

Date : 1 Jan 2023

Theme : The Word of God

Topic : Making God's Word our Priority

Key passage : Matthew 4:4

Key verse : Matthew 4:4 – Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Introduction

As we assess 2022 with regards to our intake of God's word, many of us can conclude that we have not made significant progress. We ponder about the changes we want to make or resolutions we want to set for 2023. How will 2023 be different from last year? Do you want to do better?

The most important key to spiritual growth is to increase your intake of God's Word. As a church, this year's primary goal is to understand the foundational aspect of our faith. We will start from the beginning – Genesis.

Today, I shall address the following questions:

- 1) Why is God's word worthy of our ardent attention?
- 2) Why should we systematically acquire God's word?
- 3) How should we plan for it?

1) Why is God's Word worthy of our ardent attention?

- a) It is inspired by God the Holy Spirit

God, who created us, knows what we must feed on to be wise to overcome foolishness in our decision making. Without wisdom we remain as fools and do not even realize it.

- b) It is absolutely reliable

For centuries, many have tried to prove that the Bible is full of mistakes; but in each case, they had been proven to be wrong. Believers need to learn what are their arguments and what God's Word actually says in order to establish the truth. For instance, while the Bible is not a science book, there is no scientific error in it.

2) Why should we systematically acquire God's word?

- a) God's Word is our spiritual food

(Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. – 2 Peter 2:2)

God wants to teach us that His Word is more necessary than food is for us to live. Many people go through life, but they had not fully lived because they are body, soul, and spirit. Physical food may feed the body, but the soul and spirit are starved and weak. Our spirit must be fed to be healthy and alive, able to commune with God and to grow spiritually.

- b) God's Word imparts Faith

(Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. – Romans 10:17)

Many of us lack faith to attempt great things for God, even praying the prayer of faith is a challenge. But God clearly instructs that without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). How can we please God without growing in faith?

Is faith something optional for a believer? It is very common to hear a Christian say, "I don't have the faith to attempt anything for God." Who has faith unless we feed on the words of faith?

- c) God's Word is powerful

- i) The power to resist the devil

(Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes...Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. – Ephesians 6:11,17)

We have a vicious enemy of our souls. Who can win in our combat against the enemy unless we are armed? The Word of God is our 'Sword of the Spirit'. When a Christian, who is ignorant of God's Word, tries to face the enemy without any weapon, is victory possible?

- ii) The power to encourage us when we are down
(Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand you save me. - Psalms 138:7)

The word of God is able to bring comfort and hope, as well as strength and encouragement to those who are in sorrow and suffering.

- iii) The power to be fruitful
(But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. – Luke 8:15)

The Word of God often refers to itself as a seed. The germination process of the Word of God in our life takes time. The law of seedtime and harvest operates in every area of our lives. If we will plant God's Word in our hearts, and allow the plant to grow to maturity, we will reap the fruit of harvest.

3) How should we plan for it?

- a) Start from the beginning

Question: Why do we begin from the first 5 books?

We begin with the Old Testament because the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed. We can only understand the revelations in the New Testament if we know the Old Testament. The first 5 books give us the foundational principles of our faith journey. (Torah – meaning God's instruction to all mankind).

- Genesis

We learn who is the God to believe.

Who are the human models of faith to follow.

- Exodus

How does our faith journey begin.

What does the early part of our faith journey involve.

- Leviticus

How to establish our relationship with God through worship.

How we can be holy, for without holiness no one can come to God.

- Numbers

What are the pitfalls that hinder us from completing our journey of faith.

- Deuteronomy

How will the new generation succeed in possessing the land, thereby arriving at their destination.

- b) Be Equipped

To help those who want coaching in understanding these books, we have equipping sessions every Saturday 7.30 am to 9 am on zoom, starting 7th Jan. Please register with your cell leaders.

- c) Have a daily set time and place for your bible reading to be effective.

- Start the reading schedule and pace – at Genesis. 2 chapters a day if you want to complete the bible in 1.5 years.
- Set the time and place – preferably in the morning at the same place.
- Share your learning at your cell group.

Application

- 1) How would you plan your time in 2023 for reading God's Word?