



The
FLOW
Adult CURRICULUM

#19

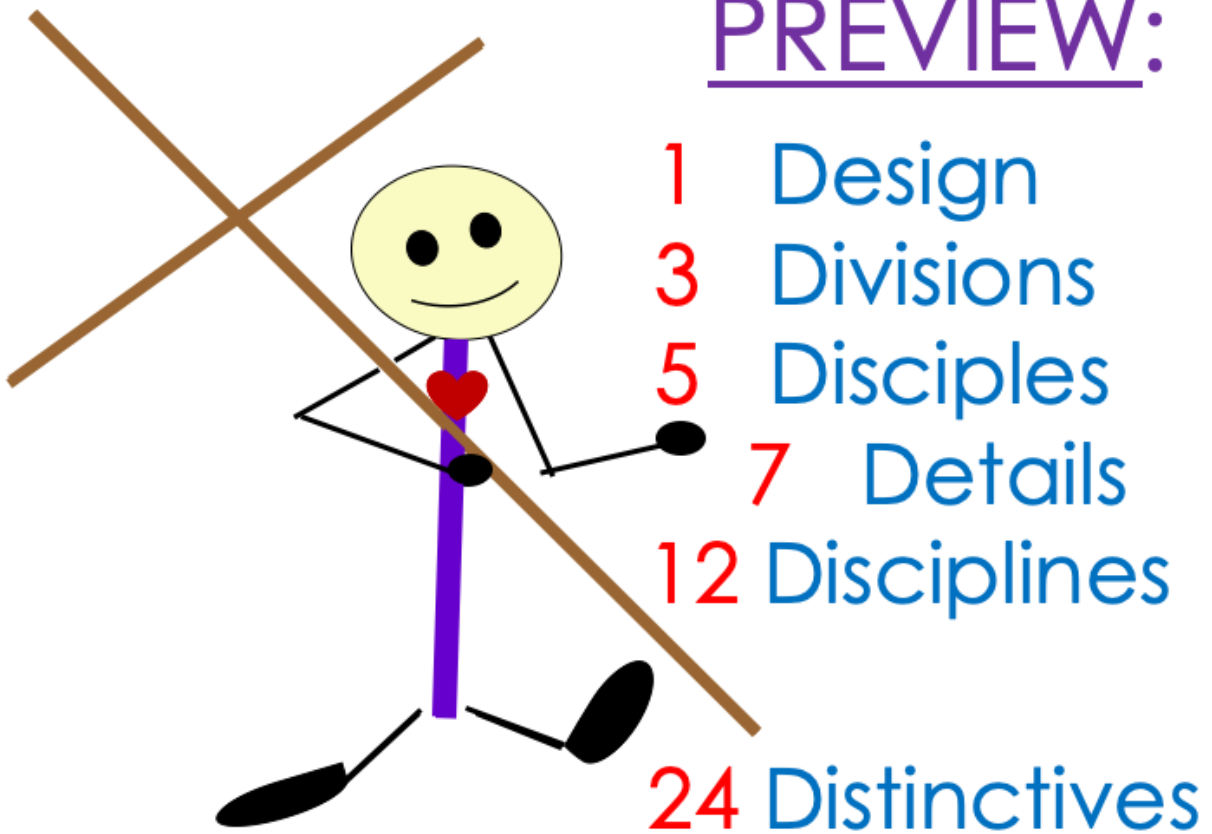
Scripture (intake)

2 Timothy 3:15-17

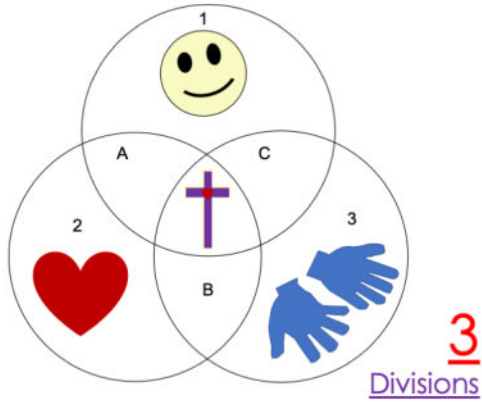
(Come And See Christianity book pages 64-65))

