

A Growing Knowledge of God's Word

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 July 2019

[0 : 00] Second value which I hold for the church is that we value a growing knowledge of God's word in every member that directly impacts their life.

Again, we pick each word carefully. We value a growing knowledge of God's word in every member that directly impacts their life.

This morning we'll be looking at core value number two. The value of a growing knowledge of God's word. So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God in 2 Timothy chapter 3.

Really focusing in on verses 14 through 17, but just so that you can get it in context, I'm going to back up to verse 10. Paul is writing to what he refers to as his son in the faith, who is Timothy.

He had taken Timothy and put him under his wing and really had raised him up in the faith to be of usefulness in the church. Timothy was a pastor at one of the churches which Paul had helped start.

[1 : 06] And we read here in 2 Timothy 3, starting in verse 10, Look at verse 14.

Here's the beginning of our message this morning. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you again for this opportunity to gather together today. God, we thank you. And we do not take lightly the privilege we have of opening up our Bibles and hearing and reading your word.

Lord, we pray that this word would ring true in our lives. And Lord, that it would resonate within us. And it would be the driving force for us. Lord, it would conform and shape us more to your glory and more to your image.

[2 : 36] We pray that by growing knowledge in it, we would be more useful for the sake of the kingdom. And we ask all of these things in the sweet name of Jesus. And amen. You may be seated.

Now, immediately as I'm reading this passage, I'm sure you were drawn to a portion of it that says, To equip the man of God. And you were probably thinking to yourself, Well, sure, Paul is writing this to Pastor Timothy, and he is telling Pastor Timothy, These things are good for you.

So, there's not many of us in the room that are pastors. What does this have to do with me? Well, Paul is equipping Pastor Timothy of things he can do to equip church member Joe.

Or church member whoever. He is telling Timothy things that are not just fitting for him. This is not a personal letter. These letters were written. This is a pastoral letter. I get that from the pastoral epistles.

But it was written for the edification of the church. And we are looking this morning at the value of the growing knowledge of God's Word. The late, great Pastor Adrian Rogers, When I came to faith in Christ, I was a very new believer.

[3 : 44] However, Lord saw fit to put me in a truck that only had AM radio. Not a personal truck, but my work truck. I've told this story before, and I don't mind telling it. There are two stations that come in good on AM radio.

The Super Tower of the South, 650 AM. Everybody knows that, right? But if you get tired of listening to banjo picking and fiddling every now and then, you had to find the second one, which was AM 710.

Now, I worked in Rutherford County. I know now that AM 710 broadcasts from the heart of Murfreesboro. So it's no wonder that it picked up good in my truck.

Now, 710 AM is the equivalent of 91.7 FM or 88.9 FM if you're on the other side of Montego Mountain. It is moody radio.

So I had bluegrass and preaching. That's all I could listen to. And my lunchtime fell at a time where I didn't really want to listen to bluegrass, but it fell perfectly at a time where Adrian Rogers was preaching on moody radio.

[4 : 41] And I was a very new believer. I used to listen to Adrian Rogers every day. I was really, I grew in the faith of the pastor, of that great man from Memphis area.

And seeing his work and really, the more I heard and the more I studied the life of Adrian Rogers and the more respect I have for him. But Adrian Rogers did a lot of good things in his pastoral ministry.

And he wrote a lot of great works. And one of the things he wrote, and I have a copy of it in my office, and you need to get a copy. I would be hesitant to hand you mine because I could probably find another one.

But I have it, and I picked it up at Lifeway, which no longer has stores anymore. And I'm one of those guys who likes to hold books in my hand. But anyway, it is 12 things every Christian should know.

What every believer ought to know. Now, that drew my attention because in the early stages of my ministry, I went through an Adrian Rogers study called What Every Pastor Ought to Know.

[5 : 36] And I learned a great deal amount from it. He had the foresight to video himself teaching this as he taught it at his church there at Bellevue. And he had the foresight to study, to do it as he was going through.

I didn't have the opportunity to go with him through it, but shortly after his death, I had the resources made available to me. And I learned so much. So when I found the book, What Every Believer Ought to Know, I picked it up.

