

Don't Forget to Abide in God's Word

In 2018, the American Bible Society commissioned a study conducted by the Barna Group. Over 2,000 people were surveyed about how they engage with Scripture, and the results were shocking. The study concluded that 52% of Americans don't read their Bibles at all; 8% read it three to four times a year; 6% read it once a month; 8% read it once a week; 13% read it several times a week; and only 14% read it daily. Even more disturbing is the fact that over half of those polled have no engagement with their Bibles at all. It seems most of us are happy to leave the Bible on our shelves.

Yet it's not for a lack of time. A recent study shows people ages 15-25 spend more than 50 hours a week in front of their phone, computer and tablet screens.

As a Christian, I simply don't get this. My time in God's Word is paramount to my spiritual, mental and physical well-being. Over the last 40 years, Scripture has been the wind in my sails, strengthening me through the trials of life. Without the Word, my life would break down.

When we look around, we see a world where loneliness, depression and suicide are on the rise. We see a church rife with division, impotence and uncertainty. Could these symptoms be related to our casual and, at times, dismissive approach to God's eternal Word? Where is the desperate hunger for the bread of life? Instead, it seems we've settled for likes and mentions on our social media platforms, searching for validation in the arms of the world.

Please understand, my intent is not to shame or condemn you. Rather, I want you to find the peace and assurance that come with simple obedience. Jesus told us to abide in His Word, and

that is why a daily diet of God's Word is necessary for our well-being. So let's get personal for a moment. Ask yourself this question: "Is God's Word the foundation of my life?"

We cannot follow Christ without doing what Scripture says, yet there is evidently an alarming number of us who downplay its importance. Satan knows he cannot destroy the Word of God, but he sure tries to diminish it. This was his strategy with Eve in the garden—questioning God's Word and swaying her from godly wisdom. Has Satan succeeded at doing the same to us?

Think about it. If Eve could be deceived in a perfect environment, how much more are we susceptible to Satan's tactics?

Throughout the Bible, we can read of its significance in our life. That's why I believe it's helpful to remind ourselves of its importance. Paul, in particular, made some strong statements regarding God's Word. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, he writes, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Like any good father, God wants the best for His children. That's why He's given us His Word—which, states Paul, is profitable to us. We profit from the Bible through the doctrine (teaching), reproof (rebuke), correction and instruction found within it.

As our children were growing up, my wife, Lisa, and I would periodically purchase items for them that required assembling. I'd often ignore the instruction manual, assuming I knew what to do and could figure it out on my own. Oh, how wrong I was! Halfway through construction, I would realize I had missed pivotal steps and left out crucial pieces—then I would have to deconstruct everything and start over.

Similarly, we can often assume we know what's right and best

for our lives and neglect God's instruction manual—the Bible—only to later realize how wrong we were. However, as we take to heart God's Word and apply it obediently, we'll find ourselves strengthened in our faith and equipped for our calling—building our life according to God's wisdom and ways.

When I consider things to come and the trajectory many are on, I believe the Holy Spirit is saying, "Abide in My Word." The Scriptures are pivotal to building a life that endures, both now and for eternity. Without them, we'll never grow into the fullness of our identity as sons and daughters of God.

During the close of his ministry, Paul said, "So now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32, NKJV).

Paul didn't just commend believers to God, but to God and the word of His grace—which are vital to our spiritual growth and our relationship with the Lord. So let's dust off our Bibles and restore the Word of God's supremacy and wonder in our lives.

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