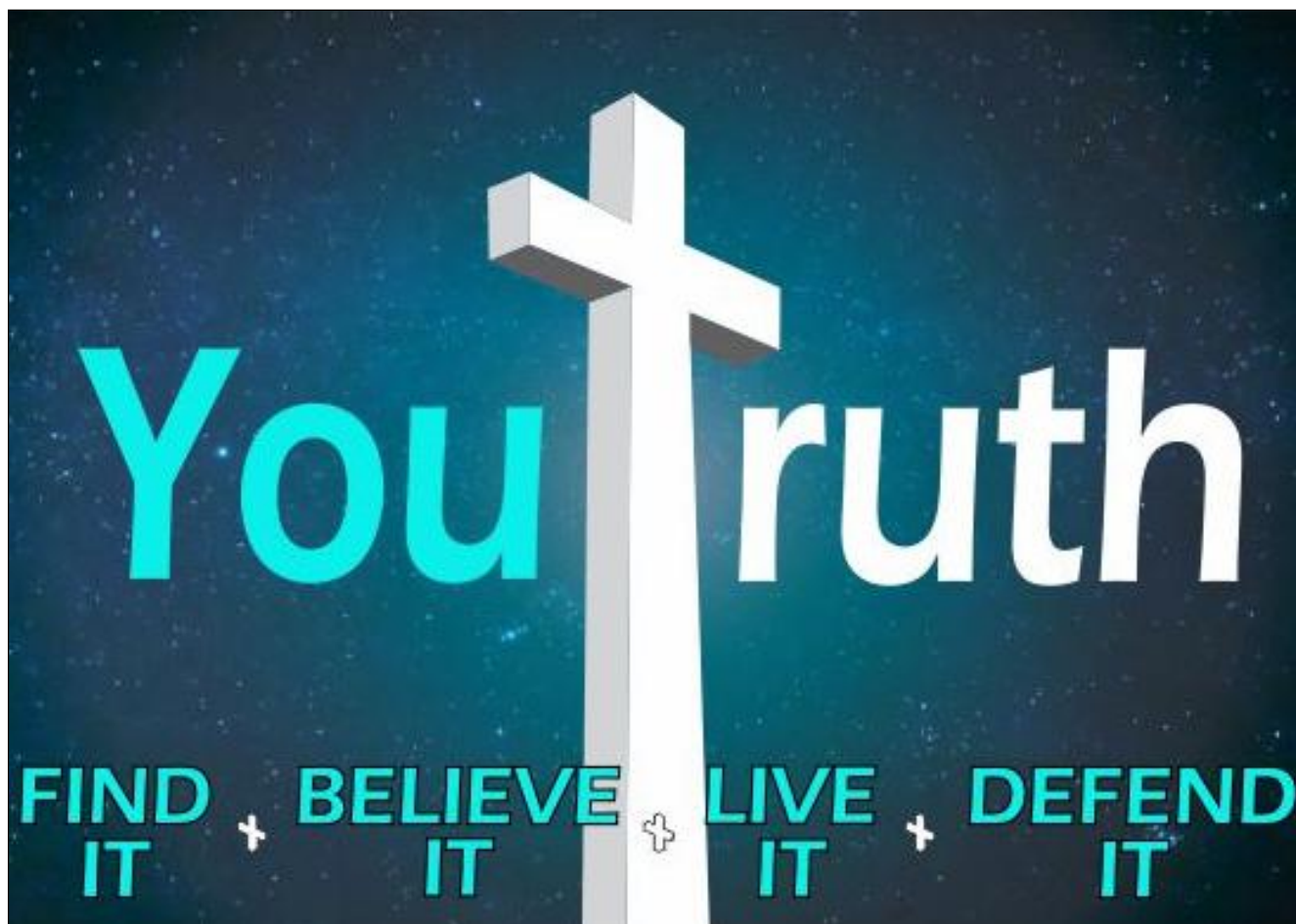

RBC Bible Sunday

The Holy Spirit and the Scriptures

January 5, 2014





Introduction

Revival is needed. The moral fabric of our culture has been completely shredded. Evil is celebrated as good. Good is denounced as evil. Wrong has been made right, in the legal sense, and right has been relegated to the realm of subjectivity. Whatever one deems right in his or her own eyes is accepted. If anyone holds that there is one standard of right and wrong; not only of right and wrong behaviors but right and wrong directions, then that person is labeled a "fundamentalist" or worse. What is a fundamentalist? The definition depends on who one asks. According to the *secular media* a fundamentalist is any kind of religious fanatic. Examples they provide range from Islamic terrorists¹ to Westboro Baptist Church² to Tim Tebow³.

