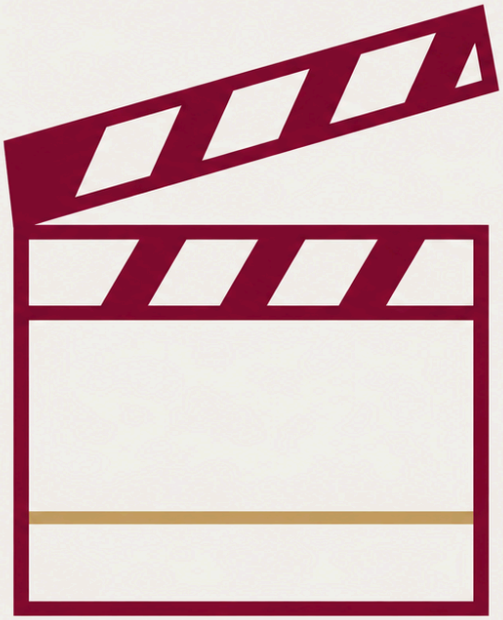
BIBLE STUDY

Lights, Camera, Action



RESONATE

Lights, Camera, Action

Action

-The Transformation by the Word

Self-help books are the top sellers in stores across the country. People desire to change so they read the latest advice from experts. Since sales are increasing instead of decreasing, we can surmise that the “experts” are not helping us. For those who desire to change, let me tell you about a book that has been on the bestseller list since the beginning: it’s the Bible!

DAY 1 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today's Scripture: Luke 6:46-49; Isaiah 1:15-20

Have you ever given anyone advice yet he or she refuses to put into practice what you are saying? He may listen to what you say and agree that it is right yet still make the same poor choices. It is upsetting to watch the people fall into the same trap time and again.

The Word of God has the answer for getting out of an endless cycle: to listen and obey the Word. If you do, you will be protected from more devastation in your lie.

Luke 6:47-49

> 47I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Verse 47-49: There are only two types of spiritual houses being built: one that is based upon the Word and the other that is not. When we obey the Word of God, our foundation is sure. When we do our own thing, listen to culture, or choose any way that is not obedient to the Word, our lives will crash down all around us. You must listen to the Word for it is from the Lord.

Luke 6:46

> 46"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?

Verse 46: This statement is so convicting. We can pray, sing songs, and even talk about our Lord but it is all in vain if we are not obeying His commands. It is like a child saying to a parent, "I love you" yet disobeying all of the house rules. The words and actions must match for love to be shown. When our actions do not match our words, it is repulsive in God's sight.

Isaiah 1:15-17

> 15 When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood;
>
> 16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong,

> 17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Verse 15-17: We must decide to change your ways. Stop the evil. Learn to do what is right. God is willing to show the right way but we must be willing to accept it. If there is any part of our lives which are not lining up to the Word of God, change can begin right now. Our pasts may be filled with sins but our futures do not need to be defined by it.

Isaiah 1:18-19

> 18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.
>
> 19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land;

Verse 18-19: Look at the word “if” in the verses above. God will bless our lives if we obey His Word with a willing heart. However, if we refuse to change and choose our own way instead, there will be consequences.

Isaiah 1:20

> 20 but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Verse 20: Devoured by the sword, or the house collapsing in the flood, both of these show us the destructiveness of not allowing the Word to change our lives. If we want to be spiritually blessed in this life, we must change. The basis for that change is the Word. All we must do is obey it.

DAY 1

Up Close and Personal

Confess any part of your life where you are not following the Word. Turn from the sin and choose to obey.

How have you experienced the devastating consequences of not obeying the Word of God?

In what area do you hear the Word (know what you are called by God to do) and yet not obey?

How could following the Word in the above mentioned area bring blessing to you and your family?

DAY 2

The Word

Today's Scripture: 1 Peter 1:13-24

The lesson yesterday was a simplistic view about obedience. I do not want to give the impression this it is easy to do. Instead, it involves hard work and determination.

1 Peter 1:13-16

> 13Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. 14As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Verse 13-16: We are called to holiness. This is nothing less than perfection. How can imperfect beings act in a holy way? It is impossible unless we choose to do so. It does not come naturally. Our natural ways lead only to sin. We must live supernaturally. But to cultivate holiness in our lives, we must do the following:

1. Prepare our minds for action 2. Be self-controlled 3. Set our hope fully on the grace to be given 4. Obedience 5. Do not conform to evil 6. Be holy

All of these steps involve us choosing to do something. It is not by default. Why would we choose the more difficult path of holiness when we could just choose to act like our natural selves? Because our actions matter and we will be held accountable for them.