The FLOW

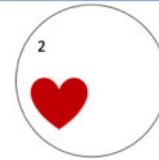
PREVIEW:



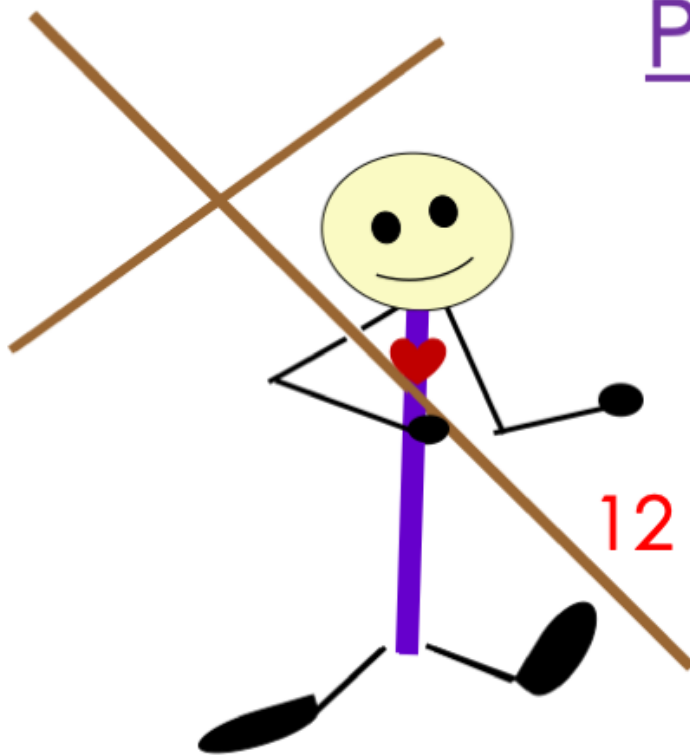
SECTION FIVE: 12 Disciplines



The
HEART



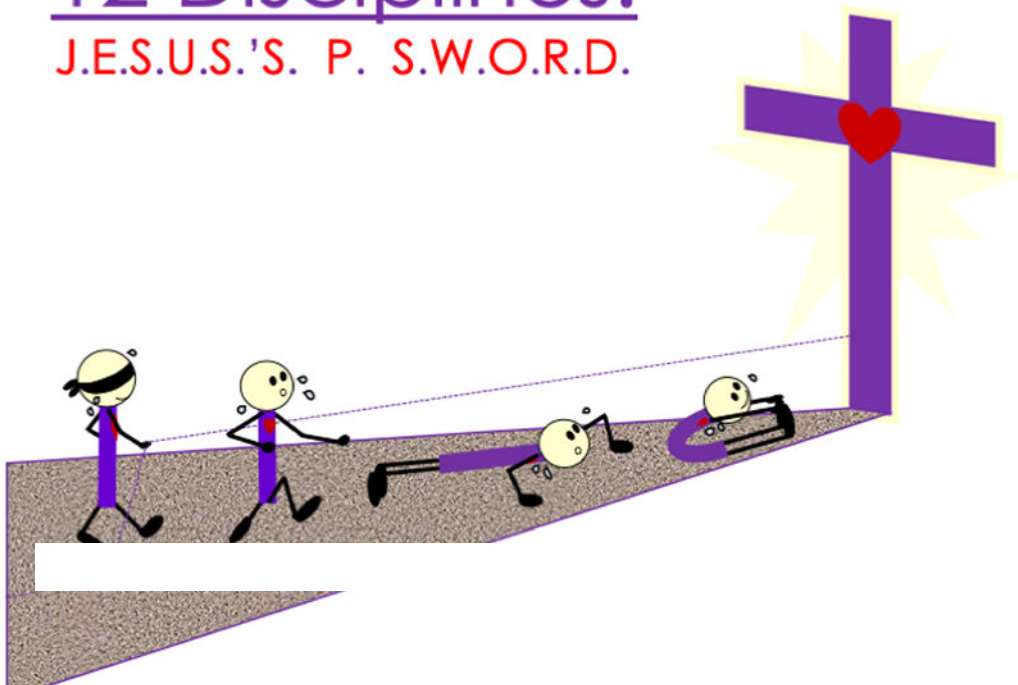
PREVIEW:



