

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

**“LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION:
CAMERA-THE EVALUATION
BY THE WORD”**

When filming, a director will often review a scene in the camera. If the actors do not meet his expectations, he will make them redo the scene. Reviewing on the camera enables the director to evaluate the quality of the movie he is making, scene by scene. In our lives, we need to evaluate each moment as well. The Director of our lives gives us His standard in the Word.

DAY
1

Today's Scripture:

John 14:23-24; 1 John 2:3-6

The Word

Some people in this world are overachievers. They are not content with mediocre instead, they strive for perfection. Others of us just get by. Whenever the topic of spiritual things comes up, the overachiever wants the list on how to improve. The rest of us think the topic is only for the "super spiritual", like Billy Graham or Mother Theresa. For all of us who just want to "slide by", we are in for a rude awakening. Our lives reflect the true love we have for our Lord. Would your life show shallow or deep love?

John 14:23-24

²³Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

Verse 23-24: Love for God is evaluated in our obedience to His commands. That is it. If you claim to love the Lord then it should be evident by your obedience to His Word. In order to obey Him, you must know what to obey. This is only possible by knowing His Word. Knowledge of the Word leads to obedience of the Word which showcases love of the Word (Jesus Christ).

1 John 2:3-6

³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Verse 3-6: Often unchurched people say that the reason they do not attend a church is because of the hypocrisy of the people in it. As they evaluate what we say is true compared to how we actually live, they consider our beliefs to be lies. For if we truly believe the way we claim then we would actively live it out.

The only way to be rid of hypocrisy is to mold our walk to our talk. This is done by obeying the Word of God. It is that simple.

Up Close and Personal

Confess any area where you are not being obedient to the Lord. Repent from your sin and choose to obey the Word.

Why would obedience be the test of our love for the Lord?

How does Bible study showcase love for the Lord?



Today's Scripture:

James 1:22-25; Psalm 119:2

The Word

Most of us look at a mirror at least one time a day. We make sure everything is in place before we step out the door. If we have toothpaste on our mouth, we make sure to clean it off. When others look at us, we do not want them to notice anything unseemly in our appearance.

The Word of God is a mirror to our life. It reflects back to us the smudges on our heart that need to be cleaned up.

James 1:22-24

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

Verse 22-24: If we see something wrong in the mirror, we would fix it. But if we do not, others will see our mistake. One day my grandmother was in a doctor's office. A lady came out of the bathroom with toilet paper hanging onto her shoe. I asked my grandmother if she told the lady about this situation. My grandmother replied, "If she didn't notice it, why should I embarrass her?" When we don't take time to check ourselves, others will notice. They may or may not tell us but they will see it.

The Word is our mirror. We are to look at it and evaluate our life by it. Then, when we understand what needs to change, we must change it. Our obedience is vital to growth. If we do not change, then we actually deceive ourselves. We begin to justify our actions which lead to more sinful ways. To prevent the lies in our lives, we must look at the truth of the Word and determine to repent from the sin in our lives. Then, we must obey God in whatever He calls us to do.

James 1:25

²⁵But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

Verse 25: The Word is meant to be studied. It is like a work of art. Have you ever been to an art exhibit? People will stand and stare at the different pictures. They try to grasp the meaning of the artist. The Lord is the creative genius behind the Word. He wants you to gaze into the Word to discern its truth. From what you learn, you accept and apply it to your life. This is how God transforms your heart.

Many at an art gallery will study the pictures but then return home. Others will buy a replica of the picture to hang in their house. Then they can view the masterpiece on a daily basis. The Word is to be a constantly viewed masterpiece. It should not be a weekly visit to the “art gallery” of church every Sunday. Instead, we are to continue studying the Word. Then we will experience freedom from the bondage of sin. Persevering over time in obedience to the Word brings blessing from the Word.

Psalm 119:2

*²Blessed are they who keep his statutes
and seek him with all their heart.*

Verse 2: The ways of the Lord must be pursued. It is a matter of diligence. To look intently into the law requires time and discipline. But God will bless you for obeying Him in this matter. But you must put your heart into it. A relationship can only be pursued if your heart is involved. God put His heart on paper for you so that you can read it every day. Respond to His heart and show Him your love by looking intently at His love letter to you.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to teach you how to look intently into His Word.

Describe all the similarities between a mirror and the Word.

How can others see the effects of you not reading the Word?

When have you deceived yourself about sin in your life?

How can your Bible study become a time of “looking intently” in the Word?

DAY
3

Today's Scripture:

2 Kings 22:3-20; Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 Corinthians
7:10

The Word

Sometimes we choose to live without the standard of the Word of God in our lives. By not making the decision to have the Word in our daily lives, we are making the decision to live according to our best “judgment”. In so doing, each person determines how to live. We may choose to ignore the Word in modern times however there was a time in history when the Word was lost so no one had it for a standard.