Now, there are 12 essential truths that he puts in there for every believer. Number one pertains to God's Word. Every believer needs to know that God's Word is inspired and true.

Number 12 is every believer needs to know how to understand God's Word. So of the 12 essentials, he begins and ends with the Bible.

And it is amazing that those really are the bookends, not only just to your coming to faith in Christ, but how you're going to live the rest of your life in Christ.

[6 : 37] The Bible is not just some great book, though it has been the world's number one bestseller for year after year after year. The Bible is not a great book.

It is an amazing work. The Bible is not just some great piece of furniture. And it is something to be revered and respected, yes, but it is not something to be worshipped.

When I first began to preach, people would have a hard time because I am a little hard on my Bibles, my preaching Bibles. I understand that. I break the binding in every one of mine. You don't believe me? You can see it. I don't mean to.

I don't hold to. But I use my Bibles. I don't set it down and worship it because in itself, when it's sitting there and I'm looking at it, it is just a book full of pages and a wonderful cover.

I invested in one that had a great cover. It is just those things. But it is when we crack it open and when we let it crack us open and when we let it and we take it for what it is and we're seeing it as the Word of God, then we begin to understand the power that it contains.

[7 : 44] See, we are looking at the value of a growing knowledge of God's work and God's Word. There are some essential truths I want you to see from this passage this morning.

Adrian Rogers in his book, and this is why it's so important. He said this, and I will quote, and I'll have to read this quote. He was speaking of the efforts, I don't know if you have really done much historical study and seen the efforts that this book has endured to be destroyed.

How after century after century after century, people have tried to just get rid of the Bible. There are parts of the country today which they just hold on to one page out of their Bible and they hold on to it with all of their might.

They'll take a New Testament, they'll rip it up, and they'll distribute the pages of that New Testament among every believer because they only have one, and they'll go home and they memorize everything that's on that page, front and back, and come back and exchange pages.

And then they'll go home and memorize everything that's on that, front and back, and come back and exchange pages. And before you know it, they have the New Testament memorized, and they don't even own one. It's wild.

[8 : 58] Adrian Rogers speaking of all the hardship that the Bible has endured throughout the ages, all of the attacks that have come against the Bible throughout those ages, said this, and I quote, the greatest enemy, he said, I believe the greatest enemy of the Bible, listen to this, and see if it doesn't step on your toes, is the so-called Christian who simply ignores the Bible or disregards it.

He said, I believe the greatest enemy of the Bible are not those who are burning it or throwing it away or cutting it to pieces or denying it access into countries.

I believe the greatest enemy of the Bible is the so-called Christian who is ignoring it or disregarding it.

See, the Word of God is important, and we need to value. And you say, why? Let's look at our passage that we have this morning in 2 Timothy.

Number one, we see the Word's importance because of the Word's invitation. Because of the Word's invitation, look at what Paul says to Timothy.

[10 : 13] Paul says, you've seen me, you've watched my life, you've heard of all these good things, the teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and perseverance. All those sound good, right? In verse 10. And then he goes to verse 11, persecution, sufferings, and all those things.

He says, oh, the persecutions that happened to me, and out of them all God has delivered me. But then he goes on to speaking about the value of the Word of God, and he says so in verse 14. He says, you, however, continue in the things which you learned and have become convinced of.

So we see here that what Timothy had was not just a passing glance of the Bible. It was not just a passing glance of Scripture. He says, continue in these things which you have learned and the things you have become convinced of.

Those things which are not just, oh, yeah, that's there in that book, and I can find it if I need it. No, those things that you know about, a growing knowledge, look, and knowing from whom you have learned them, look at verse 15, and that from childhood, you have known the sacred writings.

More than likely, not more than likely, in all accuracy, this is referring primarily to the Old Testament. We'll get to that in just a minute, how we can't disregard everything before the book of Matthew, right?

[11 : 21] But now he is including Peter. We'd have to go through this great in-depth, multi-week study to see what contains all of the canon of Scripture and how Peter acknowledges the writing of Paul and Paul acknowledges the writing of Peter.