12 Disciplines

12 DISCIPLINES: Here are some heart exercises for you... These discipleship “**disciplines**” can help Christians to **strengthen** their **faith** and grow as missional & maturing Christ-followers.

12 Disciplines:
J.E.S.U.S.'S P. S.W.O.R.D.





Scripture (in-take)

SCRIPTURE: Nothing feeds the soul like the Word of God! Everything that defines, describes, and defends Christianity is found in God's Holy, **inspired**, and perfect **Scriptures**.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

INTRO:

Welcome to another major transition point in your discipleship journey and our Come And See Christianity curriculum. By way of review, thus far, we have gone through Section One's single lesson on God's divine DESIGN, then Section Two's three unifying and introductory lessons on every human's 3 DIVISIONS (our HEAD, HEART, and HANDS); we then followed up with the universally inclusive definitions and descriptions of humanity's 5 types of people, also known as biblical DISCIPLES (the LOST, LOVER, LEARNER, LEADER, and LIFER), each having received their own lesson. Next came what we just completed, Section Four's 7 lessons on Christianity's fundamental, knowledge-based truths, also known as The DETAILS (FOUNDATIONS, FRAMEWORK, FACTS, FIGHT, FAITH, FAMILY, and FOREVER).

Now, in the same way that Sections 1-4 (and their 16 compiled lessons) all concentrated on aspects of "The HEAD" and the truth of God's Word, Section 5 will contain 12 complementary lessons (**J.E.S.U.S.'S. P.S.W.O.R.D.**) that focus on HEART exercises, also known as spiritual DISCIPLINES, that can help to grow and strengthen the Christian's truth-filled, loving, and faithfully obedient HEART...

12 HEART Strengthening DISCIPLINES:

1. *Journaling*
2. *Eat-nothing (Fasting)*
3. *Scripture intake*
4. *Understudy of Scripture*
5. *Solitude*
6. *Stewardship*
7. *Prayer*
8. *Serving*
9. *Worship*
10. *Outreach*
11. *Relationships*
12. *Development*

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen

CONTEXT:

Macro

Spiritual Disciplines

(The content herein is predominantly derived and expanded upon from Dr. Don Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines* & Dr. Chuck Lawless' *Disciplined Warriors*.)

I. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES . . . FOR THE PURPOSE OF GODLINESS

*Ours is an undisciplined age. The old disciplines are breaking down.
... We **need** the rugged strength of Christian **character**
that can come only from discipline.*

- V. Raymond Edman

Discipline without direction is drudgery!

The Bible says of God's elect, "*For those whom He foreknew He also predestined **to be conformed** to the image of His Son*"
(Romans 8:29)

Although God will grant Christlikeness to us when Jesus returns, until then He intends for us to grow toward it.

We aren't merely to wait for holiness; we're to pursue it.

All who come to God trusting in the person and work of Jesus to make them right with God are given the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 1:13-14). The presence of the Holy Spirit causes all those in whom He resides to have new holy hungers they didn't have before.

Hebrews 12:14 is clear:
anyone who is not striving for holiness will not see the Lord!

The urgent question every Christian should ask is, *“How then shall I pursue holiness... How can I become more like Christ?”* God’s Word offers a clear answer in...

1 Timothy 4:7
“Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness”

The only road to Christian maturity and godliness (a.k.a. Christlikeness & holiness) passes through the practice of the Spiritual Disciplines.

