

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! — Calling saints in Christ, (in our Homes and with one another in Church), to Walk in the Steps of CHRIST, (1 Peter 2:15-25)! (Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ)

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AM I PROFITING FROM THE WORD OF GOD?

WAY TOO MUCH Bible reading and Bible study is of little or no spiritual profit to MANY who engaged in it! **BECAUSE:**

Sometimes we merely read/Study the Bible to satisfy a sense of DUTY. At other times we read/Study the Bible with mere intellectual interest — or so as to be well versed in particular POINTS of our THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS; and so we search eagerly for proof-texts in support of "CERTAIN doctrines." **OR we read/study** the Bible for the purpose of being able to argue with those who differ from us; **or we simply read/Study the Bible in sort of a 'mere history lesson' fashion! TRULY, even genuine saints in Christ can be in one, or more of the above traps;**

INDEED, WE CAN DO ANY OR ALL OF THE ABOVE AND HAVE LITTLE or NO thought of worshiping or serving God, or yearning for spiritual growth, or for purposefully being equipped to plant and water gospel seed in the lives of others. TO PROFIT FROM THE WORD —

LET US RECEIVE 2 Timothy 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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works!" [AND, in 2 Timothy 3:15, we are informed that the Holy Spirit makes use of the Word of God in the saving of children!]*

Observe what is omitted in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: The Holy Scriptures are not for intellectual gratification or carnal speculation; but to equip us unto "all good works," by means of teaching, reproof, correcting us. **THEREFORE, by the blessed ministry of the HOLY SPIRIT,**

1. I AM spiritually profited when the Word of God convicts me of sin. This is its first office: to reveal our depravity, to expose our vileness, to make known our wickedness. "... When the Holy Spirit applies the Word to OUR heart and conscience, WE CRY, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" Such conviction, (that brings home to the heart the awful ravages which sin has wrought in the human HEART), is not to be restricted to the initial experience AROUND conversion. **Each time** that God blesses His Word to OUR HEARTS, WE ARE made to feel how far, far short WE come of the standard which He has set before US, namely, **"Be ye holy in all manner of behavior"** (1 Pet. 1:15).

Here, then, is the first test to apply: as I read of the sad failures of different ones in Scripture, does it make me realize how sadly like unto them I am? As I read of the blessed and perfect life of Christ, does it make me recognize how unlike Him I am— and, thus, I yield afresh and feed on the Word of God that I may rest in His goodness; and GROW IN HIS LIKENESS!? *[DO I SEE HOW TRAGIC IT IS TO merely intellectually discuss and/or share 'our thoughts' about such Scriptures?]*

2. I am spiritually profited when the Word of God moves me to sorrow over my sin. Of the stony-ground hearer it is said that he "heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself" (Matt. 13:20-21); **but of those who were convicted under the preaching of**

Peter it is recorded that they were pricked [STUNG, STABBED, CUT TO THE HEART, SMITTEN] in their heart (Acts 2:37); and moved to repentance and a life of faith! (Acts 2:28-47)

The same contrast exists today. Many will listen to a flowery sermon (OR even to a Bible saturated sermon), which **contains no searching application to the conscience.** It is received ... but no one is humbled before God or brought into a closer walk with Him through it. But let a faithful servant of the Lord bring the teaching of Scripture to bear upon character and conduct, exposing the sad failures of even the best of God's people, and, though the crowd will despise the messenger, the truly regenerate will be thankful for the message which causes them to mourn before God and cry, "Oh, wretched man that I am!"

So, it is ALSO in the private reading of the Word! It is when the Holy Spirit applies it in such a way that I am made to see and feel my inward corruption's that I am really blessed. **SO, IT WAS with the prophet Jeremiah:** *"After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded."* (Jeremiah 31:19)

***** Does our study of the Word produce a broken heart and lead to a humbling of ourselves before God? *** Does it** convict of sins in such a way that we are brought to daily repentance before Him? REMEMBER: The PASSOVER lamb had to be eaten with "bitter herbs" (Ex. 12:8); so, as we really feed on the Word, the Holy Spirit makes it "bitter" to us before it becomes sweet to our taste! **This is ever the divine order:** There must be mourning before comfort (Matt. 5:4); Humbling before exalting (1 Pet. 5:6).

