

# BEING

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## SERIES

40 days to being more like Jesus

### **BEING Series Week 2 - [Keystone Habit 2: Study Scripture]**

*January 21, 2024 - Pastor Jason Carter*

If you are a Christian, you have to read the Bible. It is not an option.

**Today will consist of several snapshots of why we read the Bible.** Many verses to revisit this week **and** practices to help make it a habit. Habits will increase the likelihood of you reading the Bible and you sticking with it.

**The story of the 3D poster:** stare at the dots and eventually you see the image and then every time you look, you will always see the image. As we read the Bible it will begin to connect and make sense. **There is always new revelation** no matter how many times we read it, thanks to the Holy Spirit.

#### **Basic Truth about the Bible:**

2 Timothy 3:16 NIV <sup>16</sup> "All Scripture is God-breathed (God authored) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness..."

The Bible was written by 40 authors over 1500 years and consists of 66 books- 39 OT and 27 NT.

The Bible is a **metanarrative** (one cohesive story with clear themes): sin, the fall, humanity's need of a Savior, redemption, and ultimately a future with God to those who put their faith in Jesus. The Bible Project says, "The Bible is a unified story leading to Jesus."

It helps us know God and His character and gives us a living picture of the person of Jesus- we see what God is like in Jesus.

The Bible tells this story through several **literary genres: Narrative** - History, Law, and instruction, which are meant to instruct God's people about how they could stay God's people. **Poetry** - shows the heart, beauty, passion, terror, sadness, and joy of life and how it can be expressed. **Prophecy** - it is rarely foretelling but instead was used to remind kings and the people of the good that God approves of. **Letters** - to

encourage, guide, and challenge. Lastly, **Apocalypse** - which acknowledges the mysteries and many things that we do not understand.

## **The Bible shows us many things:**

### **The Bible is the unveiling of who God is and what He is like.**

John 1:14 NIV <sup>14</sup> "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

This is the difference from all other religions, that Jesus would take on flesh, dwell among us, experience what we all experience, live perfectly, and then die for the sake of mankind as a perfect sacrifice that we may be saved, forgiven, transformed, restored to relationship with God, live for Him in this life and live with Him for all eternity. Jesus is the embodiment of all of scripture. Consider the story of The Prodigal (Luke 15)- this shows us what God is like and how deeply He loves us, His creation.

John 1:1-3 NIV <sup>1</sup> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

Col. 1:15-17 NLT "Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, <sup>16</sup> for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together."

### **God 's desire is for us to come alive to scripture.**

Luke 24:40-45 NIV <sup>40</sup> "When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence. <sup>44</sup> He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. <sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures."

God desires that those who follow Him would have their minds open and understand the scriptures. Ask Him before you read to open your understanding!

### **The Bible teaches us to recognize God's voice.**

The primary way we hear Him is through His word. It is how we learn the language of God, the intention of God, and the character of God. God wants you to know Him as He IS, not how you think He is.

- Have you ever received a text you did not know how to take? How did you handle it?
- Sometimes we misread or project onto God what is not there, or is not true. We have to know Him so that we know the truth of Him. Share an example of a time when you have been guilty of this.

### **John 10:27 NIV "My sheep hear My voice. I know them, and they follow Me."**

The more time we spend with someone, the more we can recognize their voice, even their cough, their laugh. The more I recognize the word of God, the more I will hear the prompting, and leading of the Holy Spirit.

- What is a way you have learned to recognize God's voice in your life? Or in a specific situation?

Isaiah 30:20-21 NLT "Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and suffering for drink, he will still be with you to teach you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. <sup>21</sup> Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, 'This is the way you should go,' whether to the right or to the left."

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

The enemy is an accuser and a liar. Scripture helps us know whose voice is speaking.

### **The Bible is for life instruction.**

Romans 15:4 NIV <sup>4</sup> "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NIV <sup>6</sup> "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

We must do whatever it takes to become familiar with scripture.

- How have you become familiar with God's word? Share some ideas of how you have made scripture a part of your daily life so that we can learn from your experience.

### **The Bible helps us know how to follow the Lord.**

**Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall <sup>[a]</sup>direct your paths."

We do not know everything. He's a pretty good resource for daily living AND big decisions.

- Are you trusting Him with all or just portions of your heart? Asking questions like this is what helps you actually apply what you are reading in scripture.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter and it is about learning to know and follow God's commands.

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

Psalm 119:130 NLT "I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations."

- Our decisions determine our direction. What decisions have you made that have positively or negatively affected your direction?