2 Kings 22:3-11

³In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the temple of the LORD. He said: ⁴“Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. ⁵Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the LORD - ⁶the carpenters, the builders and the masons. Also have them purchase timber and dressed stone to repair the temple. ⁷But they need not account for the money entrusted to them, because they are acting faithfully.”

⁸Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the LORD.” He gave it to Shaphan, who read it. ⁹Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him: “Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the LORD and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple.” ¹⁰Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

¹¹When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes.

Verse 3-11: King Josiah tore his robe to show how distraught he felt. After hearing the Word, he realized that the entire nation was sinning against the Lord. Please understand that the people were accountable for their sin whether they knew the Word or not. They would still be judged. Just because someone does not read the Word, this will not excuse him from being held accountable to it. But may we be like Josiah who allowed the Word of God to cut him deeply, just as it can do in our lives today.

Hebrews 4:12-13

¹²For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Verse 12-13: The Word is like a sword. It cuts past everything. You may look good on the outside but the Word accesses the deepest part of you. Your thoughts and your attitudes are exposed to it. You cannot hide. The church of God has become accustomed to hiding. When asked "How are you?" everyone answers "fine". We are not willing to be transparent before one another. So are we willing to be authentic before God? If we allow Him to enter our lives through the Word, we will be exposed so that all the good and the bad will be apparent to us. The Word will show us the truth about ourselves. We can choose how to respond. The best choice is to go to God, who knows all about us anyway.

2 Kings 22:12-20

¹²He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: ¹³"Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us."

¹⁴Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophetess Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District.

¹⁵She said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, ¹⁶This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched.' ¹⁸Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: ¹⁹Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I have spoken

against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste, and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the LORD. ²⁰Therefore I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.' "

So they took her answer back to the king.

Verse 12-20: The people of Israel would be punished for their sins. However, the humble reaction of King Josiah delayed judgment to a future generation. Josiah shows the proper response to the Word: responding humbly with sorrow. We are to be moved in a direction away from sin and toward the Lord.

2 Corinthians 7:10

¹⁰Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Verse 10: Godly sorrow will lead us to repent of our sins. It goes beyond, "I'm sorry that I got caught" or "I'm sorry that others got hurt". Godly sorrow is a turning away from the sin and experiencing the Lord's salvation power. Our lives are changed. We receive freely the mercy of the Lord while also receiving His strength to live in a new way.

Up Close and Personal

If there is a sin in your life which you do not feel any conviction, ask the Lord to give you godly sorrow so that you may repent.

What is the danger in living according to our best "judgment" instead of the Word?
What happens if an entire society lives like this?

If we are accountable for sin, whether we realize it is sin or not, what is the value of reading the Word?

Josiah's repentance spared an entire nation from immediate judgment. How can your personal repentance help others?

DAY 4

Today's Scripture:

1 John 4:1-3, 2:18-27

A few years ago, two Mormons knocked on my door. I think they were surprised when I invited them in. I told them that I was willing to listen to them if they would be willing to listen to me. They agreed. After that we set up a time to meet each week for a month, until they had to move to a different territory. We debated our beliefs about the Lord. Because I knew the Word of God, I could readily see the deception in their words. I was able to point them back to Scriptures that disproved them. It was based on the Word, not on my opinions. This alone was valid testimony. The Word alone can evaluate if someone is a true or false witness of God.

1 John 4:1-3

¹Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

Verse 1-3: Not everyone who claims to be of God is truly sent by God. There are false prophets in this world. Please note that not every false prophet is easy to recognize. Often we view them as living in communes with white flowing beards and wearing long robes. This is just not the case. The letter of 1 John was written to dedicated believers. John did not want true disciples of Christ to be deceived. The same warning is for us today.

1 John 2:18-19

¹⁸Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Verse 18-19: The false teachers had come out of the church. These people were not unknown to believers. Instead, they had served side by side for the Lord, or so they thought. The truth is that these so-called followers of Jesus Christ were truly “antichrists”. There is always the possibility that someone who seems to be authentic is not. But we can only determine that by knowing the truth of God’s Word.

1 John 2:20-23

²⁰But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. ²²Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. ²³No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Verse 20-23: Truth protects us from false teaching. But we must make an effort to hold onto this truth. We must continually grow in our understanding of the truth for the enemy will become more and more clever in the ways he will try to deceive us. To protect us from deception, we must remain close to the Lord.

1 John 2:24-27

²⁴See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.

²⁶I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Verse 24-27: The anointing, which is the Spirit, teaches you. You are taught by the Spirit through the Word (John 14:26). By learning the Word, you will be able to discern who is speaking truth and who is speaking lies. This will protect you from heartache. Many have been led astray. Do not fall victim to false teachers. Guard yourself through the Word.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord for His willingness to give us the truth to protect us from the harm of false prophets.