1 Peter 1:17

> 17Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

Verse 17: If fear of future judgment is the only motivation to be holy, then we will fail miserably. The fear should be one of respect for the One who loved you enough to save you from your unholy ways.

1 Peter 1:18-21

> 18For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Verse 18-21: The Lord who redeemed us by the shedding of His blood desires our holiness. In love, we respond in thanksgiving to Him by obeying His Word. This will transform our lives.

1 Peter 1:22

> 22Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

Verse 22-23: Obeying the truth of God does not lead to robotic motions. Often we view holiness as pious and cold. The opposite is true. As we are purified from our sins and take on more of the holiness of God, we will grow in love towards others. For this is the heart of God: love. To be more like the Lord is to be more loving of others. For this is the defining mark of believers.

1 Peter 1:23-24

> 23For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,

Verse 18-21: Our lives on earth are short. Generations have come and gone. Throughout it all, the Word has stood the test of time. In this generation, at this moment in history, will you live a holy life before the Lord? If so, others will see the evidence by the love in your life. Be transformed by the Word: Be holy as God is holy.

DAY 2

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you be holy like He is holy.

Write your own definition for the following: Prepare our minds for action

Be self-controlled

Set our hope fully on the grace to be given

Obedience

Do not conform to evil

Be holy

How are love and holiness linked together? How does this defy the typical idea of “holy people”?

DAY 3

The Word

Today's Scripture: Ezra 9:1-10:4

The discipline of children by their parents is expected. However, how does an adult confront another adult about sin? This is not an easy topic to address. But when others around us are committing sin against our Lord, should we just sit by and watch? A true heart after God will desire change in others.

Ezra 9:1-4

> 1 After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. 2 They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness."
>
> 3 When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. 4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.

Verse 1-4: When was the last time that you were appalled by sin? Do you remember a time that the wrongdoing of someone else broke your heart because you knew it had broken the heart of God? Oftentimes we justify the sins of others, "That's just the way he is." Or we gossip about it amongst ourselves but we never confront the person with what he is doing wrong. We may even just consider it just a running joke. We are allowing sin to be committed by another and we are not even upset by it. But when we know the Word and tremble at it, our response will be like Ezra's, for we will understand that sin is against a holy God. Our example needs to be Ezra, who was distraught by the sin of the people around him and went to prayer over this desperate situation.

Ezra 9:5-15

5 Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak
torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God 6 and prayed:
"O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because
our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. 7 From the
days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our
kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and
humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

8 "But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a
remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes
and a little relief in our bondage. 9 Though we are slaves, our God has not deserted us in
our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted
us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall
of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

10 "But now, O our God, what can we say after this? For we have disregarded the
commands 11 you gave through your servants the prophets when you said: 'The land you
are entering to possess is a land polluted by the corruption of its peoples. By their
detestable practices they have filled it with their impurity from one end to the other. 12
Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for
your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time, that you may be
strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting
inheritance.'

13 "What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our
God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant
like this. 14 Shall we again break your commands and intermarry with the peoples who
commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us,
leaving us no remnant or survivor? 15 O LORD, God of Israel, you are righteous! We are
left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not
one of us can stand in your presence."

Verse 5-15: The people had disobeyed the Word of God. Ezra knew their sin. And he confesses their sin. He agrees with the Lord that what the people are doing is wrong and deserves judgment. Ezra did not do this privately. Everyone around him saw his prayers and because of his intercession, they were moved to repentance.

Ezra 10:1-3

> 1 While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites—men, women and children—gathered around him. They too wept bitterly. 2 Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, said to Ezra, "We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us. But in spite of this, there is still hope for Israel. 3 Now let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my lord and of those who fear the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law.

Verse 1-4: Because Ezra upheld the truth of the Word in front of others, the people responded in obedience. What they did physically, we need to do spiritually. We must agree with the Word, follow the Word, and get rid of anything that is not of the Word. They cast out the sin from them. We need to remove the sin from our lives. But to carry this out, they had to submit humbly to Ezra, the one who had spoken truth in their lives.

