

“The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” John 6:63

“You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!” John 5:39

Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.” John 14:9-11

- Want to completely erase a house? You don’t just tear it down; you destroy the foundation.
- What did Jesus, the Word in flesh, rely upon? ***“It is written...”***
- When questioned about the relevance of marriage, Jesus responded using Scripture, confirming its relevance.
- Beware of sources that call into question what Jesus never questioned. He didn’t hesitate to question many things: tradition, religion, cultural norms or trends, but He didn’t question the veracity of Scripture. In fact, He affirmed He wasn’t here to abolish “outdated or irrelevant” words, but to fulfill and affirm the foundation of Scripture.

Example: a source who says there are two creation stories. That person(s) has very shaky theological understanding and is the “blind leading the blind”, and the result will be ending up in a ditch. There aren’t two creation stories, there are two perspectives of the same story. One is the simple facts of the process while the other is viewing the creation from the perspective of the focus: the crown jewel of creation—humanity in God’s image.

Same goes for those who try to claim ‘inconsistencies’ in the Gospels. Four different accounts of the ministry of Jesus told from four different perspectives and aimed at four different audiences. Listen to parents and grandparents describing the same youth sports events: each set describes the events focused on their child or grandchild.

- Our first step to understanding the Word is hearing and seeing it through Jesus.

Summer in the Red

Years ago, I started doing a devotion where I would read only the “red writing”, the words of Jesus in a red-letter edition of the Bible. Each day, I would read a passage, then reflect on it, asking Holy Spirit to give me more wisdom and understanding on it. I would focus only on the words in red and ask Him how those words spoke to me today.

Then I would journal what I felt I was hearing. I think **journaling** is so helpful for believers for several reasons.

- First, every time we add another “sense” (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch) we double what we’re able to retain. When I write it, I’m not just hearing it, now I’m seeing it.
- When I write it, I also have to put it in words that make sense to me. I’m not just hearing it, I’m allowing the Spirit of Understanding to help me process it.
- I’m also creating a memory, a “**stone that cries out**”, reminding me of what He has spoken to me. It’s always astounding to me how many times I will need what I learned from Him that very day. Some circumstance, some opportunity, will be presented where I can use what I just learned, or was reminded of, in my morning devotion.
- And, finally, I’m creating my own “**commentary**” which I will use from now on as I continue to grow into His likeness. I believe the most dangerous Christian to the kingdom of darkness is one who is learning to hear from God for themselves. Remember what Jesus said He would build His Church upon? We will never grow to a point where we don’t need a local church, a pastor, the help of prophets, teachers, evangelists, apostles, or believing friends (ever notice these are the very things the enemy tells us we don’t need because we’re “so mature”). As maturing Christians on our journey to Christlikeness, these are all part of our “toolkit”.

The goal is sons and daughters of God who hear Holy Spirit clearly and understand our Father’s heart and purposes.

“I’ve told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from the Father.” John 15:15 MSG

Journaling Technique for Summer in the Red:

Go thru Day One as an example.