And you have all of these things, how the New Testament came into what they call the canonization, the inclusion in Scripture, and how Jesus himself referenced the Old Testament. But Paul here says, from childhood, you have known the sacred writings, the Word of God.

Look at this. He says, which are able, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

What are we looking at? Why do we value the growing knowledge of God's Word? Because of the Word's invitation. The Word's invitation. He says, you have known the sacred writings.

You know what the Bible says. You know what Scripture talks about. You have looked at Scripture. You see that. And these things are able to give you knowledge. And not just knowledge which would puff you up, but knowledge which would lead you somewhere.

[12 : 33] Friend, knowledge that does not lead you somewhere is foolishness. And there are a lot of things that I know that are foolish. Sometimes it's just funny, right? And that's okay. But there are some things that lead us places, and that's knowledge.

And it is knowledge that leads you to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul does not say, Timothy, you are saved because of what you know.

He does not say that. Okay, stay with me. He said, you are saved because what you know invited you to someone. It invited you to put your faith in Jesus Christ.

There are people, my friend, who know the Bible a whole lot better than me. There are professors at Ivy League and even top elite universities who teach Bible classes, who are non-believers, agnostic, not even convinced that there is a God, and they can quote to you front and back the Bible.

And they quote it accurately. But knowledge alone does not lead to salvation. Knowledge gives you the invitation to the person.

[13 : 48] And why is the Word of God that which gives us the invitation? Think about this. He says, Timothy, when you read the Old Testament, you find a bleak picture.

Timothy, as you read the Old Testament, you find out there's something wrong with man. And Timothy, when you read the Old Testament, the Scripture, that's all Timothy would have been reading. You find out that man can't do it on its own.

But old Timothy, you find out that God's got a plan for the problem of man. And God's beginning to introduce the solution to the problem of man. And now all of a sudden, when you know so much about yourself, all of a sudden you begin to look outside of yourself and you look at the person of Jesus Christ and you put your faith in that.

I don't know how you can read the Bible and still rely on yourself. I just don't. I don't know how in the world someone can study the Word of God, can look at the Bible, and still think they're okay by themselves.

It's just not possible. Some of you reading the same Bible reading plan that I am this morning, reading through that great and glorious book, the book of Judges. Oh, that judge, if you haven't read it yet, I don't want to spoil it for you, but this judge that God raised up that would deliver His people, He made a vow.

[15 : 03] Oh, Lord God, if you let me win this battle, I will sacrifice to you the very first thing that comes out of my house. Oh, my wife this morning, she said, what did he expect to come out of his house?

Only people come out of a house, right? He wins the battle. He goes home. And what comes out of his house? His very own daughter. His only child. What did he do?

He offered her as a burnt offering. You say, that's not right. Exactly. That's the point. Man is not right. They were mixing the worship of Baal with the worship of God.

And he said, God, I will give to you what Baal expects. And man is not right. Man is messed up. And I don't see how you can read the Bible and not see that it is extending to you an invitation to go beyond yourselves to someone who has already paid the price.

Because on your own, you cannot do it. But I want to tell you something, friend. Listen to me. Paul is very clear here. He says that the invitation to salvation only comes by the Word of God, which means that if you do not come to salvation through the Word of God, you have not come to biblical, true salvation.

[16 : 13] I'm going to say that again. If you have not come to Jesus Christ because of the Word of God, you have not come to true, biblical salvation.

For years, Carrie and I worked with the teenagers. We would take the teenagers to youth conferences. And I love youth conferences. Youth conferences have a great way of creating an atmosphere.

Oh, the music is good. The environments are wonderful. The testimonies are powerful. And you can hear testimonies that will give you goosebumps of how God worked in this individual's life.

And I don't discount the testimonies. And I'd see teenagers. Oh, whoever wants to come to this Jesus, would you raise your hand? And the same year, I'd watch the same teenagers raise their hand. And I began to, after every one of those, before we'd go in there, I would tell them the gospel.