The secular media's definition is based only on a caricature and, as a result, is inaccurate. The *popular Christian* definition is hardly any better. Among most Christians, the consensus definition of a fundamentalist would be someone who enjoys controversy for controversy's sake; one who is overtly hostile to everyone outside his own boundaries. As the very first sentence in the introduction of George Marsden's book *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* reads: "A fundamentalist is an evangelical who is angry about something."

The secular media definition of a fundamentalist is a caricature of the popular Christian stereotype of a fundamentalist. As with all caricatures and stereotypes, neither description provides the total picture, but they do factually depict how the word is currently understood.

The *historical definition* of a fundamentalist may also be gleaned from Marsden's book. Many current fundamentalists may truly be angry evangelicals, but...

"A more precise statement of the same point is that an American fundamentalist is an evangelical who is militant in opposition to liberal theology in the churches or to changes in cultural values or mores, such as those associated with 'secular humanism.' Fundamentalists are a subtype of evangelicals and militancy is crucial to their outlook...[they] are not just religious conservatives, they are conservatives who are willing to take a stand and to fight." ⁴

Historically speaking, a fundamentalist was someone who affirmed the essential truths of the gospel, who was militant (and that is different from belligerent) in his defense of those truths, and who would formally break fellowship with anyone who persisted in denying any of the fundamental doctrines (which is different from someone who separates over every difference, not just of doctrinal convictions but mainly over personal preferences).

What are fundamental doctrines? Early in the 20th century, at the beginning of the fundamentalist movement, five doctrinal truths were identified as “fundamental.” They were:

- 1) the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible,
- 2) the virgin birth of Christ,
- 3) the substitutionary atonement of Christ,
- 4) the bodily resurrection of Christ, and
- 5) the historicity of the biblical miracles.

Historically, all authentic fundamentalists were united in affirming these doctrines – sometimes called the “five fundamentals”⁵ – as essential to the gospel. The five fundamentals were never intended to serve as an exclusive summary of essential doctrines. They were intended as a summary of basic – fundamental – Christian beliefs, and a true fundamentalist⁶ was someone who affirmed these essential truths, was militant in defense of them, and would formally break fellowship with anyone who persisted in denying any of the “five fundamentals.”

I would gladly label myself a fundamentalist according to this definition. Sadly, the historical definition is basically unknown today, and the secular media/popular Christian definitions prevail. As this article from Wheaton College’s Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE) states:

“Fundamentalist is a term that is frequently bandied about in the news media these days. Casually invoked to describe anyone who seems to hold some sort of vaguely-perceived traditional religious belief—be they a Bible Baptist TV preacher, a Hasidic rabbi, a Mormon housewife, or a soldier of the Islamic Jihad—the word has become so overused as to be nearly useless.”⁷

The modern day fundamentalist movement is dominated by personality cults, easy-believism, man-centered doctrine, and petty bickering about anything and everything all the time. It is not known by a love for the gospel and a passion for truth, but known only for being loud, cranky, and judgmental. Nevertheless, revival is needed. The moral fabric of our culture has been completely shredded. And the only way for us to understand and address the issues of

our times is with the timeless Word of God.

This is fundamental! We cannot ignore the Word, or be bored with the Word. We must be people of the Book: reading, memorizing, studying, and living God’s Holy Scriptures.



Sola Scriptura

As a church we do not trace our spiritual lineage to the Reformation.⁸ Still, there is much about the Reformation for which we should be appreciative. It was a revival. Like any genuine revival, it was rooted in the scriptures. John MacArthur states it well:

“[The Reformation] was the inevitable and explosive consequence of the Word of God crashing like a massive tidal wave against the thin barricades of man-made tradition and hypocritical religion. As the common people of Europe **gained access to the scriptures in their own language**, the Spirit of God used the timeless truth to convict their hearts and convert their souls. The result was utterly transformative.”⁹ (emphasis mine)

The Reformation spawned the “official” usage of five Latin phrases that were the de facto doctrinal rallying cry of their protest against the Roman Catholic Church. They are colloquially referred to as the “five solas,” and they are:

1. **Sola Scriptura** – *scripture alone*
2. **Sola Fide** – *faith alone*
3. **Sola Gratia** – *grace alone*
4. **Solus Christus** – *Christ alone*
5. **Soli Deo Gloria** – *To God alone be glory*

While the “five solas” originated with the Reformers, the biblical truth and belief in them certainly did not.¹⁰ The “five solas” were developed in response to perversions of the truth that were taught – and still are being taught – by the Roman Catholic Church. Rome taught that the foundation for faith and practice was a *combination* of the scriptures, church tradition, the teachings of the magisterium, and the pope. The Reformers refused to accept this. Their foundation for faith and practice would be the scriptures alone – *sola scriptura*. Of course, long before the Reformation, groups of believers known as Anabaptists¹¹ believed in and practiced “sola scriptura” even if they had not codified the belief into a Latin phrase!

SCRIPTURE ALONE is our foundation for faith and practice; as individuals, as families, and as a church. SCRIPTURE ALONE is our ultimate authority; not a pope, church council, traditions, or the “man-a-gawd,” and certainly not subjective feelings, personal visions, dreams, or other transcendental experiences. Other authorities are ordained of God and have an important role to play, such as parents, pastoral leadership in the church, even human government, but SCRIPTURE ALONE is truly ultimate. Psalm 138:2, “*I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for*

thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." (Psalm 119:18).

The following quote is from an evangelical organization, but is something to which our church could wholeheartedly shout "Amen!"

"Rather than adapting Christian faith to satisfy the felt needs of consumers, we must proclaim the law as the only measure of true righteousness and the gospel as the only announcement of saving truth. Biblical truth is indispensable to the church's understanding, nurture and discipline.

Scripture must take us beyond our perceived needs to our real needs and liberate us from seeing ourselves through the seductive images, clichés, promises and priorities of mass culture. It is only in the light of God's truth that we understand ourselves aright and see God's provision for our need. The Bible, therefore, must be taught and preached in the church. Sermons must be expositions of the Bible and its teachings, not expressions of the preacher's opinions or the ideas of the age. We must settle for nothing less than what God has given.

The work of the Holy Spirit in personal experience cannot be disengaged from Scripture. The Spirit does not speak in ways that are independent of Scripture. Apart from Scripture we would never have known of God's grace in Christ. The biblical Word, rather than spiritual experience, is the test of truth."¹²

The Sunday school lesson for Rodgers Baptist Church's 2014 Bible Sunday will be a look at the "Holy Spirit and the Scriptures." We will note that it is the Holy Spirit who inspired the scriptures, that the Holy Spirit illuminates the believers' understanding of the scriptures, and, finally, that the Holy Spirit empowers believers to obey the scriptures. Living a Spirit-filled, joyous, and purposeful Christian life will only be accomplished as we *learn **and** live* the Spirit's Book – God's Holy Word.¹³

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SCRIPTURES

2 Timothy 3:14-17:

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

Any individual, church, or movement that does not honor God’s Word cannot rightfully claim to honor Him. What could be more offensive to the Lord God than to deny, disregard, or distort the truth He has revealed (Revelation 22:18-19)? To mishandle God’s Word is to misrepresent Him. To reject its truth claims is to call God a liar. To ignore its message is to snub that which the Holy Spirit inspired.

The scriptures reflect the holy character of God. Therefore...

- *Because God is TRUTH, His Word is INFALLIBLE*
- *Because God cannot LIE, His Word is INERRANT*
- *Because God is the KING of KINGS, His Word is ABSOLUTE and SUPREME*

Some argue that having such a high view of scripture equates to making the Bible an object of worship; instead of an idolater such a one is a *bibliolater*. Making this claim is wrong on two levels. First, it is an ad hominem¹⁴ attack. Those are always easier to make than well reasoned, substantive arguments. Second, it misconstrues – intentionally or unintentionally – what it means to honor God’s Word.

The *physical book* is not what is revered, ***but God who has infallibly revealed Himself therein***. Since 2 Timothy 3:16 describes all scripture as God’s very breath – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” – it speaks with *HIS AUTHORITY*. There is no possible source of truth that is more reliable, or more worthy of our devotion. God has personally exalted His Word to the highest level. David’s worship of God in Psalm 138:1-2 depicts this: “I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: **for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.**”

The Holy Spirit INSPIRED the Scriptures

It is not uncommon today to hear Christians speak of needing something more in their spiritual walk than the scriptures.¹⁵ They often make this “something more” a special work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, many Christians today believe and behave as if being an “on fire” Christian – someone attuned with and filled by the Spirit – may or may not be a Christian who is a learner and a liver of God’s Word. That is false.