Godliness is the goal of the Disciplines... remember this and the ***Spiritual Disciplines become delights vs drudgery.***

II. WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES?

Spiritual Disciplines are those practices found in Scripture (and in application) that promote spiritual growth among believers in The Gospel.

Spiritual Disciplines are the **habits of devotion** and **experiential Christianity** that have been **practiced** by the people of God since biblical times.

The Disciplines could be described in several ways:

- “First, the Bible prescribes both **personal** and **interpersonal** Spiritual Disciplines.”
- **Spiritual Disciplines are activities, NOT attitudes.**

- Disciplines are practices... NOT character qualities, graces, or “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22-23).
- **Disciplines are things you do!**

The goal of practicing a given Discipline, is not about “DOing” as much as it is about “BEing,” that is, BEing like Jesus. But the biblical way to grow in BEing more like Jesus is through the rightly motivated doing of the biblical Spiritual Disciplines.

- We do specific practices *sometimes* that cultivate being more like Jesus *all the time*.
- Spiritual Disciplines are practices taught or modeled in the Bible. (Without this limitation, we might call anything we fancy a Spiritual Discipline.)
- Spiritual Disciplines found in Scripture are sufficient for knowing & experiencing God & growing in Christlikeness.
 - See 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - See 2 Peter 1:3 & Philippians 4:13
- Spiritual Disciplines are practices derived from the gospel, NOT divorced from the gospel.
- ***Spiritual Disciplines are means, not ends.***

Godliness is both closeness to Christ and conformity to Christ.

CAUTION: *While we cannot be godly without the practice of the Disciplines, we can practice the Disciplines without being godly...*

So, the Spiritual Disciplines are those personal and interpersonal activities given by God in the Bible as the sufficient means believers in Jesus Christ are to use in the Spirit-filled, gospel-driven pursuit of godliness, that is, closeness to Christ and conformity to Christ.

III. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES... AS MEANS TO GODLINESS

Godliness comes through discipline.

- God uses **three primary catalysts for changing us** and conforming us into Christlikeness, but only one is largely under our control.

#1: God uses people to change people.

- *"Iron sharpens iron," says Proverbs 27:17*
- *Sometimes God uses our friends to sharpen us into more Christlike living, and sometimes He uses our enemies to file away our rough, ungodly edges.*

#2: God uses circumstance(s) as His catalyst for change.

#3: God uses spiritual disciplines to change His people.

*God uses spiritual disciplines
to work on His people from the inside out.*

Colossians 1:29 illustrates how **the efforts of a Christian & the work of God—can occur simultaneously** in a person indwelt by the Holy Spirit.” (cf. Philippians 2:13)

See here divine grace AND human responsibility...

*As physical disciplines promote bodily strength, so
the Spiritual Disciplines promote godliness.*

- Think of the Spiritual Disciplines as ways by which we can spiritually place ourselves in the path of God’s grace and seek Him, much **like Zacchaeus** placed himself physically in Jesus’ path and sought Him. The Lord, by His Spirit, still travels down certain paths that He has ordained and revealed in Scripture. We call these paths the Spiritual Disciplines...

*If we will place ourselves on these paths and look
for Him there by faith, we can expect
to encounter Him.*

IV. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES... GOD’S WILL FOR CHRISTIANS

*“Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness”
makes it plain that **this is a command of God**, not merely a suggestion.*

- **Holiness is not an option for those who claim to be children of the Holy One** (see 1 Peter 1:15-16), so neither are the means of holiness—that is, the Spiritual Disciplines—an option.
- Jesus is the model of discipline in & for godliness.
- Many professing Christians are spiritually undisciplined and seem to have little Christlike fruit and power in their lives. Yet, many of them are remarkably disciplined in other areas of their lives.
- Too many Christians trivialize their effectiveness for the kingdom of God through a lack of discipline.

- The danger of neglecting the Spiritual Disciplines is the danger of bearing little spiritual fruit—your life counting little for the sake of the kingdom.