3. I am spiritually profited when the Word of God leads me to *confession of sin*. The Scriptures are profitable for "reproof" (2 Tim. 3:16), **Of the LOST it is said,** "For every one that loveth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproof" (John 3:20). **IN CONTRAST, the redeemed cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" This is the cry of a renewed heart,** and every time we are quickened by the Word (Ps. 119) there is a fresh revealing to us and a fresh owning by us of our transgressions before God. ***"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).***

There can be no spiritual prosperity or fruitfulness (Ps. 1:3) while we conceal our secret SINS; only as our sins are freely owned before God, shall we enjoy His mercy. There is no real peace for the conscience and no rest for the heart while we bury the burden of unconfessed sin. Relief comes when it is fully CONFESSED to God.

David TESTIFIES, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Ps. 32:3-4).

Blessed indeed is the immediate sequel here: *"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:5).*

4. I am spiritually profited when the Word produces in me *a deeper hatred of sin*. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil" (Ps. 97: 10). ***"We cannot love God without hating that which He hates. We are not only to avoid evil, and***

refuse to continue in it, but we must be up in arms against it, and bear towards it a hearty indignation" (C. H. Spurgeon). **One of the surest tests to apply to the professed conversion is the heart's attitude towards sin.**

If our hatred of evil be genuine, we are thankful when the Word reproves even the evil which we suspected not. **This was the experience of David:** "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore, I hate every false way" (Ps. 119:128). **Observe well, it is not merely** "I abstain from," but "I hate"; not only "some" or "many," but "every false way"; and not only "every evil," but "every *false* way." "Therefore, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way" (Ps. 119:128).

But it is the very opposite with the wicked: "Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee" (Ps. 50:17). In Proverbs 8:13, we read, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil," and this godly fear comes through reading the Word: see Deuteronomy 17:18, 19.

5. I am spiritually profited when the Word of God moves me to a forsaking of sin. "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2: 19). **The more the Word is read with the definite object of discovering what is pleasing and what is displeasing to the Lord, the more will His will become known;** and if our hearts are right with Him the more will our ways be conformed thereto. There will be a "walking in the truth" (3 John 4).

At the close of 2 Corinthians 6 some precious promises are given to those who separate themselves from unbelievers. Observe, there, the

application which the Holy Spirit makes of them. **He does not say,** "Having therefore these promises, be comforted and become complacent thereby," but ***"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit"*** (2 Cor. 7:1). JESUS PROCLAIMS: "Now **ye are clean** through the **word** which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).

Here is another important rule by which we should frequently test ourselves: *Is the reading and studying of God's Word producing a purging of my ways?* Of old the question was asked, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and the Divine answer is "by **taking heed** thereto according to Thy Word."

Yes, not simply or merely by reading, believing, or memorizing it, but by the personal application of the Word to our "way." **It is by taking heed to such exhortations as** "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18), "Flee from idolatry" (1 Cor. 10:14). "Flee these things"—a covetous love for money (1 Tim. 6:11), "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22), that the Christian is brought into practical separation from evil; **for sin has not only to be confessed but "forsaken" (Prov. 28: 13).**

6. I am spiritually profited when the Word of God fortifies me against sin. The Holy Scriptures are given to us not only for the purpose of revealing our innate sinfulness, and the many, many ways in which we "come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23), ***but also to teach us how to obtain deliverance from sin, how to be kept from displeasing God. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11).***

This is what each of us is required to do: "Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth, and lay up His words in thine heart" (Job 22:22). It is particularly the commandments, the warnings, the exhortations, we need to make our own and to treasure; to memorize them, meditate upon them, pray over them, and put them into practice.

The only effective way of keeping a plot of ground from being overgrown by weeds is to sow good seed therein: **"Overcome evil with good!"** (Rom 12:21) So, the more Christ's Word dwells in us "richly" (Col. 3: 16), the less room will there be for the exercise of sin in our hearts and lives.

