

February 20, 2011

Born Again Series - Discipleship

2 Timothy 3:13-17 – “Why is the bible so important?”

- **TURN WITH ME**...Ephesians 4:11...

INTRO...

Before we get into our study this morning...let me remind you...

- ...that we have several more weeks to complete our series on discipleship...
 - ...AND THEN...we will be getting into some verse by verse studies out of the New Testament...
 - ...I know that some of you are getting a bit antsy...hang in there...

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Today, we are going to answer the question...**“Why is the bible so important?”**...

- ...which is not a simple question to answer...because the subject is exhaustive...

AND SO...what I want to try and do this morning...is look at TEN essential things that I believe...

- ...every New Believer should understand about the bible...in fact...every Christian should understand these things...
 - ...as it will establish the foundation for your faith...

However...before we get into those 10 things...I want to take a moment and share with you...

- ...how I learned...the hard way...how invaluable the bible is in every Christian’s life...
 - ...AND...how I came to believe...with all of my heart...how incredibly important the bible is...

I first accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior when I was around 11 or 12 years old..

- ...my cousin invited me to his church...where I heard a very clear presentation of the Gospel...
 - ...the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ...

Though I was saved...born again...I quickly fell away from the faith because I lacked the encouragement I needed to stay strong in my new found faith...

- ...I was so excited about being a Christian and couldn't wait to tell others...my grandmother...who wasn't a believer...
 - ...was one of them... *"I invited Jesus into my heart today Grandma"*, to which she replied...
 - ...*"Oh that's nice"*...and wen on about her day...she may as well have said... *"Big deal!"*...at least that is how it felt...

It wasn't until some 12 or 13 years later...that I rediscovered my long lost love...

- ...how grateful I am that though I had left Him...He never left me...

In 1977 at the age of 24...I rediscovered Jesus...and what a joy it was to be home...

- ...I was like a sponge...taking in everything I could about the Lord...so hungry to know Him better...
 - ...BUT...unfortunately...I never got grounded in a church...who taught you how to understand...
 - ...AND...apply the things that were written about in the bible...

TURN WITH ME...Ephesians 4:11-14...

The apostle Paul...that great leader of the early church spoke about this...

Ephesians 4:11–14 (NKJV) — **11** And He Himself [...that is Jesus...] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, **13** till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man [...that is 'until we become mature Christians...], to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; **14** [...**Q:** Why?...] that we should no longer be children, **tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine** [...the word 'doctrine' simply means 'teaching'...], by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

YOU SEE...because I did not have people in my life...who understood the importance of the bible...

- ...and how it makes us...*wise for salvation*...as we are going to see in just a moment...
 - ...because I did not have that in the beginning of my faith...I spent **literally** the next 14-15 years of my Christian life...
 - ...being ***tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine***...every kind of teaching...

There are all kinds of Christian teaching out there...and not all of them are good...

- ...in fact...when you get right down to it...some of them are downright unhealthy and stunt your growth as a Christian...rather than enhance it...

Don't get me wrong...I believed in the bible...and the churches I attended believed in it...

- ...and we read it and learned from it...BUT...I never understood its importance...and how important it was for my survival as a Christian...

Fortunately...in 1992...God **sovereignly** directed me to a church which believed in studying the entire bible...

- ...and learning how it all related to our faith...and lives as Christians...AND...in a very short time...
 - ...I learned more about being a Christian...than I had understood in all of those previous years...

I love what the apostle Paul said to the pastors in the church at Ephesus...as he was getting ready to say goodbye to them...

Acts 20:25–27 (NKJV) — **25** “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. **26** Therefore I testify [...I declare...] to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. **27** For I have not shunned to declare to you **the whole counsel of God**.

The bible tells us that those who profess to be teacher's of the bible...will be held in stricter judgment before God...

- ...in other words...God expects that we...as bible teachers...take seriously the

things that God had spoken through the bible...

- ...and make sure that the people we are leading are growing strong in their faith...growing to be mature Christians...

AND SO...Paul is saying here... *“I will be able to stand before God one day...and declare to Him that I have not failed in this area...that I have taught them the whole counsel of God.”*...

- ...for Paul...that was the Old Testament Scriptures...for us it would be the bible we hold in our hands today...

AND SO...reading...understanding the bible...is the most important thing you can do...

- ...to make sure that you are not tossed about...to and fro...by every bit of crazy teaching that comes down the pike...

I could tell you some stories...of some crazy things we did...in the name of Christ... which cannot be supported by the bible...

- ...some of which I am embarrassed to even admit...which all would have been prevented...
 - ...if I had heard...what you are hearing here this morning...

Q: How do we know the bible is true?

- ...as Christians...there are a number of reasons we know it to be true...which we will look at in a moment...

BUT...from a sheer intellectual and logical standpoint...you know that it is true...we know that it is divinely inspired...

- ...because there is no other way that a book could have been written...which contains...
 - ...a total of 66 books within...written by over 40 authors...over a period of 1,600 years...
 - ...in three different languages...with no contradictions...remaining absolutely consistent in its message...