The Holy Spirit is the divine Author of scripture. He is the One through whom God has revealed His truth – 1 Corinthians 2:10, *“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”* While the Spirit worked through many human authors, the message is entirely His. Scripture is the perfect and pure Word of God.

The process by which the Holy Spirit transmitted divine truth through human agents is called *inspiration*. That process is biblically described in 2 Peter 1:20-21, *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* The point here is that the Bible is not a fallible collection of human insights. It is the perfect revelation of God; as the Holy Spirit worked through godly men to convey divine truth.

These godly men were carried along or moved by the Holy Spirit just as a sailing ship is driven by the wind. Acts 27:15, 17 are good verses that illustrate this point. *“And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up in the wind, we let her drive...and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.”*

The Holy Spirit filled their minds, souls, and hearts with divine truth, mingling it sovereignly and supernaturally with their unique styles, vocabularies, and experiences, and guiding them to produce a perfect, inerrant result. Every part of scripture – Old and New Testaments – constitute the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). **All** that believers need for life and godliness is revealed in and enjoyed through the God-breathed scriptures. We are complete and thoroughly equipped through the Holy Spirit and His book to honor Christ in all things.

The Bible is a supernatural book that provides supernatural benefits. It has been given to us by the Holy Spirit, but He has done more than just give us the Bible. He also promises to help us understand and apply its truths, and this is the second way the Spirit works through the scriptures.

The Holy Spirit ILLUMINATES the Scriptures

Divine revelation would be worthless if we were unable to comprehend it. By the Spirit's power we are able to understand the truths of scripture and submit to what we know. The Spirit's ministry of illumination is described in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."*

Through the illumination of the Word accomplished by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, believers are enabled to discern¹⁶ spiritual realities that unbelievers are unable to truly comprehend. As Psalm 119:18 says, *"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."* The sobering reality is that it is possible to be familiar with the Bible and still fail to understand it. The religious leaders of Jesus' day were Old Testament scholars, yet they completely missed the point of the scriptures (John 5:37-39). This is what led Jesus to ask Nicodemus, *"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"* (John 3:10) And it is the force behind Stephen's scathing rebuke: *"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."* (Acts 7:51; c.f. Hebrews 10:28-29)

No sinner can believe and embrace the truth of scripture apart from the Holy Spirit's work in their mind and heart. Anyone can memorize facts, listen to sermons, and gain some level of intellectual understanding about biblical doctrine. But the Spirit's power, using God's Word, is necessary in order to penetrate the sinful soul (John 6:44; Acts 16:14). The Puritan Thomas Watson brilliantly stated it like this:

*"The natural man may have excellent notions in divinity, but God must teach us to know the mysteries of the gospel after a spiritual manner. A man may see the figures upon the dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes unless the sun shines; so we may read many truths in the Bible, but we cannot know them savingly, till God by His Spirit shines upon our soul."*¹⁷

Believers have been unblinded by the Holy Spirit, having been taken from darkness to light (2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:12-13; 1 Peter 2:9), and are now – as born again believers – indwelt by the Spirit. As such, we have a resident Truth Teacher who enlightens our understanding of the Word, enabling us to know and submit to the truth of scripture. As the apostle wrote in 1 John 2:27: *"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye*

need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

The Spirit's work of inspiration only applied to the human authors of scripture. His ministry of illumination is given to all believers (John 16:13-14; Luke 24:26)! Inspiration has given us the message inscribed on pages of scripture. Illumination inscribes that message on our hearts so that we may know and obey His Word.

Beware here. The doctrine of illumination *does not mean* that every mystery will be solved and every theological secret unlocked (Deuteronomy 29:29). It *does not mean* that godly teachers are unnecessary (Ephesians 4:11-12). It *does not mean* that we should fail to discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness (1 Timothy 4:8), or from doing the difficult work of careful Bible study (2 Timothy 2:15). Here again is another Puritan, this time Richard Baxter:

*"It is not the work of the Spirit to tell you the meaning of scripture, and give you the knowledge of divinity without your own study and labor, but to bless that study, and give you knowledge thereby...to reject study on the pretence of the sufficiency of the Spirit is to reject the scripture itself."*¹⁸

The doctrine of illumination *does mean* that we can approach our study of God's Word with joy, eagerness, and confidence that as we investigate the scriptures with prayerful diligence the Holy Spirit will illuminate our minds and hearts to comprehend, embrace, and apply the truths we are studying.

