

## **Devoted to God: Scripture September 16, 2007 - Skip MacMillan**

**Our Motivation: "In Christ are unsearchable riches" (Ephesians 3:8).**

**The hope is that as you search you would come to know the love of Jesus Christ** (Ephesians 3:17b-19).

17And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Prayer is an Opportunity, an Awakening, a Soulful dialogue with God - **ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication).**

Scripture is an opportunity for God to speak to you; to define God specifically, to define Christian beliefs, and to learn how to live this life.

I want us to be moved to the Scriptures because we believe that "in Christ are unsearchable riches" (Ephesians 3:8).

### **Guilt Stuff**

God had people write the Bible at great personal sacrifice.  
People died so you could have a copy of the Bible in your own language and in your hands.  
No other generation has had so much available about the Bible.

These things are true, but you need to be moved by the love of God for you. His love for you has no end, no limit.

**At Eternal we want the Scriptures to hold a central place in your life. GPS – S is for Scripture.**

### **The Bible is: An Opportunity for God to speak**

What does He want to say to you?

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'" (1 Timothy 1:15).

"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" (Isaiah 1:18).

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).

"For it is certainly the case that the Word of God, read or preached, has the power to enter the innermost crevices of a person's being, to shine light in unwanted places, to explode the myths and deceits by which fallen life sustains itself, and to bring that person face to face with the eternal God. It is this Biblical Word which God uses to bring repentance, to excite

faith, to give new life, to sustain that life once given, to correct, nurture, and guide the Church (Jer. 23:29; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:18)" -David Wells.

## Some reasons why we struggle to read the Bible:

### E-mail correspondence:

#### 1. What would you say got you reading Scripture?

"It happened to me in stages because unfortunately, I had so much **fear** in even picking up the Bible due to it being used for the wrong reasons...solely for guilt and shame. But since Eternal tends to enforce Bible-bringing and Page-flipping...I felt a little uncomfortable without it. So I went and bought myself one....and tried to start on my own at the very beginning of the Old Testament...

"Ha! I put it away and got myself the book/journal, "Daily Wisdom from the Bible" and I figured if I just took **baby-steps** and **processed** it . . . It wasn't until I started **small group** and admitted my fears and inadequacies...they taught me the ways."

#### 2. Did you notice the different genres, or the stories, or something else?

"For me, at this point, it is all about Proverbs...considering all of my journaling is based on these and I had also noticed that you referred to these quite a bit in your sermons. No stories, no miracles, just plain and simple, to the point but with oh so much meaning. The minute I started proverbs, I couldn't stop reading it until it was over and then I went back for more and still do. It just works for me."

#### 3. What would be helpful for you to know or know more about Scripture?

"I guess, **taking the fear away from its grand reputation. It is a tool...plain and simple.** And if used in a positive way **can create an evolution of the soul. I have referred to I don't know how many self-help books and it is all right there in the Bible, everything!** And if you are really brave...you will allow it to unfold before you. **If I am trusting, it always refers to what I am struggling with that day...**

"Also, that I don't have to know everything right away...God wants me to learn only as much as I can handle. I feel no guilt in missing things or not being emotionally available; knowing that I can pray about it and converse with God makes it all better...everytime. He wants me to create limits and move forward in this journey with Him with Grace and that...there is something that I smile about everyday!"

## The Bible by Sections:

**First five books**, Genesis to Deuteronomy –

**Genesis** - Creation, The fall of humanity from relationship with God, the Flood, Tower of Babel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the 12 Sons or Tribes of Israel or Jacob, entrance into Egypt

**Exodus** – is the exit from Egypt

**Leviticus** is the law spelled out

**Deuteronomy** – is a summary of the Exodus and the last words of Moses

First five books also called Torah, The Law, Pentateuch; written by Moses.

**Joshua to Esther** – History (taking the Promised land, struggles, Judges to the Kings of Israel, high to the lows.)

**Job to Song of Songs** (Psalms, Proverbs) – Poetry (Personal life with God)

**Isaiah to Malachi** – Prophets

Forth-telling - hammering it, telling it like it is and pointing people to the heart of God  
Foretelling - prophecy, what is to come

**Matthew to John** – Gospel, the life of Jesus Christ – His birth, life, death, and resurrection

**Acts** – History of the early church, how it all got started

**Romans to Jude** – letters to churches and individuals

They are all about Christ and being a follower of Christ.

Hebrews ties the OT with the NT (tying the sacrificial system to Jesus Christ's atonement).

**Revelation** – the return of Christ and the conclusion of time as we know it.

### **Stats and Facts**

66 books; written in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic; on three continents.  
Over 1,500 years of time and cultures.

### **How did Scripture come about?**

2 Peter 1:20-21 - "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2 Timothy 3:16 - "The holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

### **It is going to require some effort and intentionality.**

**Get a bible (NIV, NAS), set a time to get up, find a spot, open your Bible and read it.**

**1st: ask God to teach you what it says, ask for a desire to read it, and to help you understand it.**

**2nd: Read. Start by reading one of the Gospels, Acts, Hebrews, Ephesians, James and Revelation.**

**Think of the Bible as a piece of art, the more you look, the more you discover, the more you appreciate.**

### **God wants the Scriptures to be your life!**

*"When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, 'take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you – they are your life' (Deuteronomy 32:45-47).*

**The Scriptures are to "create an evolution of the soul".**

**Allow God to shape your soul and your life through Prayer and the Scriptures.**

**Allow God's Scriptures to become your life.**

**Why are we going to read the Bible? Because "in Christ are unsearchable riches" (Ephesians 3:8).**

**As you read you are going to find hope, conviction, direction, answers.**

**The hope is that as you search you would come to know the love of Jesus Christ (Ephesians**

3:17b-19).