And as we came out, I would tell them the gospel. And I would begin to share with them the Word of God. We saw less people raising their hand, but that was okay. Because, friend, listen to me. I can bring what some refer to as a celebrity Christian who could come up here and give you a magnificent testimony.

[17 : 18] But you are not saved based on the testimony of man. You are saved based on the testimony of the Word of God. And your salvation is not dependent on what God has done in someone else's life.

Your salvation is dependent on what God has done for you through His own life. And if you accepted a Jesus that was doing great things in somebody else's life, the problem is, He may not have that plan for your life.

Read the book of Hebrews, the heroes of the faith. Go to Hebrews chapter 11. He delivered some. Some He let be sawn in two. I don't know if I'm going to be the sawn in two or the delivered.

I just don't know. But the same Savior of them all. We don't respond because God did great things and gave me goosebumps. We respond because the Word of God showed me I can't trust in myself.

And He introduced me to a Savior I could respond to. Friend, listen to me. It is the Word's invitation. Why do we value the Scriptures, the Word's invitation? And if you are not in your Bible, you will not receive the invitation.

[18 : 18] We got an invitation this morning to a celebration of wedding. To a celebration. We are invited to celebrate an upcoming wedding. We have been invited to celebrate a wedding that's been going for 25 years.

But you would never know about it if you had never received the invitation. You want to know why so many people don't know that God loves them and God wants them and God cares for them is because they do not know the Bible.

It is the Word's invitation. Not only is it the Word's invitation, we value it because of the Word's inspiration. The Word's inspiration.

And I have to finish this message today. I will go over, but I will have to finish it. It is the Word's inspiration. Look at what the Word of God says. He says in verse 16, All Scripture is inspired by God.

All Scripture is inspired by God. The New American Standard, which is what I read from and what I preach from, says inspired. The word inspired there literally means God breathed.

[19 : 19] Okay? All Scripture is God breathed. Now we need to make a reservation right here. We need to kind of camp out for just a minute. The Bible is telling us that God moved men of God by the Spirit of God to write the Word of God.

Peter testifies to that, right? That in the past, men of God were moved by the Spirit of God to pen the Word of God. It tells us in the book of Hebrews that that is the fulfillment or the completion of the Word of God.

We have the final revelation in the book of Revelations. And again, we'd have to go through this great theology class of why this is, these 66 books are it. There's nothing else.

I'm not looking for another man of God to be moved by the Spirit of God to write any more Word of God. If there is someone who claims to be a man of God and he is being moved by some kind of Spirit and he says he's writing a Word of God, I will question the Spirit that is moving him.

That is the truth. But we see here that Paul testifies because all Scripture is God-breathed. It is inspired by God. But let's just go ahead and clarify this.

[20 : 28] I preach and read and study from the New American Standard Bible. Some of you are holding in your hand the King James Version in all of its beauty and elegance and all of its magnificence and its old English writing.

And there are some verses that are just so poetic in the King James and it's hard to get away from them. Even in my preaching, my mind goes back to it. I used to preach from the New King James Version because it took out some of the these and thous.

Some of you are holding in your hand the NIV. Some of you the NCV. Some of you the ESB. There are a number of versions. But I want you to understand this. That when God moved in the past, men of God, by the Spirit of God to write the Word of God, they didn't write it in King James English.

They didn't write it in New American Standard English. They wrote it in the Old Testament in Hebrew. And then it was written in Aramaic. And then it was written in the modern day Greek. Okay? That was a literal writing.

Now I'm not trying to be too teaching here, but I just want you to understand this. And I caution you this. I caution you because this is a very reality. I've had people tell me that I preach from a devil's Bible because I'm preaching from a Bible other than a particular translation which they like.

[21 : 43] And I'm not saying to anybody in this room, okay, let's just go ahead and get that out there. I'm not trying to pick a fight with anybody in here. This was probably about 10 years ago and I already fought that battle and I was done. So let's just get that air out of the room so now everybody's going, I wonder who that was.

I don't want anybody in here like leaning on the Savior's, is it me, Lord? Who is it? You know, I know that, okay? But I want you to understand this, that our effort today, I have in my library a Greek New Testament.

