

**Just Checking In**  
**JCI #192 February 2018**  
**Grow in the Word**

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The earliest record of the church of Jesus Christ in Acts 2 demonstrates that it is a people founded on, filled with, focused on, and fulfilling the Word of God. **Acts 2:41-42** Then those who gladly received his *word* were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they *continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine* and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The Bible is absolutely central to the believer individually and the church collectively. It is this Word that generates saving faith. Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The Bible is the means by which God speaks to us and brings us His truth, creates conviction for sin, provides correction to return us to fellowship with Him, and then instruction for daily decisions that are right and pleasing to Him. It is His Word that fills and equips us to live lives that are faithful and fruitful. **2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

A church that is not Bible centered is a church that drifts from its Divine moorings. Let us renew our hunger and passion for God's Word individually, as families, and as churches so that we will be led of God, used of God, faithful to God and bring joy and pleasure to Him whose Word it is.

**READ THE BIBLE!** Read it with a pen and a notebook at hand. Someone told me as a new believer that I should read the bible with a pen in my hand. *When you write, you will remember far longer than if you just read.* Underline, take notes, and write down questions. Get into the Word for yourself. I use the ESV now for my in-depth study, but I use the NLT with a yellow highlighter for my through-the-Bible-in-a-year reading. I find using a different translation for my general Bible reading each year enables me to notice things I hadn't seen before.

**READ SUBMISSIVELY** **Luke 5:1-5** So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the

boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; ***nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.***"

When Jesus finished teaching on the shores of Galilee early in His ministry, He commanded Peter to let down his nets for a catch of fish. Peter initially protested, but eventually submitted with a wonderful phrase... **"At your word I will..."**

I remember over forty years ago when a student at Bible college, I happened to look into the president's office and saw on his desk a plaque with His life verse on it. ***"Nevertheless, at Your word I will" Luke 5:5*** It made a real impact on my soul. This is the way to read the Bible. It is not just for information, but for submission and obedience. This is the Word of our Creator, our King, our Lord.

**READ BROADLY Luke 24:25-27** Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

On the road to Emmaus, the broken-hearted disciples encountered the risen Christ, though He was hidden from their eyes. Jesus rebuked them for not believing the prophetic scriptures and then proceeded to take them through the greatest Bible study ever known on this earth! *"Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.* Jesus took them from Genesis to Malachi and revealed Himself hour after hour as they walked.

Let me encourage you to set a goal of reading the entire Bible, Genesis to Revelation, in the next 1,2, or 3 years. If reading is difficult, then let me encourage you to listen to it. There are many websites that offer free audio Bible readings. Here is one example: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/audio-bible/esv/> There are also chronological Bibles, and chronological reading guides that many also find really helpful as they read the scriptures in the time-line in which they were written, not as they were later assembled in our present arrangement. It's the same Bible, just read in a different, chronological order.

**READ CAREFULLY Psalm 119:11** I have hidden Your word in my heart, so that I might not sin against You.

In addition to reading submissively, and reading broadly, let's spend some time more focused on a single book or Bible character or doctrine. We are called to study God's word and hide God's word in our hearts. Spending time meditating and memorizing smaller portions of scripture is very helpful in growing us deeper in our walk with God. As God told Joshua.. *1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it by day and by night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall act wisely.* And Paul to the Colossians, *Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...*

**READ INTENTIONALLY** Ezra 7:10 *For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and judgments in Israel.*

I find it extremely helpful to read the Bible intentionally. That is, to read it looking for specific things. I read it with three questions before me: **WHAT, SO WHAT, NOW WHAT!**

**What does it say?** About God, man, sin, promises/principles, commands/choices/consequences? The Bible is God's gift to us to reveal Himself to us, reveal ourselves to us, our sins to us, His promises to us, and His commands for us.

**So what does it mean?** What's the main point? What's the big idea? What does it mean for me as a believer... as an unbeliever... as a church? How does it fit in the big story? How does Jesus fit in it all?

**Now what do I do?** What do I need to do now, today, this week, as a result of what I have read? Then pray! I write down two prayers of application... Thank you Lord, for (whatever I discovered that helps me change), and Lord please help me (get specific in asking God to help you obey what He's shown you.)

The whole concept of DISCIPLE is rooted in DISCIPLINE. And DISCIPLINE is saying "No" to the non-essential so I can say "Yes" to the essential. Developing godly habits with God's Word daily will enable you to experience significant spiritual growth. Grounding and growing will never happen by accident. Let's get deeper into the Word in 2018 on purpose for His glory!

*Lord, I am so grateful you have given us your perfect, preserved, inerrant, inspired, life-changing Word. Give me the discipline to feed myself on Your Word every day and to pursue a life of obedience. Lord, I want to say with Peter... "At Your Word, I will!"*

### **Self Check**

- 1) Are you disciplined in your daily study of God's Word?
- 2) Are you sharing your discoveries to encourage others to get into the Word?
- 3) What do you need to say NO to so you can say YES to God's Word?

### **For Further Study**

Read the Book of 1 Peter slowly, and take special note of the many times God's Word is lifted up and shown to be the believer's great treasure.

***Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.***

***Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4 Ron & Val***

Seeing the Invisible,  
Embracing The Unapproachable,  
Declaring the Unexplainable,  
Changed by the Immutable,  
Running after the Irresistible  
With inexhaustible joy  
In our inexpressible sorrows,  
Spending our time on eternity,  
Owning nothing yet possessing everything  
That matters and lasts.  
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.  
Welcome to THE JOURNEY