Through His ministry of inspiration the Holy Spirit has supplied us with the very Word of God. Through His ministry of illumination He has opened our eyes to understand and submit to biblical truth. But He does not stop there.

The Holy Spirit EMPOWERS the Scriptures

Working in concert with His ministry of illumination, the Holy Spirit empowers His Word so that as it goes forth it convicts the hearts of unbelievers and sanctifies the hearts of the unredeemed.

Evangelism

In evangelism the Holy Spirit energizes the gospel's proclamation (1 Peter 1:12). The preaching of the Word is used to pierce the heart and convict the sinner (Romans 10:13-17):

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- **1 Thessalonians 1:5** – *“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”*
 - **1 Corinthians 2:4-5** – *“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”*

If the Spirit does not empower the proclamation of His Word – and this proclamation does not just come from behind a pulpit but in every context – then no one would ever respond in saving faith. The Holy Spirit is the omnipotent force behind the Lord’s promise that the going forth of His Word will never return void (Isaiah 55:11). Through the Spirit’s power the Word of God is more than just words on a page. It is the living and powerful book (Hebrews 4:12).

Sanctification

God’s Word is the divinely energized means by which sinners are saved, and it is also the means by which believers resist sin and grow in holiness

- **John 17:17** – *“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”*
- **Psalms 119:9** – *“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”*
- **1 Peter 1:22** – *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”* (c.f. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 4:7-8; 1 Peter 2:1-2)

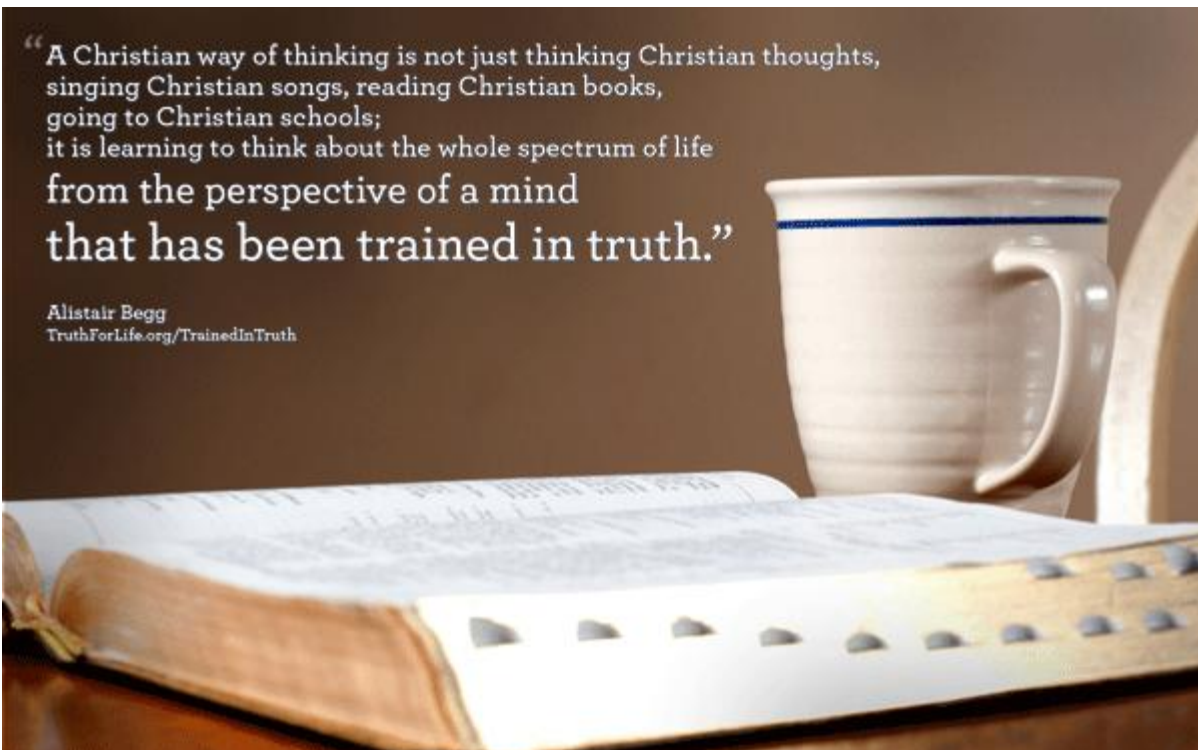
It just as natural for believers to delight in God’s Word as it is for a baby to crave milk, and we should do so with the same intensity. Genuine believers are characterized by a hunger for and a delight in the scriptures. (Psalm 1; Psalm 119; Job 23:12, *“Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”*) In all of this we are being conformed into the image of Christ; a ministry the Spirit accomplishes by exposing our hearts to biblical revelation about the Lord (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 5:18-6:9; Colossians 3:16-4:1).