It is not sufficient merely to assent to the TRUTHFULNESS of the Scriptures; they require to be received into the affections. **It is unspeakably solemn to note that the Holy Spirit specifies as the ground of apostasy, "because the love of the truth they received not."** (2 Thess. 2:10). **"If it lie only in the tongue or in the mind, only to make it a matter of talk and speculation, it will soon be gone. The seed which lies on the surface, the fowls in the air will pick up.**

Therefore, hide it deeply; let it get from the ear into the mind, from the mind into the heart; let it soak in further and further. It is only when it hath a prevailing sovereignty in the heart that we receive it in the love of it— when it is dearer than our dearest lust, then it will stick to us!" (Thomas Manton)

Nothing else will preserve from the infections of this world, deliver from the temptations of Satan, and be so effective a preservative against sin, as the Word of God received into the affections; "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide!" (Ps. 37:31) As long as the

truth is active within us, stirring the conscience, and is really loved by us, we shall be kept from falling. **When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife**, he said, *"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Gen. 39:9) The Word of God was in his heart; therefore, he had **prevailing power over his lusts**. None of us knows when he may be tempted: therefore, it is necessary to be prepared against it. "Who among you will give ear . . . and hear *for the time to come*?" Isa. 42:23). Yes, we are to anticipate the future and be fortified against it, by storing up the Word in our hearts for coming emergencies!

7. I am spiritually profited when the Word of God causes me to practice the opposite of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). **God says**, "Thou shalt"; **sin says**, "I will not"; **God says**, "Thou shalt not"; **sin says**, "I will." Thus, sin is rebellion against God, the determination to have my own way (Isa. 53:6). Therefore, sin is **REBELLION AND anarchy** in the spiritual realm, and may be likened unto the waving of the red flag in the face of God.

Now, the opposite of sinning against God is submission to Him, as the opposite of lawlessness is subjection to the law. Thus, to practice the opposition of sin is to walk in the path of obedience. **This is another chief reason why the Scriptures were given: to make known the path which is pleasing to God for us. They are profitable not only for reproof and correction, but also for "instruction in righteousness!"**

Here, then, is another important rule by which we should frequently test ourselves. Are my thoughts being formed, my heart controlled, and my ways and works regulated by God's Word? This is what the Lord requires:

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves!" (Jas. 1:22) This is how gratitude to and affection for Christ are to be expressed: "If ye love me, *keep* my commandments" (John 14:15).

For this, Divine GRACE is needed. David prayed, "Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments" (Ps. 119:35). "We need not only light to know our way, but a heart to walk in it. Direction is necessary because of the blindness of our minds; and the effectual impulsions of grace are necessary because of the weakness of our hearts! Note it is "the *path* of Thy commandments": not a self-chosen course, but a definitely marked one; not a public "road," but a private "path."

CLOSING QUESTIONS:

Has my study of the Bible made me more humble, or more proud—proud of the knowledge I have acquired? **Has** it raised me up in the esteem of my fellow men, or has it led me to take a lower place before God? **Has** it produced in me a deeper abhorrence and loathing of self, or has it made me more complacent? **Has** it caused those I mingle with, or perhaps teach, to say, **"I wish I had his *knowledge* of the Bible"; or does it cause THEM to *pray*, "Lord, give me the faith, the grace, the *holiness* Thou hast granted my friend, or teacher?"** **'Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting *may appear* unto all'** (1 Tim. 4:15).

OBJECTION: This is all too involved, too serious. THE DEEPER REALITY: The hour in which we are presently living is so late! The spiritual warzone is so deadly! MANY MEN, WOMEN and YOUTH are already FALLING by the **WAYSIDE** throughout the land! **The stakes**

are so high— that only a great fool would NOT approach personal Bible Study; and Bible Study with fellow saints in the coming days in a much more serious way than has EVER been our custom! [This article is edited from A. W. Pink]

Great Grace to one and all in Christ!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

EVERY SATURDAY * 8:00am**, — Men's Bible Study! (*Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits!*)

[8/2/25 – Ephesians 6:17-18

NEXT Ladies Bible Study, AUGUST 5, 2025 @ 11:00am

(LADIES Bible Study, from JOB!) (NO CHILD CARE.)

*****EVERY TUESDAY: LADIES PRAYER MEETING FROM 10:00 to 10:30am, come in back door, under drive-thru awning, go IN THE IMMEDIATE FIRST ROOM ON THE RIGHT!**

***** Tuesday Evening, Southside Young Adult Group; Bible Study, (EXODUS), @ 7:15pm, at Jaden & Rhi's home**

WEDNESDAYS: 6:30pm—

**** Adult MEN'S Prayer Service**

**** Young FAMILIES STUDY/Prayer Service**

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***** LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD BY MAIL or by ONLINE GIVING; For Church Ministry and/or MISSIONS: SUCH funds, (if checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 / OR... TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:**

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