone tells us who God is...but your own personal revelation of God and journey with God.
- God is always ready to speak into our lives. But are we ready to listen?
- We simply need to listen, tuning our ears and hearts to what he is saying in the book he inspired.
When we open the Bible, we find more than 750,000 words breathed out by God himself for us.

Don't say God is silent if your Bible is closed.

- We silence the sound of God's voice in our lives when we leave our Bible on the shelf. **Complaining about God being silent when your Bible is closed is like complaining about not getting texts when your phone is turned off."**
- Because God is always speaking.
God wants to speak to us today, and everyday, through His word. God's word is not simply "once spoken." God's word is always "now speaking."
- But the Bible is clear we need special, God-given ears to hear him. **The Scriptures call us to have "ears to hear" seven times in the Gospels, and seven more times in the beginning of Revelation.**
- Two of these instances are Matthew and Luke telling us about Jesus's story of the sower and the seed.

Luke 8:15 – "As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."

Jon Bloom has said, referring to **Colossians 3:16**, "What we desperately need, more than anything else in the world, is the word of Christ dwelling in us richly." We desperately need to hear God speaking to us through his word, and simultaneously to hold fast to what it says with an honest and good heart.

As we listen well and strive to practice what we see and hear, God will give us enough grace and hope to trust him in our circumstances, however hard or unclear.

As far and removed as God may seem right now, he is not silent, and "he is not far from each one of us" (**Acts 17:27**). God is always active and speaking in the turmoil of our world, and in the messes of our individual lives.

But are we ready to patiently open our Bibles and listen to him?

Romans 10:17 — So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- When Peter got out of the boat to walk on the water to Jesus, he asked one qualifying question, because the wind and waves obscured his vision as to who this ghost walking on water really was.
- His question?? "**Lord, if its you....tell me to come.**" - Matthew 14:28. He wasn't looking for a word, he was listening for a voice.
- Peter didn't find reassurance in the word itself, because if I said "Come" Peter would have drowned. But even if Jesus said "Bubble tea", Peter would have still walked on water.
- Why? Because **the voice revealed that it was Jesus.** The world, the enemy may say anything. But when God's voice is heard, faith rises, no matter how daunting your situation is.
- Peter just wanted to know whose voice was calling him, because **FAITH COMES BY HEARING, AND HE HAD A HISTORY WITH JESUS.**

Who's ready to build a history with Jesus?

WHEN WE READ HIS WORD, WE ALLOW GOD TO TRANSFORM US.

I was once asked what the best translation of the Bible is. My answer was, "**When you translate it into your life.**" That's what Bible study is all about.

- If you're not translating God's Word into your life, you're not studying the Bible the way God intended.
- **God gave us the Bible to TRANSFORM us, not simply inform us.**
- **It should give us a bigger heart, not a bigger head.**

James 1:22 - "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (NIV).

- In other words, **God wants our beliefs turned into behavior.**
- Do not just listen to the word, and know the word, but be a DOER of the Word of God. Information doesn't change you, its real tangible action that transforms you.

God makes his purpose for the Bible even more explicit in:

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work" (NLT).

1. **He teaches you. God shows you the path on which you should walk;**
2. **He rebukes you. God shows you when you're off the path;**
3. **He corrects you. God shows you how you can get back on the path;**
4. **He trains you. God shows you how you can stay on the path.**

The purpose of the Bible is more than just showing us what is wrong in our lives or how we should live. **God gave us his Word to radically transform our lives.**

The Bible describes itself in different ways.

- For example, it calls itself a **hammer, a sword, and a scalpel.** All of these are tools designed to make radical changes. **God intends for the Bible to dramatically change our lives.**
- The Bible also describes God's truth as **milk, water, bread, and meat.** What do all those things have in common? If you don't eat or drink them regularly, you'll die. **We were never meant to live without the Bible.**
- The Bible is essential to our lives because **it gives us life.**
- In fact, the Bible also talks about **Jesus as the Word of God.**

John 1:14 says, "So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son" (NLT).

- God gave you the Living Word, Jesus, to be the **author and finisher of your faith,**
- And he gave you the written Word to **prepare you to live out your faith.**
- Regularly reading the Word of God transforms our thinking so that we can **GROW IN MATURITY.**
- As continue to live out in faith and obedience / applying the Word, we are continuously being transformed daily to be more and more like Him too.

WHEN WE READ HIS WORD, WE KNOW HIS WILL & PURPOSE FOR US.

THE WORD OF GOD = THE WILL OF GOD.

