

What Is The Bible Is to Us?

Psalm 19:7-11
1 Peter 1:23-25
Ephesians 6:17
Hebrews 4:12-13

1. GUIDE TO OUR THINKING

- a. *Biblical paradigm, worldview*
- b. *God's values*
- c. *God's purposes*

2. PATTERN FOR OUR PRAYERS

- a. Prayer is at the heart of the Bible and the Bible is at the heart of prayer.
- b. Jesus - constantly prayed the Bible.
- c. To Satan's temptations: *"It is written."*
- d. The *very last words of Jesus* were a quotation of Scripture.
- e. To pray the bible is to learn what God wants to give us.
- f. Scripture is "in-spired" by God - "in-spirited" by God, God breathed. (2 Timothy 3:16) *To pray the Bible is to be breathed upon by God.*
- g. Praying Scripture:
 - i. To pray the Scripture is *to know the heart of God.*
 - ii. To pray the Scripture is *to want the will of God.*
 - iii. To pray the Scripture is *to be the instrument of God.*
 - iv. To pray the Bible is *to harmonize us with the Divine will.*
 - v. To pray the Bible is *to synthesize with the Divine Consciousness.*

3. HYMN BOOK FOR OUR PRAISE

- a. Book of Psalms was the nation of Israel's songbook
- b. The Bible calls on us to *exalt* God's glory, to *revel* in his love, *receive* his salvation, to *celebrate* his goodness, to *declare* his glory and to *worship* his majesty.

4. THOROUGHFARE FOR GOD'S VOICE

- a. My blog ([calvaryhouston.com/resources/pastor steve's blog](http://calvaryhouston.com/resources/pastor%20steve's%20blog))
"Fourteen ways God speaks to us"
- b. When the Bible becomes the place where do not merely *read a text but rather we hear God's voice*, it operates at a different level, occupies different psychological space- when we hear God's voice speaking through Scripture
- c. We are meant to hear his voice in *private reading*
- d. *Public reading* or in *preaching* we are to be listening for the real, present, loving God to speak to us.
- e. *Study, meditation* – learn to listen
- f. The Bible is central to our *interaction with God*
- g. This approach must be different than our western style of study.
- h. But what I am recommending is that we approach the Word differently. We listen for a voice. It is a wholly different process. It results, not in *information* but in *intimacy*. It is an approach to the Word that gives us *a sense of contact with God*, not merely a lesson about him.
- i. We have made the word into a *commodity* instead of receiving it to enter into *communion / conversation*.

5. AN AVENUE OF GOD'S AUTHORITY

- a. This Word is meant to bring:
 - i. *God's order for our lives*
 - ii. *Christ's mercies for our sins*
 - iii. *Holy Spirit's liberty for our hearts*
- b. The Bible is God's mandate for our stewardship of life. It shows us how to live lives worthy of the good news of the Kingdom of God and to the glory of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Loving God Through His Word

1. Why did God give the Scripture to us?
2. What is the Bible?

Why should we devote ourselves to the Bible as a sacred avenue to intimacy with God?

1. The Bible is a pathway of truth
2 Timothy 3:7 Man is ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
2. The Bible is a pathway of growth
1 Peter 2:2 ...like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation...
3. The Bible is a pathway of happiness
Luke 11:28 Happy are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.
4. The Bible is a pathway of victory
Psalms 119:11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.
5. The Bible is a pathway of hope
Psalms 119:114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

How can we approach the Word in a way that will increase our love for God, our Father?

1. *Read the Scriptures devotionally and relationally*

Informational	Relational
A lot	A little
Length	Depth
Master the text	Text masters you
Analytical	Submissively
Scholastically	Monastically
Principles	Encounter
A thought	A voice
Concepts	Communion
Knowledge	Intimacy

2. *Practice lectio divina*

- a. This ancient art of sacred reading centers on loving God through his Word.
- b. Four moments of lectio divina:
 - i. Reading
 - ii. Realizing
 - iii. Responding
 - iv. Resting
- c. This is Bible reading that fosters a *sense of contact with God*, leading us deeper into his presence, more aware of his voice, and wonderfully open to his love.

3. *Pray the Scriptures*

- a. Quiet your mind, still your heart, ask God to direct your time of prayer. Believe God wants to commune with you and speak in your heart.
- b. Read until a verse, phrase, or word catches your attention. Really believe God is directing your heart to this prayer.
- c. Turn that awareness into a prayer.

Psalm 19:8 *The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight to life.*

A Summary of the Transformational Agenda

From:

Perfectionism

Eroticism

Consumption

Legalism

Bravado

Knowledge

Rigidity

Judgmentalism

Religion

Self-consciousness

Exclusivity

Performance

Drama

Rebellion (against)

Victim

Passivity

Entitlement

Power

Doing

Product

To:

Authenticity

Intimacy

Service

Integrity

Courage

Wisdom

Discernment

Compassion

Faith

Self-expression

Community

Grace

Balance

Cause (for)

Creator

Engagement

Gratitude

Strength

Being

Process

Transformational Agenda

A Spiritual Exercise

Examine the list of common transformations that the Holy Spirit is working to establish in our lives.

- 1. Circle the top three that you feel the Spirit has made significant progress toward in your life. In your journal, write a paragraph on each of these three areas of accomplishment noting what God has used to move you along toward transformation.**
 - a. What circumstances has he used?**
 - b. What people?**
 - c. What teachings, books, or messages played an important role?**
 - d. Close the paragraphs by thanking God for his ongoing work in your life.**

- 2. Circle the three areas in which you feel you have made the least progress. In your journal, write a paragraph on each of these areas revealing how they surface in your life.**
 - a. What circumstances give rise to these issues?**
 - b. What people?**
 - c. Ask the Lord to reveal ways you might move forward in the transformational agenda.**
 - d. Record any scripture verses that come to mind.**
 - e. How might you prepare yourself ahead of time to respond differently in these circumstances?**
 - f. Write a prayer of fresh surrender asking the Holy Spirit to change you in each of these areas. Remind him, and yourself, that you have not given up, that your hope is in the Lord and his transforming love.**