If you can read it, come read it to me, please. I know some pastors in the past that they only preach from Greek New Testament and Hebrew Old Testament so that they can go back to the original language.

I respect them to the utmost. It's Greek to me, I can't read it. Okay? I don't get it. So our aim is to get an accurate translation of the original language that is true to the text.

Jesus didn't speak English. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he wasn't writing in King James English, he wasn't writing in modern English, he was writing in Aramaic because Paul was a Roman citizen and that was the language of the day.

[23 : 00] Okay? He said, well, so how do I know if I have an accurate Bible? There are tools and there are ways we can get there but I'm not going to take you through that now. You need to study an accurate translation of the original manuscripts.

I have my reasons for choosing the New American Standard. I'm not going to get into them right now. If you want to talk to me about it later, we can. I always tell people it's not that I'm anti-King James. As a matter of fact, I love King James and the reason I love King James, King James sold the colony of Maryland to my great, great, great, great grandfather, Baltimore Calvert.

Calvert's founded Maryland and we bought it from King James. We were there when he was issuing the Bible to be written and that's true. That's history. You can read it in your history books. The Calverts bought the land of Maryland from King James, same King James.

So we're not against him. I just can't hardly read that English as well as I used to could, okay? So I stay with the New American Standard but understand this. all Scripture is God breathed.

And what that does, all Scripture, Paul was including the Old Testament. You can no longer discount parts and portions of the Bible.

[24 : 12] Just because it's difficult does not mean it is not applicable. When we're reading the book of Numbers and we're going through all these names, still God breathed, God inspired. So we see the words inspiration.

Number three, we see the words instruction. And we're making our way very quickly here. We see first the words invitation. We see the words inspiration. Now we see the words instruction. Look at what it says. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

It is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate. What does this tell us? And I'm going very quickly.

It tells us that the only place that we can find instruction, the only place that we can find profitable instruction and equipping is from the Word of God. It is profitable, first of all, for teaching, which means there are some things we need to learn.

We need the knowledge which leads to salvation. We need to be taught. Where can we go to be taught from the very Word of God? It is for reproof. That means there are some things that we need to be admonished about.

[25 : 16] Reproof means to tell me to watch out for something. Something's coming my way. correction, that corrects something that is wrong in me. It is profitable for that. For training in righteousness. It is the Word of God that can teach me how to be right with God.

This is true. This is absolutely true. It is 100% accurate and it is authoritative and it is adequate for instruction. It is so that we may be adequate.

Look at what the Word of God says, friend. Listen, we have to be true. There are certain things we know today for fact that history and even science used to say were false but the Word of God said a long time before that that it was real.

We know today we're celebrating the celebration this past couple weeks of the Apollo landing on the moon and all those things. We're not trying to get into conspiracy theorists and all those other things but we've seen satellite images.

We know for a fact that the Earth is spherical, that it is a circle and that it is suspended on nothing in the middle of the heavens. We know that. Okay? It is a fact that when you're looking at pictures even from satellites that the Earth is round and it's not hanging on anything.

[26 : 24] It used to be the old Jewish thought, the old Jewish thought if you go all the way back to Genesis is that the world was sitting on four pillars and that these four pillars were holding this platform and that is what you called the world.

And then the platform was superseded or above it was the heavens. It was this dome. There are still some today. The Hindu thought was that the world rested on the back of an elephant.

That's why if you see the statues holding an elephant, be careful. The world rested on the back of an elephant. The elephant, this big great elephant was holding up Earth. You say, well what was holding up the elephant? That's easy.

The elephant was being holding up by an even bigger turtle and this turtle was holding up this giant elephant which was holding up the Earth. Well what was holding up the turtle? That was fine because the turtle was riding on the back of this big great serpent which was swimming through the cosmos sea.

They still believe that today by the way so don't mock too much. Hindu thought is there's this serpent swimming through a sea out in the space who is holding a turtle which is holding an elephant which is holding the world. But the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible, the oldest book recorded in Scripture and I've told you this before and I love it.