“I’m not afraid of failure. I’m afraid of succeeding at things that don’t matter.”

- William Carey

“Freedom and discipline have come to be regarded as mutually exclusive, when in fact freedom is not at all the opposite, but rather the final reward, of discipline.”

Elisabeth Elliot

If your picture of a disciplined Christian is one of a grim, tight-lipped, joyless half-robot, then you’ve missed the point.

*By means of the Disciplines,
let the truths of The Gospel restore your soul.*

Micro

Nothing feeds the soul and informs the mind like the Word of God!

To prove the point and quote Jesus from Matthew 4:4, Creator Christ has declared, *“It is written”* (in Deuteronomy 8:3) *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*

When we add the greater context of John 1:1, *“In the beginning was the Word and Word was with God and the Word was God,”* we can see and say without hesitation or reservation that the inspiration of The Word (both incarnated and inspired) embodies the truth in love of eternal life. With that said, let us engage this lesson that will help to explain why it is so important for Christians to regularly and righteously, properly and passionately, intake God’s inspired Word, the holy Scriptures.

“The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian.”

- A.W. Tozer

Message

*“If you are ignorant of God’s Word,
you will always be ignorant of God’s will... (and ways).”
– Billy Graham*

*“God wants to communicate with you in the 21st century. He wrote His message in a book. He asks you to come and study that book for three compelling reasons: it’s essential for growth. It’s essential for maturity. It’s essential for equipping you, training you, so that you might be an available, clean, sharp instrument in His hands to accomplish His purposes... So, the real question confronting you now is: How can you afford not to be in God’s Word?”
– Howard Hendricks*

BIG IDEA: Everything that defines, describes, and defends Christianity is found in God’s holy, inspired, and perfect Scriptures.

PREVIEW:

1. Scripture’s AUTHOR
2. Scripture’s AUTHORITY
3. Scripture’s APPLICATION

TEXT:

2 Timothy 3:15-17
*“...from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17**that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

1. Scripture's AUTHOR

Illustration:

Who is your favorite author? An informed young child might answer: "Dr. Seuss." A classical thespian might dramatically respond with: "Shakespeare!" Another voice, far more subtle and subdued, might be heard saying: "Hemingway" or "C.S. Lewis." For all practical purposes, the list of answers could go on as long as we had new people to ask.

What is interesting about the question is how much it reveals about the respondent... Have you noticed that those who want a certain type of reading or genre gravitate to a particular author or group of writers? In one sense, knowing a person's favorite author gives you a bit of read on that individual. How about you... who and what do you choose to read on a regular basis? Even more importantly, why do you make those choices?

"The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid."

- Martin Luther

Explanation:

"The Bible does not stutter."

- Eric Ludy

Our text and God's truth are crystal clear, **God is the Bible's Author!** *"ALL Scripture is God-breathed (divinely inspired)..."* This fact is arguably amongst the most important realities that Christians believe and embrace, all by God's grace and all for His glory.

To be clear, The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the single most eternally important truth and "doctrine" in all of creation. Bar none! At the same time, take note, it is only through the perfect, inspired, unblemished and eternal Word of God that we can truly know The true Gospel. At the risk of creating a bit of confusion with a closed loop of logic, think about it this way...

*The Word of God defines The God of The Word... and
The God of The Word is The AUTHOR of The Word of God.*

There is more to the Scripture's authorship than meets the eye... In short, any attempt to divide or disconnect God from His Word or His Word from Himself will create instant heresy and eternal devastation.

The following is just one consideration that comes with the connecting of these dots... Without acknowledging Creator God as The holy Scripture's holy AUTHOR, there would be no rightful claim to the Bible's divine inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility; nor its supernatural purpose, power, and people.

Do not ever forget, while it is true that God wrote the Scriptures through human writers, He, Almighty God, Creator-Christ, has always been The eternal AUTHOR. In the end, understanding the importance of The Scripture's authorship is directly related to an embrace of the entire Bible's authenticity and authority.