The Holy Spirit activates the truth of the Holy Scriptures so that we are convicted, instructed, equipped, strengthened, protected, and enabled to grow. The Bible is a living book because the living Spirit of God inspired it and energizes it.

As believers we will be filled with the Spirit as we are filled with the scriptures; diligently studying, carefully applying, and daily arming our minds with scriptural truth, and joyfully embracing its teaching with all our hearts. The Spirit has given us the Word. He has opened our eyes to understand its bottomless riches, and He empowers its truth in our lives as He conforms us into the image of our Savior.

This is why the Rodgers Baptist Church begins each year with a Bible Sunday. This is why our Pastor regularly encourages and faithfully models reading through the scriptures every year. This is why all of our ministries are biblically based, gospel saturated, and cross-centered. It is because we understand that...

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” (Psalm 19:7-11)



HOW ABOUT YOU?¹⁹

The great tragedy among Christians today is that too many of us are under the Word of God, but not in it for ourselves.

What about you? Do you regularly read and study the Bible on your own? Or are you part of the majority of people who rarely if ever open the Bible for themselves? Here's a simple exercise to help you evaluate your Bible reading habits.

How often do you read the Bible? (circle one)

NEVER

ONCE A MONTH

ONCE A WEEK

TWO OR THREE
TIMES A WEEK

EVERY
DAY

When you read it, how much time do you spend reading?

5 MIN
OR LESS

15 MIN.

30 MIN.

45 MIN.

1 HR.
OR MORE

Here are a few reasons that people give for not reading the Bible. Check the ones that express why you don't read the Bible more than you do.

_____ The Bible doesn't seem relevant to my life.

_____ The Bible seems confusing and hard to understand. I don't know how to make sense of it.

_____ I used to read the Bible, and it made me feel good. But after a while, it didn't seem to have the same impact, so finally I gave it up.

_____ I feel guilty when I read the Bible.

_____ The Bible is hopelessly out-of-date. It may have some interesting stories, but it has little significance for life today.

_____ I rely on my pastor or minister to explain the Bible to me. If I need to know something, he will tell me about it.

_____ I have doubts about the Bible's reliability.

_____ I don't have time. I'm just too busy.

_____ The Bible seems boring to me.

_____ I don't own a Bible.

_____ The Bible is full of myths and half-truths. Why study something that lacks credibility?

_____ I don't read, period! It's not just the Bible; I don't read anything.

READ, RECORD, REFLECT²⁰

Would you like to start gaining more from your time in the Scriptures? Here are three habits to cultivate that will increase your productivity. Use them every time you open your Bible.

READ This may seem obvious. Yet too many “readers” are nothing but browsers. They turn pages the way they flip through channels on a TV set, looking for something to catch their interest. The Word doesn’t lend itself to that sort of approach. It requires conscious, concentrated effort. So read portions of the Bible over and over. The more you read them, the more clear they will become.

RECORD In other words, write some notes. Jot down what you see in the text. Keep a record of your insights and questions. I don’t know how many times someone has said to me, “Prof, what I have to write down is not very good.” Yet the fact is, you can’t build on something you don’t have. So start where you are, even with very elementary things. Everyone starts at the same place. But be sure to write it down. Use a legal pad or notebook to record what you see. In your own words, summarize your observations and insights so that later they will come back to you. Doing so will help you remember what you’ve discovered and use it.

REFLECT That is, take some time to think about what you’ve seen. Ask yourself: What’s going on in this passage? What is it telling me about God? About myself? What do I need to do on the basis of what I’m reading here? As we’re going to see, reflection, or meditation, is vital to understanding and applying God’s Word.