[27 : 34] S.M. Lockridge says it. It's a great one. Where did God come from? You need to listen if you've never Googled anything of S.M. Lockridge to Google search where did God come from and listen to that 14 minutes.

That man can preach and it's good. But anyway, he says and everybody else says it but the book of Job says I think it's in like the 26th chapter or it could be chapter 27. Job says that God created the Earth and suspended it in space on nothing and told it to stay there.

And it took us, it took mankind getting a satellite into heaven to take a picture to believe what Job told us thousands and thousands and thousands of years prior to that. When the Black Plague swept through England they were kidding everybody that had the Black Plague and was putting them together and they were putting them together and they wondered why everybody kept dying and somebody opened up the Bible and saw that when somebody was sick God told them to quarantine them.

So they learned to quarantine people from the Bible. They began to quarantine people and all of a sudden hey man, things started working. Do you know the way George Washington died? George Washington died because he got sick and the practice of that day was that if you got sick your blood was bad, right?

You had bad blood so they would bleed you out. So he got sick and they bled him out. He was still sick so they bled him out some more. He was still sick so they bled him out. They bled him to death, right? Somebody in the Americas opened up the Bible and read the Bible that it says in the blood is the life and said wait a minute maybe we're doing this wrong.

[28 : 54] Maybe it's not bad blood because God's word says the blood contains the life. Maybe we don't need to bleed people out. Maybe we need to let it stay in there. See the Bible has been true all along and is adequate to instruct us in things if we would open it up and we would look at it.

It is adequate to instruct us and it tells us things we need to know. Again to quote Adrian Rogers and I have to go to this quote because it is so good. He speaks saying this speaking about the instruction we receive from the Bible.

Let this sink in. If you do not know, love, understand, practice, and obey the word of God. He said if you do not know, love, understand, practice, and obey the word of God.

I can tell you without stutter, stammer, or apology you are not a victorious Christian. Why? Because you don't have any instructions to stand on.

You will not be adequately equipped for the things Satan's throwing at you. You will be bleeding yourself out and draining yourself of the very source of life.

[30 : 04] He says there is no other way. This is all the instruction you need. Too often it is the very instructions we neglect.

You can say, hey Siri and your phone will give you an answer and you will trust it. Or you can Google it and you will trust it. Friend, listen to me.

Every instruction we need is right here. The words instruction. Now, fourth and finally, and I will be through, I promise.

I know I've been alone, but it's something that we need to see together. The words implication, which means there's something implied. Because these things are true, because these things are true, this will result.

Because the word is that which gives us the invitation to salvation. because the word is that which is inspired by God. Because the word is that which instructs us how to be adequately equipped. There is an implication, something that will result.

[31 : 03] Look at what it says. So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. Equipped for every good work.

Paul implies here, and is implied all throughout scripture, that the more you know of the word of God, the more you will do of the work of God.

You will not be busy about the work of God if you do not have a growing knowledge of the word of God. Moses never would have went back had the word of God not grabbed a hold of him at a burning bush.

Noah never would have started building an ark, had the word of God not instructed him that it was going to rain. And he fellowshiped with him, he hung with him. All this great work of God throughout history, biblical history, and even the world's history, every great work of God always starts with the word of God.

And the more you are in the word of God, the more you grow in your knowledge of the word of God, the more of the work of God you will begin to do, and you will begin to do it without even thinking about it.

[32 : 17] People say, well I just want to come and I want to serve the Lord and I want to do whatever it is he wants me to do, and pastor, I'm ready to work, I'm ready to be busy, I just want to be busy about the kingdom, then my instruction to you is the very instruction the word of God gives you, then get in your Bibles.