- When we go to God's Word, **we find the thoughts of God's heart—His will—to you and me.**
- The Bible is God's divine elevation to His creation.
- The Word of God shows us His will for our lives.
- The Scriptures rightly divided are the words of God; they are His will for every man, woman, and young person. The Word of God is the will of God.
- **Without God's Word, we could never be saved.**
- **Without God's Word, we would not be headed for Heaven.**
- **Without God's Word, we wouldn't know what Jesus' death on the cross meant for us....what did His Resurrection Victory mean to us.**
- We would NOT know about God's purpose for our lives.
- God wants to give you all that — but it starts with His Word.
- Through the Bible, **God re-creates our lives.**

Life's biggest question of every single human being: "**Why am I here for?" What's the purpose of my life?"**

- **Because life without purpose is incredibly frustrating.**
- **You look around and see your friends and coworkers living passionate, engaged, meaningful lives.**
- **They have deep relationships, rewarding jobs and a sense of direction that compels them to get out of bed each morning with a spring in their step.**
- You know that God has something good in store for you.
- You don't believe he intends you to live a life of painful miserable life. But what is His purpose for me?

Psalms 57:2 says, "I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me."

- This is key in understanding God's purpose for your life. God has numbered your days and will fulfill every purpose He has for you.
- However, our choices and actions also really matter.
- **We can choose to do things that will bring us more joy and give us more of a sense of God-given purpose.**

DIG INTO GOD'S WORD.

- The primary way God speaks to us is through the Bible.
- This means that one of the first things you should do in your search for God's purpose is to start digging into scripture.
- Now, you won't find any verses that tell you to become a dance instructor or painter, but **you will begin to understand THE HEART OF GOD.**
 - **What are His plans for your life**
 - **You are created to glorify Him**
 - **You are His masterpiece created for His good works.**
 - **And whatever assignment He has for you, He has already equipped you with it — you have all you need (with you) to fulfill His purpose for you.**

Psalms 119:105 : "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

- God's word brings light to paths that otherwise seem dark.
- In the Bible you learn how to live wisely in God's world, which is the first step toward finding your purpose.
- He will show you your next step and the path that He wants you to make.
- **You were created for His marvelous work,**
- **You were chosen, ordained, called for such a time as this....**

"The purpose of the Bible is to help you live out the purpose God has for your life; it's God's inheritance that's due to you."

God wants you to be thoroughly equipped for what you've been made to do," Rick Warren Warren.

WHEN WE READ HIS WORD, WE RECEIVE HIS PROMISES FOR US.

"God wants you to grow and know what's available to you from Him. You need to read the Bible to do that."

"I commit you to God and to the Word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

Acts 20:32 (NIV)

"You have an inheritance coming to you.
When you read God's Word, the Bible promises one for you. ...

An inheritance is what you get for being part of a family that's rightfully yours,"

HIS PROMISES ARE OUR INHERITANCE

Pretend your father is billionaire Warren Buffett, and he dies.

- If you never took the time to read the will, you'd be foolish.
- You wouldn't get what was rightfully due to you.
- You wouldn't benefit from what belongs to you as a child of Warren Buffett.

The same thing as we are all the precious child of God.

- When you become a follower of Jesus, you're not just a believer — **you're His child.** You become a part of God's family. Family privileges come along with that decision. **You have a spiritual inheritance.**
- But if you walked through your entire life and you didn't know what benefits were available to you as a child of God, that would be sad — and foolish.
- **God wants you to grow and know what's available to you from Him.** You need to read the Bible to do that.

Everything that belongs to Jesus Christ belongs to us,

- In the Bible, there are **7,487 promises that God has given to man.** This is about 85% of all the promises in the Bible.
- His inheritance, His provision is in the Promises.
- That's the key to understanding everything // to claim our inheritance we got to know what's rightfully ours to begin with
- **A promise is a covenant or declaration that one will do exactly what they say or something will happen just as pledged.**

We Can Count on God's Promises Because of God's Character

- He is truth and only speaks the truth.
- He is the essence of righteousness and cannot lie.
- If He has said it, He will do it.
- If He has spoken it, He will fulfill it.
- We should trust God's promises and heed His warnings.

If God has made unshakable promises for us,

- We should devour His Word and keep it close in our hearts. "*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" - Psalm 119*
- *I want to know all God's promises for me.*
- *I want to know what I can pray for,*
- *What I can count on.*
- *What to hang my hope on when everything around looks hopeless.*
- Grab on His promises. Unfold the full extent of our inheritance.

WHEN WE ABIDE IN HIS WORD, WE BEAR MUCH FRUIT.

