

Get Serious. About the Word. – Ps 19:7-11

This is the last message in our Get Serious About Godliness series

Where we have identified those SD's necessary to train ourselves for godliness

Covered 5 so far, including – Worship, SG's, Serving, Prayer, Tithing

Saving the best for last, this morning we're looking at soaking up the Word of God

Donald Whitney – No SD is more important than the intake of God's Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture. (*SD's for the Christian Life*, 28)

Study after study, person after person supports the conclusion that no factor is more influential in shaping a person's moral and social behavior than regular Bible reading

If we're going to know God and be godly, we have to know his Word

If you're going to grow in Christ, the living Word, you have to grow in your knowledge of the written Word

And nobody can do that for you; You have to . . .

Read it yourself (Acts 17:11)

Turn to Acts 17 – not our primary text; before we get there, want to show you a few examples of people who were serious about the word

Acts 17:11b – referring to the Berean Jews in response to Paul's preaching . . .

They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

They read the Bible for themselves

It's something we all know we *should* do; Know we *need* to; In best moments *want* to do

But far too often, we just don't – the tyranny of the urgent creeps in; TV goes on

Stay up too late; don't get up early

Pretty soon our desire to read it wanes, we make excuses, and it never happens

There was an evangelist in the '60's named Robert Sumner

He wrote a book titled *The Wonder of the Word of God*

In it he tells of a man who was severely injured in an explosion

So much so that his face was badly disfigured, his eyesight permanently lost, and his hands completely gone

He had just become a Christian and one of his greatest disappointments was that he could no longer read the Bible

Tape players were not yet readily available to listen to it

Nor did he have his hands to read Braille

The best he could do was listen to someone else read it to him on occasion

Until he heard about a lady in England who read Braille with her lips

Hoping to do the same, he sent for some books of the Bible in Braille

There was only one problem – the nerve endings in his lips were too badly damaged to distinguish the characters, the bumps

But he kept trying, hoping those nerve endings would somehow regain their sensitivity

One day, his tongue touched a few of the raised characters and he could *feel* them

Like a flash he thought, "I can read the Bible using my tongue"

At the time Robert Sumner published his book in 1969, the man had read through the entire Bible four times – with his tongue

So what's your excuse again?

Our reasons for not reading the Bible seem pretty lame in comparison, don't they

Every now and then I hear someone say they don't read the Bible because they don't understand it – that's because they don't read it

If you're saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and repentance of your sins – you have the HS within you to help you understand what you read

But you have to read it – have to get on a plan, and discipline yourself to stick with it

To help you with that I've selected 7 different Bible reading plans that we'll make available to you next wk on a CD, Online, or in printed format (if no computer)

So you can get serious about the Word and read it yourself

Study it regularly (Ezra 7:10)

If you're going to get serious about the Word, have to study it regularly

That was Ezra – a leader and teacher among the Israelites around 460 BC

Ezra 7:10 – *The good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.*

God's hand of favor and blessing was on Ezra because he was serious about the Word

He set his heart to study and apply it – and the influence of God marked his life

And it will mark yours as well, if you study and apply it

Reading gives you *breadth*, but study gives you *depth*

Whereas reading broadens your perspective; increases the number of things you know

Study deepens your knowledge of those things and sharpens your insight into them

- Often times, the only difference between reading and studying is the time you take:
 - To investigate or reflect on a passage; To understand what it means
 - To see how it relates to other parts of Scripture
 - To plumb the depths of its richness and glean it for all it's worth

Last Wednesday night at our Elders meeting we spent an hour and a half on 11 verses in the Psalms

Large portion of that on one 5-word phrase – talking about what meant; how applies

In doing so, we discovered insights we didn't see at the first

Rich applications for our lives, and for the life of our church

That's study – don't miss out on that

- Don't miss out on the joy of discovering those biblical insights for yourself
 - Don't settle for spiritual food that's been pre-packaged, pre-digested by others
 - Get serious about the Word yourself, and study it regularly

This is one of the reasons we offer Bible studies and DC's in addition to Sunday morning

We want you to study it for yourself

It's one of the reasons our SG's are going to work through a curriculum next spring on *How to Study the Bible*

We want you to know the joy and the benefit of studying God's Word on your own
And doing so regularly

Read it yourself, study it regularly, and . . .

Memorize it often (Ps 119:11)

We memorize phone numbers, names and stats of sports figures, sports teams, names of business contacts, details about our friends, medical terminology, movie quotes, song lyrics, and on and on

But when it comes to memorizing verses in the Bible – we freak out; freeze up
“Oh, I can’t do that. My mind’s not what it used to be”; “That’s just for kids”
No it’s not just for kids; And yes you can do it
It just requires more discipline, because your head is full of more stuff

When it comes to a life of godliness, memorizing Scripture is one of the most valuable things we can do because it keeps us from sin

Ps 119:11 – *I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*
That’s the power of memorization – it’s a deterrent to keep us from sinning; and a protection against temptation
Like when Jesus resisted the temptation of Satan in the desert by quoting the Word of God that he had hidden in his heart
There’s strength in that; And protection for the battles of life