Well that doesn't seem like I'm doing very much, oh you're doing a lot, you're being equipped, you're being instructed, you're being transformed from the inside out rather than the outside in, because you can change your behavior on the outside and it not do a thing for you on the inside, but when God begins to transform you on the inside through the very presence of his word, all of a sudden you will begin to do things on the outside you never would have thought about, you'll begin to give like you never thought you would ever give, you'll begin to love like you never thought you would love, you'll begin to sacrifice your time like you never thought you would sacrifice your time, you'll be able to care for others like you used to not ever care for others, you'll begin to see people in a different light, things will change about you and I'm saying this by way of personal testimony, some of you knew me when I was younger and there are things that have changed about me, there were not things that I said yes in my mind I need to change this, no it was things that the word of God began to convict me and shape me and mold me and began to change me and all of a sudden the work of God, the good works he was calling me to do and calling you to do may simply be loving those who persecute you, may simply be loving those who aren't like you,

I used to really cling to those who were like me, acted like me and all those things around me because I dealt with the same thing everybody else dealt with which is this insecurity, I wanted to be around people like me, right, because I wasn't real comfortable in who I was and the only place I ever found to be comfortable in who I was is when I began to understand who he told me I was through his word and all of a sudden the more I spent time in his word it became a lot easier to do his work because that's the implication, you get in the Bible, you open up the pages of your scripture, scripture, you read that thing, maybe it's a chapter a day, maybe it's two chapters a day, then my friend I can promise you, you will begin to do the work he's calling you to do, you cannot help it, you cannot flee from it because all of a sudden he's doing something in your life that you can't even understand because of the value of a growing knowledge of God's word that directly impacts their life.

The question is, what kind of impact does the word of God have on you daily? In the Monday?

In the everyday? That is a value of the church. That's why the church existed to begin with, right? Growing together in the apostles' teaching, which is the word of God, as we find in Acts.

[35 : 08] I know I went late. My friend, listen to me. The word of God is important. And oh, how we need it. Simple invitation. I did this once before.

Not this message. I didn't preach this message. I remember there was a New Year's Eve night several years ago. I had two covenants up front, and I invited everyone that was there to sign a covenant.

God's a covenant keeping God, right? He is a covenant God. I had two covenants, two charges. One was a covenant to his body, that is the church, to be committed to his church. I didn't make everybody sign it.

I invited people to sign it, to sign this covenant. I gave them a copy of it, and I had them record their name if they signed that covenant. That way, if they didn't support the church that year, I knew that they had made a covenant before God that they were breaking.

They said, whoa, wait, hey, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. That's the standard we hold God to, right? And then the other one was a covenant to his word. I covenant to be in his word on a daily basis.

[36 : 14] I don't have those this morning. I'm going to wipe the sweat off your forehead. I had a number signed the covenant to be in his word. And I think of those who I knew was going to be in his word, we had one teenage girl that fulfilled her covenant.

One. She fell back, and she caught back up, she fell back, she caught back up, and she did not let December 31st come without finishing that covenant because she gave her word.

I didn't go and chastise and beat everybody up. There's a pastor in our association who used to give a steak dinner for everybody that would read the Bible during the year. I don't have that many steaks. That year it would have been easy.

But this is my invitation to you. I want you, as we sing this song, we want to pray, to ask God how important the word of God is to your life.

And if he so leads you to make a covenant and agreement with him to get in the word, I'm not telling you you've got to read it in the year, I'm not telling you you got to read it. I'm just saying daily. Then you take your Bible.

[37 : 23] You want to know where mine is? Very front page of my Bible. There's my values, my core values, there's my thing. And you write that covenant.

God, you're my witness. I covenant with you. I will be in your word. And you sign it. And you go back and you look and see if you fulfilled it.

Because this is what I have found. The Holy Spirit is a whole lot better watching out over you than I am. Friend, listen. It is important. We all felt it's important.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for your word. God, your word shapes and transforms our lives. Lord, I know that there are times where I fail it.

Lord, your word never fails me. So I pray that you'd search our hearts and search our minds. Oh, God. Help us to know where we stand with you, where we are in relation to you.

[38 : 27] Or maybe we've heard the invitation. Maybe we've even heard the invitation of scripture that we can't trust in ourselves. We need to come to a Savior. Lord, maybe we need to respond. Maybe someone needs to respond to that today.

Or maybe we know that we need to be more committed to your word. Lord, whatever it is that you want to do, I pray that by the power and presence of your spirit, you would do it. Even at this late moment, you would do it for your glory.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[41 : 37] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.