There are those who have said profound things about the veracity...that is the truth of the bible...

- ...with no indication that they were believers...Thomas Jefferson...one of the founding fathers of our nation being one of them...

Thomas Jefferson...

- *"The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty...students' perusal of the sacred volume will make us better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands."*
 - ...he recognized that every great nation must have a higher standard by which to base their government upon...
 - ...AND...there was no better standard...than that of the bible...

There is absolutely no other book like it...in all of the world...never has been...nor will there ever be...

- George Washington, 1st president of our nation, said... *"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."*
- Abraham Lincoln, 16th US president, said... *"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book."*
- Sir Isaac Newton, who lived in the 17th century, was a physicist, mathematician and astronomer... considered to be one of the foremost scientific intellects of all time...said *"There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history."*
- Charles Dickens...author of 'A Christmas Carol' and numerous other notable works said... *"The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world."*

The truths of the bible...simply cannot be denied...

- There are...1,000 prophecies in the bible (things that were written about...before they actually happened)...500 of them have literally come true...
 - ...100 of those prophecies speak of Jesus...of which many of them have come to pass...

The mathematical odds of just 8 of these prophecies being true for one man...are...1 in 10 to the 17th power...that is 1 with 17 zeros behind it...or 100 quadrillion...

- ...and it has been determined...mathematically...that 100 quadrillion 1” x 1.5” tiles...could cover every square in of dry land on planet earth...
 - ...that give you just an idea of how accurate and trustworthy the bible is...

TURN WITH ME...2 Timothy 3:13...

NOW...as for Christians...we know the bible to be true...for a number of reasons...most of which can be found in our text this morning...

- ...we are going to be looking briefly at 10 of them this morning...10 reasons which should form the basis...
 - ...for what every Christian believes about the Bible...

The apostle Paul is writing to Timothy...who was the pastor of the church in Ephesus...

2 Timothy 3:13–17 (NKJV) — **13** But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived [...which we see happening all around us today...]. **14** But you [...Timothy...] must continue in the things **which you have learned** and **been assured of**, knowing from whom you have learned them, **15** and that from childhood you have known the **Holy Scriptures** [...the bible...], which are able to **make you wise for salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is given **by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for **doctrine** [...that is teaching...], for **reproof** [...that is `conviction'...], for **correction**, for **instruction in righteousness**, **17** that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped** for every good work.

#1 – First and foremost...“The Bible is the Word of God”...

- ...it says in our text here...that...***All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...***
 - ...a literal interpretation of this verse would be that all of the bible is God breathed...inspired by God Himself...through the Holy Spirit...

2 Peter 1:19–21 (NKJV) — **19** And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; **20** knowing this first, that **no prophecy of Scripture** is of any private interpretation, **21** for prophecy [...the word of God to man...] never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved **by the Holy Spirit**.

The bible is extremely important to God and to Jesus...

Psalms 138:2 (NKJV) — **2** I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For

Your lovingkindness and Your truth; **For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.**

- ...God regards His word...higher than His own name...

When Jesus was being tempted in the desert...with every temptation known to man...

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV) — 4 ...He answered [...Satan...] and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but **by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**’”

King Solomon...who was without question...the wisest man to have ever lived...wrote this...

Proverbs 2:6 (NKJV) — 6 ...the LORD gives wisdom; **From His mouth** come knowledge and understanding;

- ...when we read the bible...we are reading the very words of God...from which we gain all wisdom...knowledge and understanding...

Life is much to complicated to try and figure things out on your own...

- ...the last thing you need is ‘man’s opinion’ on things...the most important opinion you will ever receive...
 - ...is God’s...and it is in His Word...that you find absolutely everything you need to know about life...both in the now...and hereafter...

#2 – “The Word of God is Alive”

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) — 12 For the word of God is **living** and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Napoleon Bonaparte...French military and political ruler of the 18th century...

- *“The bible is no mere book, but a living creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it.”*

Before you became a Christian...the bible just didn’t make much sense at all...you might have tried reading it...

- ...and most of it just seemed like a bunch of fables and folk stories...

That is because...and unbeliever can’t understand spiritual truths spoken of in the bible...

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) — 14 But **the natural man** [...that is the unbeliever...] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, **because they are spiritually discerned.**

As a Christian...when you read the bible...it will be as though words literally leap off the page and speak to your heart...

- ...the more you read the bible...the more excited you get and it speaks to and teaches your heart...
 - ...reading the Words of God...in the bible...will feed your soul like nothing else can...

#3 – The Word of God is Eternal” ...we never have to worry about it failing us...

1 Peter 1:22–25 (NKJV) — 22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, **23** having been **born again**, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, **through the word of God which lives and abides forever**, **24** because “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, **25** **But the word of the LORD endures forever.**” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

#4 – “The Word of God Makes us Wise for Salvation”

Paul said to Timothy...

2 Timothy 3:14–15 (NKJV) — 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, **15** and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, **which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith** is in Christ Jesus.