### **God's laws and God's ways matter. Why?**

Galatians 6:7 <sup>7</sup> "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

Gen 8:2 NIV "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

Galatians 6:8-9 NIV <sup>8</sup> "Whoever sows to please their flesh (independent, my way not submitted to God), from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

All decisions, actions, behaviors are going to produce something. Practically and Spiritually. What we sow, will grow.

Luke 7:35 NKJV <sup>35</sup> But wisdom is justified by all her children."

What we do now and decisions we make will live on and represent us even when we are gone. We live in a highly reactive culture. Every 4 years is the end of the world. In our culture, people are guilty before all the truth is out. Media and social media use negativity to sell and hype.

**(1) As Christians, we must think about the decisions we make because they have a life of their own.**

**(2) You will experience pressure to give in, take shortcuts, and not stand for biblical truth because of pressure. You may even experience unbiblical pressure within the biblical community.**

- Discuss these 2 points. What do you hear? What challenges you?

**Reading the Bible gives us a picture to emulate.**

Ephesians 5:1 NIV "Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children."  
2 Peter 1:3 NIV <sup>3</sup>"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

The Bible reveals our true identity; tells us who we are.

- Can you share a verse that speaks to the truth of who we are? If you don't know one, how can you find one right now?

### **The Bible helps us renew our minds.**

Romans 12:2 NIV <sup>2</sup>"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

The Bible proves science because God made our minds with neuroplasticity. We are able to create new pathways of how we think. The Bible is revelatory: it speaks to every person, every area, every heart, every circumstance and situation. It transcends time. Through its principles and the Spirit of God, the Bible come alive and speaks now. We will never exhaust the ability of God's Word to speak to us. We will never fully attain and understand in this short life. The more you read it and study it, the more the Bible connects and the more it opens. I am always saying, "I have never seen this before" when I read.

### **20 years ago, I was not in ministry but in a time of pursuit and hunger. I was growing in God and learning to listen. This is an example of how God can speak to us as we read through His prompting:**

1 Peter 1:13 NKJV <sup>13</sup>"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"

The footnote said "*It's an oriental expression for being ready to run with what you know to do- take action.*" But I knew God was trying to tell me more. I continued to study in the Hebrew/Greek Lexicon and "loins" in this context means "procreative power". God showed me that our minds have life-producing power, our thoughts have creative power; that what we think, we become; what we think, we act on. What we put in our mind will produce life... or not.

### **The Bible deepens and strengthens our faith.**

Romans 10:17 NIV "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

Our faith grows as we read the Bible.

### **The Bible reaches the depth of who we are.**

Hebrews 4:12 NLT <sup>12</sup> "For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword (surgeon's scalpel), cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."

### **The Bible instructs and commands us with wisdom.**

Proverbs 4:23 NIV <sup>23</sup> "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

The word of God grounds us and give us a foundation to build upon. It gives us roots and an unmoving focal point.

### **The Bible tells us who we are:**

Blaise Pascal, a 17th century mathematician, philosopher, and theologian, observed: *"Not only do we know God through Jesus Christ, but we only know ourselves through Jesus Christ. We only know life and death through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus, we cannot know the meaning of our life, the meaning of our death, the meaning of God, or the meaning of ourselves. It is only in Christ."*

-Dissect this. What does it say to you?

Pray every time you read the Bible and ask God to show Himself to you, to teach you something, and to help you understand things you may be confused about.

### **4 R's for Reading the Bible from the Being Challenge**

Read It

- We must hear and digest the Word of God

Research It

- Ask questions and seek understanding

Remember It

- Identify what practices help you to remember

Reflect It

- Meditate on it. Sit with it. Engage God with what you read

PJ adds: Recite it- Quote and pray it to help you remember it

### **Make a Plan**

Do you like to read? If not, find an app that will read it and you can follow along

- Your brain works differently when you listen and when you read

Determine where and what you will read?

- What do you want to know about God or where you want to grow

"Apart from Jesus, we *cannot know the meaning* of our life, the meaning of our death, the meaning of God, or the meaning of ourselves. *It is only in Christ.*"  
- Blaise Pascal

Follow a plan. We have some reading plans you can check out.

Make a commitment.

Find a consistent time and a consistent place

- If you will determine what you will read and have a plan to follow, that is half the battle

Get around people who read the Bible and discuss and you will grow.

**Remember the poster. It may take some time in the word before you connect the dots**

Luke 24:32 NIV "They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

- God desires to meet us in our reading of scripture. How will you meet Him?