- Some of you might be thinking – “I wouldn’t mind memorizing some verses, but I don’t know where to start”
I know for myself that was one of the biggest hindrances to memorizing God’s Word as an adult – I didn’t know where to start; I didn’t have a system; so I did nothing

I finally let that go, and just started with the next verse that jumped out at me – like
Prov 17:27 (see pocket)
When I have that down, I’m going to add it to the small stack of verses in the drawer beside my bed, as a reminder that I started somewhere and God has been faithful
And I’d encourage you to do the same – start somewhere, and start now

A good place would be the SG memory verses that we put out each week
You can find them online, or at your SG; Or pick up at SG kiosk if you’re not in one
Whatever the case – start somewhere, start now, and memorize it often

Now, all of that (reading the Word for yourself, studying it regularly, memorizing it often) can seem painfully laborious apart from the benefits
That’s where **Ps 19:7-11** comes in (turn there) – in it we find at least **9 Reasons** to get serious about the Word; 9 benefits if you will

Starting with the fact that . . .

1. It revives our soul (v7a)

Law is one of 5 words in this used in this passage to refer to God’s Word – testimony, precepts, commandment, and rules
One of the reasons to get serious about God’s Word, is because it revives our soul

Sometimes on Mondays as I’m eating, I’ll say – man, this is food for my soul
Being physically spent from Sunday, the food re-fuels/revives me
But I’ve recognized this past year especially, that far better than food, it’s God’s *Word* that revives my soul the most, when I’m spiritually and emotionally depleted

2. It informs our mind (v7b)

Brooks and Nina Buser are one of our missionary partners in Papua, New Guinea
After 3+ years of learning an unknown language; And then putting it into writing . . .
He started translating the Scriptures
In an update this past August, he wrote this – “Last week one of my uncles [one of the tribal leaders] said, ‘I will learn to read the banana leaves myself (banana leaves are paper) and no one will be able to trick me about what they say, again.’”
The Word of God informs our mind – giving knowledge of the gospel; insight into God
It’s one of the reasons people like the Buser’s are serious about translating it

3. It brings joy to the heart (v8a)

Show me a heart full of God’s Word, and I’ll show you a life full of joy
Complete with contentment, and overflowing with thanksgiving and praise
Truth is like that, isn’t it – even when it’s hard to hear, in the long run it brings joy to the heart

4. It opens our eyes (v8b)

Ever seen that **3-D illusion art**, where at first glance all you see is chaos, but after looking at it just right, it jumps off the page in perfect detail?
That’s how life is without the Word of God – it looks like a bunch of chaos
But with it, it’s like you have built in 3-D glasses that give you just the right perspective to see the big picture and find God’s purpose
It might not happen right away, but the longer you look through the lens of God’s Word, the clearer life is – it opens our eyes to what’s important
Another benefit/reason to get serious about the word

5. It leads to worship (v9a)

Worship that never ends; worship that endures forever
Read v9 – *fear* is not a word for the Word of God per se
But by virtue of its inclusion here, David seems to link the fear of the Lord, the awe-filled worship of the Lord, with the truth of God’s Word
That fits – it’s the Word of God, that speaks of the wonders of God, that leads to worship in the first place; worship that endures forever

6. It satisfies our desires (v9b-10a)

It satisfies our desires even more than money
You’re thinking – “no, I’m pretty sure I’d rather have money” (I know you are)
That’s because money is what you’re serious about
Money satisfies because that’s what you’re hungry for; that’s what you feast on

But if you fed yourself an equally healthy diet of God’s Word . . .

If you were as serious about God’s Word as you are about money, you’d soon find that it satisfies far more, and far longer

It’s kind of like deciding to drink water instead of pop

At first, you still long for that Diet Pepsi

But after a while of drinking only water, there’s nothing else you’d rather have
It satisfies your thirst completely

That's the way it is with God's Word – the more serious you are about it, the more you drink it in
The more you drink it in, the more it satisfies your desires more than anything else in the whole world, money included

Even better . . .

7. It exceeds our expectations (v10b)

God's Word is better than the best

Now I realize that might not be your experience at times

But if you stick with it, it *will* exceed your expectations

Listen to what one pastor, Geoffrey Thomas from the UK, said about that .(read it)

(Reading the Bible (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1980, p. 22)

Let the Word break over your heart and mind again and again, and I guarantee that the thoughts, wisdom, and promises of God will *exceed* your expectations

8. It keeps us from trouble (v11a)

Ps 119:9 – *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.*

The truths of God's Word are like the yellow lines on the road of life – they keep us from trouble

Stay between them and you'll stay pure; cross them and you'll crash

God's Word warns us and keeps us from trouble, if we heed it

9. It offers great reward (v11b)

Obedience brings blessing – that's the point of getting serious about the Word

It's not about acquiring knowledge for knowledge sake

That just makes you a smart sinner

It's about acquiring knowledge that leads to obedience; That leads to godliness

That, in and of itself, is a great reward

Read Ps 19:7-11

Get serious about the Word and **Read the Bible**

Make it a part of your Plan for Godliness

Study it regularly; Memorize it often

Because the more you know the *written* word, the more you'll know the *living* One