If we keep reading in **John 15 (NIV)**, Jesus continues to say,

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- What Jesus is telling His disciples and us is that the nutrients that we need to grow in our faith does NOT come from within ourselves.
- They come from GOD alone.
- So we must be connected to the **SOURCE** of nutrients that produce **FRUIT.**

Sadly, I believe lots of time we forget about this.

- **We want God to do great things through us, but we tend to neglect that He must first do great work in us.**
- D.L Moody's convicting words:
"There are many of us who are willing to do great things for the Lord, but few of us are willing to do little things." - D.L MOODY

If we want a life filled with the fruit of God, we must daily spend time in the Word of God.

- Because **apart from God, we can do nothing.**
- That is why Charles Spurgeon said, "**The devil is not afraid of a dust-covered Bible.**"
- The devil is not afraid of Christians who just go to church a couple times a week.
- As long as they remain powerless followers of Jesus,
- Not living up into the full potential God has for their lives
- Not knowing the promise God has for us,
- Not knowing the power & authority God has already given unto you when you accept Him into your lives.
- But not here....
- **We will be disciples that BEAR MUCH FRUIT!**
- That when people look at your lives....
- They cannot deny THERE IS SOMETHING INSIDE OF YOU — that makes you so DIFFERENT! So GLOWING! So FULL OF FAITH / "Vibes"!
- When you remain rooted in God's Word....
- You are attached the source, supercharged with God's power.
- You will never remain the same,
- You will grow healthy & stronger
- You will multiply in every aspects of your life!
- You will shine in your school
- Your business will be blessed to glorify God
- Your connect group will grow, multiply and impacting lives
- Your relationships will be prosperous & honouring God.
- Your children will grow up strong & mighty, doing great things for God
- **WHO WANTS TO BE FRUITFUL?!**

TIPS FOR READING AND UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE.

How can you make the Bible come alive?

- **Use a Translation you can understand / Contemporary translation.**
Don't go KingJames, go easy on NIV / ESV to start with.
- **Read the Bible in an orderly method / as it was written.**
Don't use the "random dip" method — a passage here, a chapter there, what you like here, an interesting portion there.
Read through the Bible as it was written — **a book or letter at a time in an orderly method."**
- For beginners: **start with one of the Gospels / New Testament.**
Read at least a chapter or two every day.
Devotions would provide great guidance / understanding — rather than relying purely on our own interpretation, or the complexity of reading commentaries.
In addition, **always ask God to show you what it tells you about Jesus and his love for us.**
- **A notebook for writing down thoughts, power verses and prayer lists.**
Make a good habit to capture to memorise / meditate more on.
"Keep your words in my heart"
- **Relax, Request and Read.**
Remember should not come running into God's presence and start talking immediately, settle into a reverent mood first.
Psalm 46:10a **"Be still, and know that I am God."**
- **Short opening prayer to ask God to cleanse your heart and guide you.**
Be in tune with the Author before you can understand his Book.
- **Let God speak to you through His Word.**
Read a section of Scripture.
This is where your conversation with God begins.
He speaks to you through His Word, and you speak with Him in prayer.
- **To effectively read the Bible, do it slowly and not race through it.**
Sometimes its necessary perhaps to read a passage over and over again until its meaning sinks in.
Reading the word of God without meditating....is like swallowing food without munching it.

We need to make Psalm 1 a daily reminder in our lives.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3)

There are two things that this passage calls us to do: walk away from sin and sinful advice, and walk toward the word of God.

Who wants to be A BLESSED MAN? We are called to make the Scriptures our delight and our continual meditation day and night.

It's not just something we read, study, meditate on...

But let's OBEY & ACT on it — be the Doer of the Word and let it TRANSFORM our lives.

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE

WHEN WE READ THE WORD OF GOD:

- **GOD SPEAKS TO US**
 - **WE ALLOW GOD TO TRANSFORM US**
 - **WE LEARN GOD'S WILL & PURPOSE FOR US**
 - **WE RECEIVE HIS PROMISES FOR US**
 - **WE BEAR MUCH FRUIT**
- Share your journey of learning and growing through the Word of God.
- How has it impacted you and your faith in God?
- In what way / aspect has the Word of God spoken and transformed your life?
- Any key Bible verse that has become 'anchor' to your spiritual journey?
Share tips of reading & learning the Bible that's effective for you.

Coaches:

Encourage your group to get a Bible (Book / App if they haven't got one - contemporary translation), Start a Reading Plan together with them.
Topical devotions, or start reading New Testament / The Gospels chapter by chapter to unpack learnings & applications on there.