Ezra 10:4

> 4 Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it."

Verse 4: Confrontation of sin is difficult. However, when we know the Word our hearts will break over those who are not living out the Word. Through the power of God, lives around us may be transformed by the Word if we are willing to share its truth with them.

DAY 3

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to break your heart over the sin of others. Stop judging, justifying, or gossiping. Instead, pray for them.

If your heart is not broken over the sins of others, what is the danger in confronting a person about his sin?

Name some people that you will daily pray for transformation in their lives.

What is a godly response that you should have if you are confronted about sin in your life?

DAY 4

The Word

Today's Scripture: Hebrews 8:10-12; Psalm 119:9-16

Growing up, I thought only pastors had to read the Bible. I never knew that the Lord invites everyone to know and study His Word. This is not for the elite few. In fact, it is through His Word that He communicates with anyone who is willing. Each of us can learn and grow through the Word, not just through someone else's sermons.

Hebrews 8:10-12

> 10This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Verse 10-12: You can know God. Each person can know Him because you can be taught all about him from the Lord Himself. Imagine: the Wisdom behind the universe sharing wisdom with you. But the Word must be implanted in you, in your mind and heart. This is not done by osmosis but involves deliberate action on your part.

Each day we choose what to put on our hearts and minds: music, T.V., movies, a book, magazines, conversations with others, etc. We have allowed it this information to be taken into ourselves. Everyday we can add the Word to this list. But we must make an intentional effort to do this. We set aside time for other things which do not have any long term value yet we need to set a date with the God who is eternal. Only then will our lives be transformed.

Psalm 119:9

> 9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

Verse 9: Purity for all ages comes from living according to the Word. By knowing the Word, you live out the Word. Choose to learn the Word.

Psalm 119:10

> 10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

Verse 10: Seeking requires effort. But when you seek God, He will be found. The more you know Him, the more you desire to obey His Word. You understand that He can help you live a blameless life; you are not alone.

Psalm 119:11

> 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Verse 11: Memorizing the Word is necessary to keep us from sin. If you want to overcome sin in your life, find Scripture that you will commit to memory.

Psalm 110:12

> 12 Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.

Verse 12: Ask the Lord to teach you. He is an amazing God, worthy of praise. He can show you the truth of His Word. Be His student. Commit to His “class” daily.

Psalm 119:13

> 13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

Verse 13: Recite the truth of the Word. Speak it aloud. Tell others about the Word. This will help reinforce the truth that God is teaching you.

Psalm 119:14

> 14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Verse 14: The commands of God are not restrictive boundaries. Instead, they free us into being all we can be in Him. A loving parent gives rules to the child out of love in order to protect the child. The Lord does the same. Rejoice in His desire to protect you from harm.

Psalm 119:15

> 15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

Verse 15: Think about the Word. Ponder it. We take time to consider sport statistics or try to figure out a mystery plot so we have the mental capacity to contemplate the Word. Recall it throughout the day.

Psalm 119:16

> 16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Verse 16: I am going to make a bold statement: If you are not spending time in the Word on a daily basis, you are neglecting it. Change your ways. Let the Word of Psalm 110:16 inspire you to keep your time with the Word everyday.

DAY 4

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord for His desire to teach us more about Him. Ask Him to help you be a more willing student.

What do you allow to enter your mind on a daily basis?

How can you make time to allow the Word to access your heart and mind?

How does it feel to know that you can be “tutored” by the Lord Almighty?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

This week you have been encouraged to be in the Word of God. The choice to obey is yours. I can attest to the immense blessing the Word has been in my life. I have learned so much, not just knowledge but also how to live a life that pleases God. In fact, I recognize that my times of rebellion were marked by lack of Bible study. My pray for you is that the Word will become a daily part of your life. I will thank the Lord when this is true.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

> 13And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

Verse 13: If you will receive the Word, it will work in your life. The Word is living and active. It will make a difference in you. It already has made an eternal difference, for by the Word you were saved.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

> 13But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

Verse 13-15: Take a stand in life. The world will want you to sway this way or the other. Sometimes, you may be unsure of which way to go. But in the Lord, if you hold onto His teachings, you can stand firmly on a sure foundation. This will allow you to live a life that pleases your Savior.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

16May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Verse 16-17: Do you need to be encouraged? Do you want to be strengthened? Do you desire to do and say good things? The Lord is willing to do all of this and more. He will transform you by His Word. Are you willing to give the Word your time? Jesus, our Savior, has given eternity to you.