2 Peter 1:20-21

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone's own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

God Himself calls the Bible the Word of God...

- And they spoke the Word of God with boldness. ([Acts 4:31](#))
- So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. ([Romans 10:17](#))
- And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. ([Ephesians 6:17](#))
- For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God ([1 Thessalonians 2:13](#))

The Bible is the Indestructible Word of God...

The Word of God lives and abides forever ([1 Peter 1:23](#)).

The Word of the Lord endures forever ([1 Peter 1:25](#)).

Heaven & earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. ([Mt 24:35](#))

Application:

*“Beware of reasoning about God’s Word. **Obey it!**”*

- Oswald Chambers

2. Scripture's AUTHORITY

Illustration:

“The Bible is not man’s word about God, but God’s Word about man.”
– John Barth

Explanation:

Any healthy discussion about the role and relationship of God’s Word to God’s people needs to include a concentrated focus on God’s AUTHORITY over all of His creation, as expressed and detailed throughout the Scriptures.

What does it mean that the Bible should be our sole authority for faith and practice?

The statement “the Bible is our only rule for faith and practice” appears in many doctrinal statements. Sometimes, it takes a similar form, stating that the Bible is “the final authority,” “the only infallible rule,” or “the only certain rule.” This sentiment, whatever the wording, is a way for Bible-believing Christians to declare their commitment to the written Word of God and their independence from other would-be authorities.

The statement that the Bible is the “only rule for faith and practice” is rooted in the sufficiency of Scripture, as revealed in [2 Timothy 3:16–17](#): “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Because God is sovereign, His Word is the absolute authority in our lives, and by it God equips us for His service. As A. A. Hodge wrote, “Whatever God teaches or commands is of sovereign authority. . . . The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only organs through which, during the present dispensation, God conveys to us a knowledge of his will about what we are to believe concerning himself, and what duties he requires of us” (*Outlines of Theology*, chapter 5).

When we say, “The Bible is our only rule for faith and practice,” we mean that we hold the Bible, God’s Holy Word, to be our ultimate guide for what we believe (“faith”) and what we do (“practice”). We mean that the Bible trumps man’s authority, church tradition, and our own opinions. We mean we will allow nothing that opposes God’s Word to dictate our actions or control our thinking. We mean that we agree with the Reformers’ cry of [sola scriptura](#).

When the Bible clearly reveals a truth, we believe it with all our hearts. When the Bible clearly commands us to do something, we make sure we are doing it. For example, the Bible says that Jesus is coming back again ([John 14:3](#); [Revelation 19:11-16](#)). Since the Bible is our “only rule for faith,” we have no choice but to believe that Jesus is returning some day. Also, the Bible says that we are to “flee from sexual immorality” ([1 Corinthians 6:18](#)). Since the Bible is our “final authority for practice,” we are bound to abstain from immorality (as defined by the Bible).

We believe following the Bible as our only [rule of faith](#) and practice is the safest position, theologically. Fidelity to Scripture keeps us from being “tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching” ([Ephesians 4:14](#)). As the noble Bereans taught us ([Acts 17:11](#)), all doctrines are to be examined in light of the Bible, and only what conforms to biblical truth should be accepted.

Following the Bible is also the most sensible position, because the Word of God “is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens” ([Psalm 119:89](#)) and “the law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple” ([Psalm 19:7](#)).

GotQuestions.org

*To love and serve the Bible's AUTHOR
is to live under and submit to the Bible's AUTHORITY.*

Application:

Surrender to victory!

“We are dealing with God's thoughts: we are obligated to take the greatest pains to understand them truly and to explain them clearly.”

— D.A. Carson

*“Nobody ever outgrows Scripture;
the book widens and deepens with our years.”*

- Spurgeon

3. Scripture's APPLICATION

Illustration:

"The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible plays in our life and thoughts."

- George Muller

Explanation:

A. Purpose

Both... The Word incarnate AND The Word inspired, came to testify to the Truth!

