

The Bible Is Meant to Be Used in Its Entirety for Spiritual Growth

Many Christians share that they go to church and read the Bible yet struggle in many areas. The bills aren't paid, and there are health and relationship issues. They wonder why. The Bible says there are many reasons for this, but most believers don't embrace what Scripture tells us. Often times, we take bits and pieces of the Bible and apply it to our lives, ignoring the rest of it. We need to learn to think of the Bible as holistic. That means it is characterized as being intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole.

Studying the Bible in depth reveals that many verses go hand in hand with each other. We might be obeying one instruction, but completely avoiding another. That can hinder us. For instance, Malachi 3:8-10 speaks on the subject of tithing. God said, "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). He also said He would rebuke the devourer for our sakes (Mal 3:11). The Bible instructs us to tithe and give offerings, yet many people just don't. They overlook something that is so very important and crucial to our lives, and even holds the promise of protecting our finances from the enemy.

To prove the point of scripture going hand in hand, look at the book of Haggai for further instruction regarding money. To paraphrase, it says, If you do tithe, and do not build God's house or focus on saving souls, your moneybag will have holes and run out the door. In other words, maybe you are tithing,

and you think that's good enough. However, you don't witness when prompted; you don't share the Word of God with people, and you're not building God's kingdom. If that's the case, God says your moneybag will have holes in it and run out the door. You will actually lose the money that you made. Winning souls is one of the most important things every believer can do. Proverbs 11:30 tells us that "he who wins souls is wise." Tithing money and investing time in people works together.

Another example of the word working together is found in James 1:6. It says, "But let him ask in faith, without wavering. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed with the wind." That means we must do everything in faith. We have to believe God and not doubt Him. That kind of faith is a tall order, but if we doubt God and lack faith, we will not receive anything. You might be doing many good things in your life, but not be doing things that stretch you and require resolute faith in God. We all need to beef up our faith. We need to increase our faith, and that only comes through reading and hearing the Word of God.

Let's look closer at that lesson on faith. First Corinthians 13:2 says that "if I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." That means that you can operate in great faith, but if you don't operate in love (remember that God is love), then you will miss out on something. We need to show love and forgiveness to people, even when they are difficult or unkind to us. Again, we must do both to receive the promised blessing. Proverbs 28:27 says that those who don't give to the poor will be cursed. Jesus also said in the book of Matthew that we must give to the hungry, or we will be cursed. It is not enough to have great faith. We must also demonstrate and walk in love.

We read in Ephesians 6:3 that if we do not honor our parents, it will not go well with us. Many people ignore their parents as they begin to age, but the Bible tells us we must honor them. The Bible promises that it will go well with us, and

we'll live long on the earth if we watch over and care for our parents. It doesn't say that we only honor parents who are easy, kind and agreeable. There are no exceptions. If you're not taking care of your parents, no matter how inconvenient or challenging, you may encounter some problems.

In the book of Revelation, it's stated that if we labor for the Lord, but lose our zeal, we have left our first love. Jesus says he will remove our candlestick. That doesn't sound good. What this means is that we can be doing works for God such as feeding the poor, witnessing or serving at our local church, but if we have forgotten our first love, it will all be in vain. The most important thing God desires from us is a personal, intimate relationship. You might be doing many things for God but not be spending time with Him.

There are many more promises found in the Bible that require diligence and obedience. It's not enough to apply a few good principles to our lives. In Matthew 6:33, we are told that we must seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all the aforementioned things will be added to us. Start seeking the Word of God for instruction and putting all of it into practice. See how the Word will work together to bring victory to your life. {eoa}

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