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

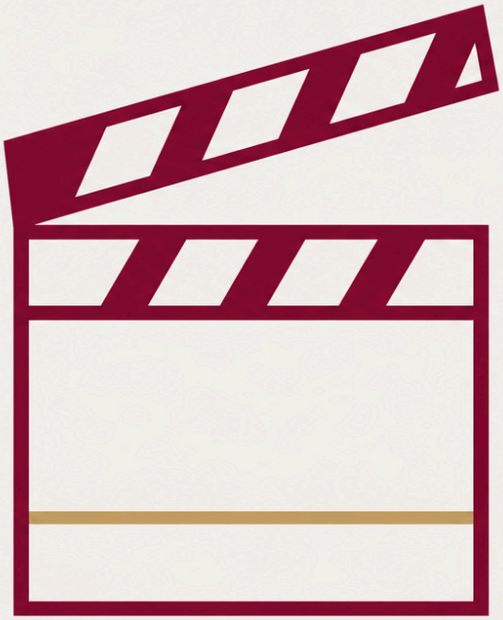
Praise the Lord for His ability and His willingness to transform your life.

Why do you believe that the Word is able to change you?

How will you live out this belief?

BIBLE STUDY

Lights, Camera, Action



RESONATE

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 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today's Scripture: John 14:23-24; 1 John 2:3-6

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 peopled 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.

DAY 1

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?

DAY 2

The Word

Today's Scripture: James 1:22-25; Psalm 119:2

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.

DAY 2

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

The Word

Today's Scripture: 2 Kings 22:3-20; Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 Corinthians 7:10

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, 16'This 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.

DAY 3

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

The Word

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 are 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.

DAY 4

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

The Word

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:1-12

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.

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

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

What traditions do you have in your life?

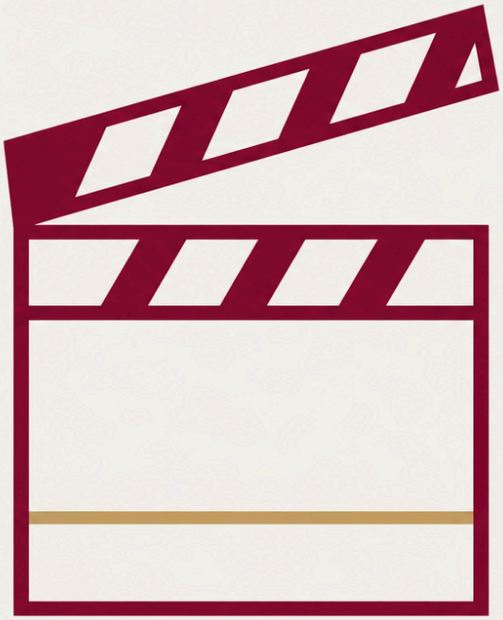
How can you bridge the gap with those who have different traditions than yourself?

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?

BIBLE STUDY

Lights, Camera, Action



RESONATE

Lights, Camera, Action!

Lights

-The Illumination of the Word

We benefit from light everyday. The Lord compares the Word to light. It has a way of benefiting us on a daily basis. This comparison can teach us how to allow the light of the Word to illuminate our hearts.

DAY 1 / DAY 2 / DAY 3 / DAY 4 / DAY 5

DAY 1

The Word

Today's Scripture: Psalm 119:105; Romans 8:28-29

When I was younger, my family and I went on a guided tour of a cave. During the presentation the lights were turned out. I waved my hand in front of my face yet I could see nothing. The darkness was overwhelming. The tour guide turned on a small flashlight. The light penetrated the cave. It was amazing to see how light truly drives away the darkness.

We live in a spiritually dark world. How do we find our way when we cannot see the hand in front of our face? The Word of the Lord is the light that directs us.

Psalm 119:105

> 105Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Verse 105: The Word is a lamp as well as a light. There is a difference between the two, even though both give off light. A lamp is more like a modern day flashlight. For those of you who go camping, you know the necessity of this device. When walking around at night, the flashlight gives you just enough light to make each step secure. It keeps you from falling into holes or tripping on branches. You cannot view the entire campground with a flashlight yet you can be sure that your walk to the bathroom is safe!