¹ *Washington Post* article by Rachel Gillum, “There is no difference in religious fundamentalism between American Muslims and Christians” may be accessed at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2013/12/16/no-difference-in-religious-fundamentalism-between-american-muslims-and-christians/> It should be noted that this article is not in reference to Islamic terrorists in specific but fundamentalist Muslims in general; however, no moderate or nominal Muslim becomes a terrorist. Only those who hold to a literal interpretation of the Koran (i.e. fundamentalists) become terrorists. By this I am not suggesting that all Muslims who literally interpret the Koran are terrorists. I am asserting that terrorists are those who literally interpret and seek to obey the Koran.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westboro_Baptist_Church - the Wikipedia page of Westboro Baptist Church; read it if you have absolutely nothing better to do

³ *Salon.com* article by Amanda Marcotte, “Five Christian “hipsters” trying to make fundamentalism look cool,” may be accessed at http://www.salon.com/2013/11/04/5_christian_hipsters_trying_to_make_fundamentalism_look_cool/

⁴ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), p. 1
⁵ <http://www.pcahistory.org/documents/deliverance.html>

⁶ The term “fundamentalist” was first used in 1920 by Curtis Lee Laws, the conservative editor of the *Watchman-Examiner*, a paper of the Northern Baptist Convention. He wrote that fundamentalists were those ready “to do battle royal for the Fundamentals.” George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, p. 57

⁷ <http://www.wheaton.edu/ISAE/Defining-Evangelicalism/Fundamentalism>

⁸ We do not consider ourselves Protestants but Baptists. While many Baptist traditions trace their spiritual heritage from the Reformation, we do not. I would have preferred that the Reformers reformed some more! Had they linked with the already existing Anabaptists, rather than persecuting them, I believe that even more power and blessing would have attended the Reformation. But this is not the place, nor do we here have the space, to go into further detail about church history. That will be addressed in a future study.

⁹ John MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, (Thomas Nelson, 2013), pp. 213-214

¹⁰ Generations of faithful believers and local churches, beginning with the first church established by Jesus Christ, believed and practiced the faith accordingly. The Reformers may have been the first to declare such biblical understanding using Latin phraseology, but the beliefs themselves are as old as the scriptures from which they are derived.

¹¹ This term means “one who baptizes again” or simply “re-baptizers.” They were so called because they would baptize only those who gave a profession of faith. Most people, except for those born into Anabaptist communities, would have been baptized as infants – by Catholics and Reformers alike – thus, when baptizing someone upon their profession of faith they become known as “re-baptizers.” Like us, the Anabaptists would have affirmed that the believer’s baptism was actual the first and only baptism. The other was simply sprinkling or dunking a baby in water.

¹² Excerpted from the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals’ “Cambridge Declaration”
http://www.alliancenet.org/cc/article/0,,PTID307086_CHID771654_CIID1411364,00.html

¹³ This lesson is adapted from the eleventh chapter of *Strange Fire* written by John MacArthur.

¹⁴ Latin for “to the person,” and it is descriptive of character assassination rather than rationally dealing with the argument being made.

¹⁵ For some time now one of the most popular and bestselling Christian books has been Sarah Young’s *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence*. It is a book of 365 daily devotions that the author claims are messages from Jesus spoken directly to her. In the introduction of her book Young writes, “I knew that God communicated with me through the Bible, but I yearned for more. I wanted to hear what God had to say to me personally on a given day.” (Location 441 on Kindle) That statement is an all-out assault against the sufficiency of scripture, made by a Christian woman, a pastor’s wife, one who has studied at L’Abri and earned a masters degree in counseling and biblical studies from Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis. This is not a good thing. Make no mistake, God *has spoken* and *continues to speak* to His people. In past days of redemptive history God spoke in various ways through the prophets and apostles (Hebrews 1:1-2). But the canon is now closed. We live in that privileged age of redemptive history where we possess God’s completed Word, and it is a living and active Word. It is also a sufficient Word not needing to be supplemented by extra-biblical voices, messages, revelations, or vague murmurings. *Jesus Calling* is not a book I would recommend. For a more thorough review follow this link http://www.redeemer.com/news_and_events/newsletter/index.html?aid=414

¹⁶ An important word which means to detect; to recognize or identify; to come to know, understand the difference

¹⁷ As quoted by MacArthur in *Strange Fire*, p. 308

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 308

¹⁹ Howard G. Hendricks, *Living by the Book: the Art and Science of Reading the Bible*, (Moody, revised ed. 2007), p. 20

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44