John 18:37

Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose, I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

John 14:6

"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to The Father except through Me (Jesus the Christ)."

- 1). God has gifted His people with His Word so that we may glorify Him.
- 2). God's Word is His grace-based blueprint of eternal truth in love.
- 3). God's Word is His Gospel-centric, bullseye-revealing, missional-map.
- 4). God's Word is His auto-biographical, standard-giving Law (Gal. 6:2).
- 5). God's Word is His authoritative revelation and authentication.
- 6). God's Word is His guiding lamp and light for living (Psalm 119:105).
- 7). God's Word is His call to worship and warning of wrath (John 3:36).

B. Power

God's Word has the power, through the grace-transforming and faith-generating work of His Holy Spirit, **to save and sanctify sinners!**

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

John 17:17

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

**God's Word has the power to purify, fortify,
and fill His family with great peace.**

Hebrews 4:12

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

Psalms 119:165

*Great peace have those who love your law;
nothing can make them stumble.*

C. People

Christians, by definition, are literally "Christ's ones." Early on, another way the first Christians were referred to was as "the way." Today, perhaps the most familiar way Christians rightly refer to one another is as "brothers and sisters" in the "family of God." Further still, when we look in the Bible for righteous references to the people of God, (in addition to those already noted), we find biblical believers called "the Church," "the Body of Christ," the "Flock" of the "Great Shepherd," the Almighty's Army of armor wearing warriors (Ephesians 6:10ff), the "Light of the world," and many more miraculous descriptions...

What do all of these truthful and loving references to God's people have in common? Answer: they are detailed, defined, and described in Scripture. As our text makes clear, Christians are those who have been saved according to the holy Scriptures. Moreover, healthy Christians are those who accept the teaching, correcting, rebuking, and equipping that comes from the truth in love of God's Word, will, and ways. If God said it, that settles it!

God's people are His people of The Word... per The Word.

In the end, the heart and spiritual health of Christians grow stronger as they (by God's grace, through His Gospel, and for His glory), learn God's Word, love God's Word, and live God's Word. To put it differently, when the Christian's HEAD, HEART, and HANDS are saturated and marinated in the holy Scriptures, witness-building follows, and worship-filled blessings flow. *"You will know the truth, and **the truth shall set you free!**"* – Jesus (John 8:32)

Application:

“My conscience is captive to the Word of God.”

- Martin Luther

*“The Bible is meant to be bread for daily use,
not cake for special occasions.”*

- Anonymous

*The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it is the noblest
of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals.”*

— Charles C. Ryrie

CLOSE:

*“To meditate on Scripture is to allow the truth of God’s Word to
move from head to heart. It is to so dwell upon a truth
that it becomes part of our being.”*

— Greg Oden

*“Fill your mind with God’s Word
and you will have no room for Satan’s lies.”*

- Anonymous

*“Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like trying to eat
without swallowing.”*

- Anonymous

For What?

*“The Bible is shallow enough for a child not to drown,
yet deep enough for an elephant to swim.”*

— Augustine

*The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it is the noblest
of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals.”*

— Charles C. Ryrie

“We must make a study of our God: what He loves, what He hates, how He speaks and acts. We cannot imitate a God whose features and habits we have never learned. We must make a study of Him if we want to become like Him. We must seek His face.”

– Jen Wilkin

So What?

“I never saw a useful Christian who was not a student of the Bible.”

– D. L. Moody

“The wings of an airplane represent the life of every believer. One wing represents the Person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. The other wing represents the Word of God. Just as a plane cannot fly without both wings, neither can the believer in Christ really ‘fly.’”

– Bill Bright

Now What?

*“I could simply share with you the treasures I’ve uncovered.
But I’d rather give you the treasure map.”*

– Jane Johnson

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.

In Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen and Amen

Support Sermon:

“Scripture’s Power, Purpose, and People”

2 Timothy 3:15-17

January 9, 2011

Sermon Series: Faithfully Fight To The Finish