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

In one form or another...it was the word of God which brought us to salvation...

- ..AND...it will be the Word of God...which will keep us in that understanding...not only that we are saved...
 - ...that we are secure in our relationship with God...BUT...how we are to live Christian lives that are fruitful...
 - ...the bible helps us to better understand and grow in our faith...

5 – The Word of God Teaches Us”

2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV) — 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine...

The word doctrine refers to teaching...it literally means...*that which is taught*...

Romans 15:4 (NKJV) — 4 For whatever things were written before were written **for our learning**, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Take some time and read Psalm 119...it is a most amazing Psalm...with 176 verses describing the glorious truths about God’s Word...

Psalm 119:105 (NKJV) — 105 Your **word** is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

The bible teaches us how to walk through this life as a Christian...

#6 – “The Word of God Brings us to Conviction”

This is one of the great things that God’s word does...it convicts us...it points out things in our lives that need to be changed...

2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV) — 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for **reproof** [...this word means...‘conviction’...],...

This means that the Word of God will expose things in our lives...that are hurting our relationship with the Lord...

- ...REMEMBER...Heb 4:12...it judges the thoughts and the attitudes of our hearts...

This is either a bad thing...or a good thing...depending on how we look at it...

- ...BAD...if we would rather not deal with the things God’s Word reveals...BUT...very good...
 - ...if we let the word do it...and then let the Lord direct us in what are to do with what the Word has shown us...

#7 – “The Word of God Corrects Us”

One of the tremendous benefits of God’s Word...is that it corrects our thinking...

- ...when we came to faith in Jesus...when we became a Christian...our thinking was all messed up...

- ...one of the reasons we came to faith in the first place...

As we read the bible...we trust that it is the Word of God...that it is perfect and will never mislead us...

- ...AND...we allow it to correct our thinking...so that we think with the mind of God...rather than the way we used to think...

#8 – “The Word of God Instructs Us in Righteousness”

One of the great bible verses which every Christian should memorize is...

Romans 8:1 (NKJV) — 1 There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

It is the devil who always wants to condemn us...to tell us we are not worthy of God's forgiveness and acceptance...

- ...this should never be news to us...we know we are not worthy...BUT...we also know that we are saved by God's grace...
 - ...thereby receiving that which we don't deserve...Salvation...

We must never confuse 'conviction' for 'condemnation'...they are two different animals...

- ...conviction is a healthy thing that comes from the Holy Spirit...as we are reading God's word...
 - ...condemnation is what the devil brings to us...and it isn't true...

God's Word tells us...that in Jesus Christ...we are righteous before God...

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) — 21 For He [...God...] made Him [...Jesus...] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become **the righteousness** of God in Him.

Man! I never get tired of reading that verse...you can expect to spend the rest of your life...

- ...being instructed in righteousness...through the studying the bible...

#9 – “The Word of God Completes Us”

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV) — 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God **may be complete**, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

ILLUST: Before I married my wife...Jenny...I was an incomplete man...

- ...I was a single dad...with 5 kids...four of them still at home...and I knew that there was something huge...missing in my life...
 - ...AND...when we got married...she completed me...she became my helpmate...and I was able to function so much more efficiently and effectively in my life...

Even more so is the case with God’s Word...

- ...it completes us with EVERYTHING...we could ever possibly need...to live this life...YOU CAN COUNT ON IT!!!

AND FINALLY...

#10 – “The Word of God Equips Us for Every Good Work”

One of the great joys of studying the bible...is that it equips us...it gets us ready to make an impact in our world...

- ...this area of being equipped by God’s word is so exhaustive it is hard to know where to begin...

BUT...let me give you just one example...

James 1:27 (NKJV) — 27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit **orphans** and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

AND...I immediately think of Ayantu...this little girl who was born in Ethiopia...

- ...by a mother who was so mentally disturbed...that three days after birth...she left her naked in the middle of some road...in Africa...

AND GOD...through His word...spoke to Jason and Jackie’s hearts...and their circumstances...

- ...an equipped them to experience...***pure and undefiled religion before God***...to visit the orphans...

- ...AND...after 13 months of prayer...and crying out to God for equipping...she is in their home...and she will be secure in understanding the ways of the Lord...

The Word of God...equips us for every imaginable good work...

CONCLUSION...

I want to conclude with...the final and most convincing proof in how important the bible is...it has **changed** my life...

ILLUST: Our tour guide...when in Israel...David Kidron...an unbelieving Russian Jew...the ossuaries...or boxes of bones claimed to be the bones of Jesus...

- ...which has since been disproved...shared with us...even before it hit the news...
 - it was a tense moment...I said a few things...and handed the mic back to David...
 - ...to which He said... *“I have never seen archeology change a person’s life...but I have seen the **word of God** change a person’s life.”*

YOU SEE...the changed life of a person...is the...INDISPUTABLE PROOF...of the authenticity of the Bible...the very Word of God...

PRAY...

WORSHIP...