The Word of God gives us guidance to know what step to take next. It will not explain the next 50 years of our lives but it will show us what to do that day. It can help us each moment so that we may be safe from the sin that so easily trips us up. By knowing the Word, we can be confident in our day to day choices, walking securely based upon what we know is true.

As well as being our lamp, the Word is also a light for our path. This is more like a floodlight. It is a high powered light that allows us to view an entire area, not just a small part of it. The Word helps give clear direction in our lives. This is one overlying purpose in order to guide us in our journey. This purpose is to become like Christ.

Romans 8:28-29

> 28And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Verse 28-29: The flashlight part of our lives is verse 28. It is all the events, all the steps we have taken in life, which are being worked to good for us. The good is not that our

circumstances will all turn out the way we want. Instead, as verse 29 shows, the good is that we are being conformed into the likeness of Jesus. This is the path that each of us is on. We are all being molded into being like Christ. However, each of our paths is individualized. For the Lord alone knows what He needs to bring into our lives to transform us. Thus, we know from the Word the lighted path, the overall direction of our lives, is to be like Jesus. Also, from the Word we learn the moment by moment steps on how to move toward the purpose of God in our lives. That is why we need both the lamp and the light of the Word.

DAY 1

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord for giving us the Word.

If the overall purpose of your life is to be conformed into the image of Christ, what are you doing to walk in that direction?

In what ways can you utilize the Word of God to help you throughout the day?

If we make decisions without the Word of God, how will that affect us not only in the moment but for our overall spiritual path?

If you know the benefit of the Word, how are you accessing it on a daily basis? How could you increase your time with the Word?

DAY 2

The Word

Today's Scripture: Psalm 119:105; 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Acts 17:10-11

At the end of the lesson yesterday, I touched on the fact that each of our paths is individualized. Read our key verse again and notice the word "my".

Psalm 119:105

> 105Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Verse 105: It is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. This is my individual walk with the Lord. I cannot copy the walk of others. I am who God created me to be. I need to discover His purpose and will for my life. Also, I am responsible to learn the Word. The Word affects my individual life. I cannot expect only pastors to know the Word. Every believer is called to learn and live out the Word. If you are not learning the Word, you are not growing as a believer.

1 Corinthians 3:1-2

> 1Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

Verse 1-2: The Corinthian church was not growing spiritually. They were staying in the same place and not walking in the light. They were relearning the basics of the faith because they were unwilling to press forward toward maturity. They were acting like the world and not like Christ. We are walking in the way of the Corinthians when we do not make an effort to learn more about the Word and live out what we learn. This caused Paul to rebuke them and that same rebuke is heard today. Do not be like the Corinthians, instead be like the Bereans.

Acts 17:10-11

> 10As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Verse 10-11: The Bereans' noble character is connected with the Word. They were eager to study the Word for themselves. They were not satisfied to just take the message of the preaching of the apostle Paul. Instead, in their own time, they studied the Word everyday. In order for us to be of noble character, to be like Christ Himself, we must be in the Word of God each day.

We live in a country that allows us access to biblical studies. You can read the Bible, listen to sermons, watch pastors on the internet, and so much more. Discover a system that works for you. Make it an appointment. Just as you keep school, work, and social appointments; keep your meeting with the Word.

DAY 2

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you to be in His Word on a daily basis.

What prevents you from being in the Word everyday?

Are you willing to obey the Lord in this matter of daily Bible study? If so, what steps do you need to take in order to make it happen?

Think through the following in order to set up a system that works for you.

Time of day for Bible study:

Place:

System (reading, listening, internet, etc.):

Materials needed (pen, paper, journal, C.D. player, etc.):

Projected starting date (when you are planning to implement doing this daily):

DAY 3

The Word

Today's Scripture: Romans 10:17; 1Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:5-7; 2 Corinthians 4:6

The Word illuminates our way. But what does that mean in a practical sense? For one, it is by the Word that faith is developed in our life.

Romans 10:17

> 17Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Verse 17: We were in the darkness of sin. When we heard the Word of salvation, we went from darkness to light. The Word penetrated our dark hearts and led us onto the path of eternal light.

1 Peter 2:9

> 9But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Verse 9: As believers, we are now in the light. We have the responsibility to live in that light.

