

Chapter 3

Devoted To the Word of God

When the Christian church came into being, they immediately began to meet together to devote themselves to a few simple things.

Acts 2:42 And they **devoted** themselves to the **apostle's teaching** and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers

The word “devoted” means to give all or a large portion of one’s time or resources to something. The first aspect of their devotion was the apostle’s teaching. The apostles were teaching the Word of God from the Old Testament as well as the words that Jesus had taught. It was through this devotion to God’s Word that the church expanded so rapidly throughout the world (Acts 4:29-31; 5:20; 5:42; 6:1-7; 10:44; 13:48-49; 19:20)

If the Word of God was so central to the lives of the church in the New Testament, we must likewise devote ourselves to God’s Word as members of God’s church.

What is the Word?

God has chosen in his goodness to make himself known to us by divinely inspiring men to record God’s actions and teachings in written form found in the Bible.

The Bible is _____, not just information

The Bible is our God-given source of truth. Just like our spoken words reveal who we are to others, God's written word reveals who He is, what He has done, and what it means for our lives. God inspired the authors of Scripture to write as he directed.

2 Peter 1:16-21¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.** ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

JOINING TOGETHER

So when we read this Holy Spirit inspired book, what should we be looking to learn?

The Bible is God’s revealing of four major things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. **God’s Great Plan for Redemption**
4. _____

Every passage of Scripture reveals at least one of these four things in a variety of ways. These components make up God’s Gospel.

When reading the Bible, it is always good to ask questions like, “What does this passage say about God, about me, about God’s saving plan and about my response in following God?”

God’s Word, however, does more than just make things known. God’s Word also makes things happen!

The Word is _____ & _____

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.

The Word is _____

2 Timothy 3:14-15 ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are **able to make you wise for salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus.

The Word is _____

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work

Acts 20:32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

How is the Bible Organized?

The Bible is a compilation of sixty-six books written by numerous authors over a period of thousands of years. Each book has its own literary genre and historical situation that it addresses.

The Old Testament tells the story of God's original creation and the fall of mankind into deeper sin. God calls the people of Israel into existence and into a relationship with Him, but they continuously fall into sin.

The _____

(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

These books tell the story of Creation, the fall of man and God's creation of a new people, Israel. It contains the laws and practices that Israel was supposed to follow to be in relationship with God.

Books

(Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)

These books continue the story of Israel from different perspectives and time periods. Every story points to the sinfulness of the people and the faithfulness of God.

(Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)

These books represent man's relationship with God through poetry, song, and writing. They contain expressions of prayer and thought that represent man's fluid relationship with God throughout history.

(Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Throughout Israel's history, God appointed prophets to speak God's truth to God's people when they needed rebuke, encouragement or revelation from God.

The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus and tells how God fixed the sin problem by sending Jesus to die the death that mankind deserves and conquered death through his resurrection.

The _____

(Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) The Gospels tell the story of Jesus. Each shares the story of Jesus from their own perspective and emphasizes different teachings and works of Jesus.

Acts is a historical narrative that tells the story of the beginning of the Christian church after Jesus' death and resurrection. It tells the story of the message of Jesus spreading to the nations.

(Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude) In the first century, many new converts and new churches were born. There was a great need for doctrinal instruction. These letters are written to various people and churches to answer questions, respond to situations, and provide sound teaching.

At the end of John's life, he saw a vision of Jesus Christ and of the future. With persecution from the Roman emperor afflicting the church, John recorded the vision of Jesus as the King of kings defeating all of His enemies and bringing all of God's people safely into the presence of God.

How do we Read the Bible?

Step 1 – Pray for _____

The truth of the Scriptures are deep and supernatural truths of God and we need God's help to understand such truth with our finite and corrupted by sin minds.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13.¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. ¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

Step 2 – Read in Original _____

The Bible was written by real people addressing real situations thousands of years ago. We cannot understand what it means for us now if we don't understand what it meant for them then. To read in the original context of these writers we must ask questions like, "Who wrote it, who did they write it to, and why did they write it?" We must understand both the historical and the literary context so that we can draw the proper meaning. The question is not what the text means "to us". The question is what does the original author intend the text to mean.

1 John 1:1-4 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete.

Step 3 - _____ to Your Context

Although the Bible is written in a different context, it is incredibly applicable to our present situation. Within every story or instruction of the Bible, there are universal life-changing truths that can be applied to all people of all times in all contexts.

Faithful readers of the Bible will not only read the Bible to learn new truth, but they will read the Bible to apply that truth to their daily lives.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Practical Tips for Bible Reading:

- Utilize a Study Bible.
- Schedule a time every day where you can sit down and read at least one chapter of the Bible and meditate upon its truths.
- Journal your prayers and thoughts about what you read

Reading the Bible daily will richly bless your spiritual life in ways that nothing else can. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3; Ps. 119:9-11)

It is the responsibility of every church member that the word of Christ dwell in your heart so that you might teach and admonish one another.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Read at least one chapter a day for the next week. If the Bible is truly God's Word, we must meditate on it daily. If you don't know where to start, read the book of 1 John.

As you read a chapter each day, write a quick prayer asking God to help you understand and apply what you have read.