

Why You Need to Discern When You Must Slow Down

In sixth grade, I had a teacher named Mr. Dillard. He was a challenging teacher, but he knew how to stretch us beyond where we thought we could go. One device he utilized was a machine to help with reading comprehension. I can still see the big bulky machine in the back of the room. You would insert some type of card (think microfiche), peer into a viewer and begin reading. After you completed the reading, there would be a comprehension test. If you did well on the test, the machine would increase the speed at which the story scrolled, repeating the process. Since I love reading, I spent a vast amount of time at this machine, and this ancient gadget turned me into a speed reader.

I enjoy books filled with action and adventure. I fly through them, caught up in the mystery of the story line. Occasionally, I'll find a book that slows me down and causes me to ponder. In fact, I sometimes have to slow myself down and intentionally take time to consider. The Bible is one of those books.

Most people will agree that the Bible is an important book, perhaps the most influential book ever written. After all, it was copied by hand until 1455 when it became the first book to be printed (Gutenberg Bible). The Bible has lasted throughout the years, and millions of copies have been published, given away or sold. We can rank the Bible right up there with the works of Plato, Shakespeare and many others. Of course, there are also thousands of copies that sit around on bookshelves gathering dust along with the classics.

However, there is a haunting question we must consider, one on which our very lives depend—what authority does the Bible have to speak into my life?

–The Bible was written over a period of approximately 1,500 years by more than 40 different human authors from a variety of backgrounds. These authors wrote in various locations—ranging from the wilderness to prison. The Bible was also scripted among three continents (Africa, Asia and Europe) and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek).

–The Bible contains stories and events through which God still speaks today. Throughout Scripture, we read of wars, adultery, idolatry, floods, famine, abundance, failure, success, judgment, grace and mercy, just to name a few. We see examples of those who have navigated life successfully and those who experienced massive shortcomings. The Bible doesn't cover up the ugly, nor the need for redemption and grace.

–The Bible teaches us why we are here; it gives us purpose and meaning for life. As Mack B. Stokes so wonderfully states, “there is no source like the Bible for disclosing God's purpose in creating us. Science and technology are immensely important, but they do not tell us why we are here. Explorations on the moon and other planets could amount to our finest achievements, but they reveal nothing about the meaning and purpose of our strange lives on this beautiful little planet. Psychology and social studies are important, but they do not provide an understanding of the ultimate meaning and purpose.”

The Bible tells the story of why we are on this earth, why we need a relationship with God, how we can choose which road to take and about the redemption that Jesus Christ offers us. This story is told consistently, cover to cover, from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21.

–The Bible is useful for teaching, correcting and rebuking (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As we weave our way through Scripture, we find that despite the “age” of the Bible, it is actually “ageless.” Noted scholar F. F. Bruce describes it as, “There exists no document from the ancient world, witnessed by so excellent a

set of textual and historical testimonies, and offering so superb an array of historical data on which an intelligent decision may be made. An honest [person] cannot dismiss a source of this kind. Skepticism regarding the historical credentials of Christianity is based on irrational bias."

—The Bible is the holy and inspired Word of God. The Lake Junaluska Affirmation includes the following statement: "The authority of Scripture derives from the fact that God, through His Spirit, inspired the authors, causing them to perceive God's truth and record it with accuracy."

Although many of us hate to admit it, we all depend on some form of authority on which to base our lives. We may rely on another person, on our experiences, emotions or something else altogether. These sources may be good, or they may be evil. The sources will either lead us to God or away from Him. However, when we slow down and make time to read through the Bible's consistent message—as we realize historical accuracy, as we research the prophecies and the fulfillment—we have little choice but to recognize that this book we call the Bible comes from a divine source.

If the Bible is indeed from a divine source, this means it does have the authority to guide our lives. This means we must also permit Scripture to challenge our very belief system, lifestyle and behavior. If we bring ourselves under the instruction and teaching of Scripture, we begin to prosper spiritually and emotionally, walking in deeper intimacy with our creator.

As I began this section, I shared about learning to speed read. As I navigate through Scripture, I have had to force myself to slow down and listen. It is vital that we don't just read words but allow the Holy Spirit to give insight and wisdom.

I also mentioned that I love action and adventure. Well, the

Bible is full of action and adventure, with all sorts of lessons to be learned in the journey. I must slow down enough to extract what the Holy Spirit is teaching me through these fantastic encounters.

–What is Holy Spirit saying or showing me as I read?

–How does what I am reading apply to my life?

Of all the books out there, this is the one we can make the standard for our lives.

Am I ready to make the Bible the basis, or standard, for how I live my life?

What difference would it make in my life if I used the Bible as my singular authority and allowed its concepts and principles to guide me in every area of my life?

“You’re only truly happy when you walk in total integrity, walking in the light of God’s word. What joy overwhelms everyone who keeps the ways of God, those who seek him as their heart’s passion!” (Ps. 119:1-2, TPT) {eoa}

Ruth Hendrickson is a conference speaker, ministry trainer, board certified counselor, pastor and above all, a follower of Jesus Christ. She is passionate about training, equipping and releasing individuals to walk in wholeness and freedom. Visit her website [here](#).