1 John 1:5-6

> 5This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

Verse 5-6: Only you can choose to walk in the light. If you do, then you will have fellowship with the Lord God Almighty. In addition, your relationships with others will be enhanced.

1 John 1:7

> 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Verse 7: We were called from darkness to light. The death of Jesus made this possible. As we walk in the light, His sacrifice which we accepted by faith continues to impact us. In other words, the faith that brought us to Christ continues to grow as we learn more and live it out in our relationships with others. Faith grows by the Word of God because we are walking in

the light of the Word.

2 Corinthians 4:6

> 6For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Verse 26: The knowledge of the Lord is the light in our lives. This is received from the Word. The more you know Him, the more you are in His light as you progress in your faith. Walk in the light, as He is in the light.

DAY 3

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord that the Word can impact our daily life.

How would growing in faith and spending time in the Word be connected?

Why would our relationships be affected by the amount of time we spend in the Word?

DAY 4

The Word

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 22:29-37

A quality of light is that it does not mix with darkness. These two never merge. It is either light or darkness, never anything in between. In our lives, we are either walking in the light or we are in darkness. There is nothing gray. However, wherever there is darkness in our lives, the Lord is willing to change it to light.

2 Samuel 22:29

> 29 You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD turns my darkness into light.

Verse 29: The Lord is our lamp. By His light, we can become light. The darkness of our life is exposed by Him so that we may repent and replace our evil actions with ones of righteousness. Because of the light of the Lord, coming from His Word, the following are possible:

1. We have victory over the enemy's attacks in our lives.

2 Samuel 22:30

> 30 With your help I can advance against a troop ; with my God I can scale a wall.

2. We are protected.

2 Samuel 22:31

> 31 "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

3. We have the strength to live righteously.

2 Samuel 22:32-33

> 32 For who is God besides the LORD ? And who is the Rock except our God?
>
> 33 It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.

4. We are able to ascend to new spiritual heights.

2 Samuel 22:34

> 34 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights.

5. We can have spiritual victory in our lives.

2 Samuel 22:35-36

> 35 He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
>
> 36 You give me your shield of victory; you stoop down to make me great.

6. We can be kept safe from falling into sin.

2 Samuel 22:37

> 37 You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn.

The Lord is our lamp. Allow Him to turn the darkness in your heart into light.

DAY 4

Up Close and Personal

Confess any darkness, or sin, in your life. Ask God to replace it with His light.

Which one of the benefits of the Word do you need in your life right now?

How does the Lord replace darkness in you with His light?

What thoughts do you have about the statement “In our lives, we are either walking in the light or we are in darkness”?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-16; Proverbs 20:27; Psalm 119:129- 130

You are light. Look in the mirror and say "I am light". It feels weird. I don't feel like I radiate anything in the morning. But spiritually speaking, we are light. Our eyes have been opened to the Lord and to His ways. Thus, our lives need to reflect Him.

Ephesians 5:8-14

> 8For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10and find out what pleases the Lord. 11Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Verse 8-14: You were once in darkness. But you are not anymore. You should not be living out the ways of darkness. The Word of God helps you to know what is dark and what is light. By being in the Word you are awakened to all you can be in and through Christ. But you must allow the light of the Word to shine on you. If not, you may waste your life.

Ephesians 5:15-16

> 15Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Verse 15: You are living in dark days. Evil is prevalent. But you have the opportunity to live wisely amongst the unwise, righteously amongst the evil. But in order to do this, you must understand what God desires from your life. The only way you are going to know God's thoughts is to be in His Word. He wrote it for you so that you could connect with Him. But you must take time to allow the Lord to access your life through the Word.

Proverbs 20:27

> 27The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being.

Verse 27: The Lord knows everything about you. When you study the Word, you know His thoughts about your life. With His help, you can change your ways so that all of your life pleases Him. But you cannot do this unless you know what pleases Him and that is only

discovered in the word.

Psalm 119:129-130

> 129Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them.
>
> 130The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Verse 129-130: Allow the light of the Word unfold in your life so that you may learn the wisdom of the Lord.

DAY 5

Up Close and Personal

Let the Word of God shine on you. Ask Him to illuminate your life today.

What dark ways in your life require the light of God?

How will you allow the Word of God to change this darkness into light?

What specific Scripture addresses your particular need for change?