How does truth protect us?

What do you think about the following in light of what we learned today:

Consider these new statistics “*A strange god indeed, as it turns out. In his book, Third Millennium Teens, Barna revealed this stunning fact: 63 percent of church-going, supposedly Christian teens said they believed "Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and all other people pray to the same God, even though they use different names for their god... ..However, the sad*

fact is that very few of the nation's youth appear to be Bible-believing Christians... Barna found that only 4 percent of U.S. teens can be considered evangelicals. More distressingly, that number is actually trending in the wrong direction. That 4 percent figure "is a far cry from the 10 percent measured in 1995," he said. How could teenagers who go to church so often know so little -- or at least believe so little -- of the historic Christian faith? And whose fault is it?" (A Strange Faith -- Are Church-Going Kids Christian?)

DAY
5

Today's Scripture:
Matthew 15:1-12

The Word

Have you ever heard anyone say, "But I always do it that way". Some people have this as their life motto. They want to continue in the ways of their past instead of learning or experiencing new things in their present. It becomes a "tradition" for them.

When Jesus came physically to earth, one of His fights with the religious leaders of His day dealt with their traditions. They had done certain rituals and claimed they had spiritual meaning. In truth, these traditions were just an empty shell. There was no connection with God and them. Yet, they refused to let them go.

Matthew 15:1-2

*¹Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked,
²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"*

Verse 1-2: For all of you germ phobics out there-you may agree with the tradition of the Pharisees! But this tradition was not as much sanitary as pseudo spiritual.

Religious Jews were especially careful to thoroughly wash their hands, wrists, and forearms before touching food. It was part of an array of rules that had multiplied over the centuries and was passed down as oral tradition. Anyone who failed to wash before eating was called unclean, in a spiritual more than a physical sense. Besides the sanitary benefits, the frequent washings were a way of reminding the faithful that they were ritually unclean before God. They extended the washings beyond their skin to dishes and utensils. Everything had to be washed. (Jesus by Leith Anderson, p. 134)

The Pharisees claimed that washing your hands made you clean before the Lord not washing your heart. Jesus rebuked their false rules.

Matthew 15:3-9

*³Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?
⁴For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother*

must be put to death.' ⁵But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' ⁶he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

*⁸" These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.*

*⁹They worship me in vain;
their teachings are but rules taught by men."*

Verse 3-9: "Honor your father and mother" was one of the Ten Commandments. Of all the laws, these ten were the most well known. Every Jew had these memorized. Yet, they were willing to go against one of the "Big Ten" in order to uphold one of their traditions. This was sin. They spoke "God talk" but did not live it out. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy.

Matthew 15:10-11

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. ¹¹What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.' "

Verse 10-11: Our traditions do not make us spiritual (or "clean"). We need to compare all of our traditions or rules or ways of doing things to God's Word. Often things that we hold out as "godly" are truly just things that we feel comfortable with because we have done them for so many years.

May I give some examples on this? Will you listen to my heart on this topic? I know that some of these are sensitive topics. I do not want a debate; I just want the Word of God to take priority over anything else, even our traditions.

Music: Whether you like hymns, praise, gospel, or rap; it doesn't matter. It is your "tradition" or preference. If it is music that magnifies the Lord then it is acceptable. We do not need to fight over it. If what is coming out of our mouths is "clean" then it is acceptable to the Lord.

Programs: Some people prefer certain curriculum over others. Other people want a certain time frame. The calendar of a church can be booked up with people wanting different things. The truth is that each has merit. Do not let what we are doing for the Lord be in vain due to division in our churches.

Dress: Whether you wear a suit or prefer shorts, clothes do not make you closer or further from the Lord. He does not look at the outward appearance but the heart. Let us not judge the outward. Instead let us ensure that our hearts are close to God.

These three traditions are only a short list of all the traditions in our lives. Other traditions may be more on a personal level: the way we do Bible study, how we give our money, where we serve in the church, etc. Each of us has a tradition. But we must

take time to evaluate it by the Word of God. It may look spiritual, but the Lord can help us see if it is in vain.

Matthew 15:12

¹²Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

Verse 12: The Pharisees were offended by the Word. They preferred their tradition over the truth of God. Do not be like them. Humble yourself before the Lord and allow Him to show you what needs to change. His evaluation will help you to grow in the person He desires you to be.

Up Close and Personal

Humble yourself before the Lord. Ask Him to speak to you.

What traditions do you have in your life?

How can you bridge the gap with those who have different traditions than yourself?

Why do we hold onto traditions stronger than we hold onto the Word?

How do we determine if something is a tradition compared to something that is truly a spiritual foundation?