



Lesson Eight: The Bible

We have started our way through the second G, which stands for Grow. The first step for those who have trusted in Jesus is to publicly identify with Him in baptism. Once we have come to faith in Jesus, it is important for us to learn about Him and what He wants for our lives. We do this by reading and studying His Word

Write it down?

If someone is going to contact you, do you prefer texting or phone calls? _____
I love texting! It is my favorite form of communication with people. I get annoyed when my phone rings. I hate talking on the phone. I have my wife make 99% of my phone calls for me. Sometimes we literally have a three-way conversation with someone as I talk to her and she talks to them. And there are very few people in the world that I am happy to look down and see their name pop up on my caller id.

In this digital age, there is a form of communication that is almost obsolete and that is the written word. I can't even think of the last time that I sat down and wrote someone a letter. It is so rare to receive a letter from someone that the written word has become very valuable. You know someone really cares about you if they take time to write you a letter. And that is exactly what God has done for you!

A more sure word?

In 2 Peter, Peter recalls the moment that he, James, and John saw the glory of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Here are his words from verses 16-18, ". For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

He notes that they saw His glory with their own eyes and heard the audible voice of God on that day. What a powerful experience to have! Does it get any better than that? My first thought is "How could it?" How could you experience anything better than seeing Jesus in all of His glory and hearing God's voice out loud? But Peter tells us in the beginning of verse 19 that there is something better, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,..." He says not only is there something better, but you and I had better pay attention to it.

He stated that the written word was far better than hearing God's voice and having some experience. Look what he says in verses 20-21, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Why do you think the written word would be better than God's audible voice? _____

I love getting handwritten notes from my wife, Lysandra. When I was in college, I would go to the mailbox every single day to look for a letter from her. We talked on the phone every day, but I wanted to be able to see her handwriting and go over every detail of what she wrote to me. When we talked on the phone, I could remember

the basics of what we talked about, but with her letters I could go back and read them over and over again. With God's written Word, we don't have to try to remember what He told us. It is there in black and white for us to read over and over again.

Inspiration

Remember what Peter said at the end of verse 21, "...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Peter told us how the Word of God was given. How did the holy men speak? _____

It wasn't man that came up with the Bible. They were simply instruments that God used to record His words. They were like a trumpet or a saxophone that a musician breathes into in order to make beautiful music. The instruments do not make the music themselves. The Bible was given in much the same way.

Paul elaborates in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." That word "Inspiration" means that God breathed out the words that He wanted the human penmen to write down. Take your hand and put it in front of your mouth. Now say the word, "inspiration". As you speak, what do you feel on your hand? _____

You can feel your breath on your hand as you speak the word. God breathed out the very words that He wanted the human authors to write down. That is what inspiration is, and inspiration was a one-time work of the Holy Spirit.

Preservation

From that point on God preserved His Word. Look at the promise that God made about His Word in Psalm 12:6-7, "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." What did God promise to preserve in these verses? _____ And how long did He promise to preserve the words? _____ That's right! God promised to preserve His Word forever. Jesus reiterated the promise in Mark 13:31 when He stated, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." Inspiration was a one-time work of the Holy Spirit, but preservation is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

Application

Understanding how special God's Word is ought to make it more valuable and important to us. The Bible is not meant to be merely used for academic purposes. It is designed to be put into practice in our daily lives. A lot of people know facts about the Bible, and can even tell its stories inside and out, but that doesn't mean that they are a growing mature follower of Jesus. The first thing that we should do with God's Word is study it. It is one thing to simply read it. It is quite another to dig deeper and actually become a student of the Bible. Paul commands us in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." How did Paul say that we could show ourselves approved unto God? _____ He tells us that we are to know the Bible from cover to cover. And you are to study it for yourself.

Another thing that we are to do with the Bible is to memorize it. We don't always have the opportunity to pull out a Bible or grab our phone to pull up the Bible app at every moment that we might need to. In moments of temptation or conversation it is needful for us to have as much of the Bible stored away in our memory as we possibly can. David says in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

What was the reason that David gave for memorizing Scripture? _____

Memorizing the Bible literally changes the way that we think, which in turn changes the way that we behave. David shared that thought with us in Psalm 119:9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." How did David say that we can cleanse our way?

This brings us to a third thing that we should do with God's Word and that is live it out. We are to put into practice the things that we are learning. Just memorizing the Bible won't cleanse your way, it is the doing of it that changes who we are. Remember, it isn't how much of the Bible that you know that dictates spiritual maturity, but how much you do. James warns us of the dangers of not practicing the truth of Scripture and also gives us the reward for being a doer of the Word in verses 22-25 of the first chapter of his letter, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

He warns us that if we just hear the Word and do not do it, then we have deceived ourselves. There are a lot of people like that. They have tricked themselves into thinking that they are more Christlike than they are just because they know facts about Jesus and His Word. Don't be like those who deceive themselves, instead be one who does what Jesus says to do. What does James say will happen to the person who is a doer of the Word?

_____ Right! They will be blessed in what they do!
If you want God to bless your life, you need to put into practice the things that you are studying in the Bible.

Conclusion

Do you have the value of God's Word that you should have? Do you read it every day? I suggest for people to download the Bible app. It is a valuable tool to assist you in your personal time with God. You can follow a reading plan on any topic that you want to learn about or are struggling with. Take the time to go download it right now. Do you study it? This is more than just reading the Bible. It is digging deeper into what God is saying and figuring out how it applies to you today. I love www.blueletterbible.org! It is a great Bible study tool. Take a few minutes to see what it has to offer. Do you memorize it? Hiding God's Word in your heart is essential to gaining victory over your flesh. Most importantly do you make it a part of your life by doing what it says? What is one thing that you know from the Bible that you need to start doing today? _____

Remember, if you want God to bless you then you have to be a doer of His Word.