



The Soul-Winner's Secret

Chapter 18 – Importance And Benefits Of Bible Study

If someone had written a book so small that it could be carried in the pocket, and so cheap that the poorest could buy it, and if this book explained simply how anyone who followed its directions could surely, without any danger to themselves or others, gain the highest possible honors, the greatest riches, the supremest joy, all linked with long life, then I feel sure that everyone would want the book.

If they could not read, they would do their best to learn in order to study it, and if they were too busy by day, I think they would sit up late at night or rise early in the morning to read it and commit it to memory. What they had learned, they would think and talk about through the day. If there were any parts of it that seemed vitally important and yet hard to understand, they would not throw the book away or go to careless critics who took more pleasure in pointing out what they considered errors than in following what they and everybody acknowledged to be true. Instead, they would go for instruction to those who had most closely followed the directions of the book, and most surely gained its prizes. Or, better still, they would go to the author of the book. The Bible is such a book, except that in place of worldly honor and riches and joy, it offers heavenly; instead of long life, it offers eternal life – a life of unutterable blessing and joy, and that without end.

God is its author. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21.)

It can be bought for twenty-five cents; the New Testament can be had for five cents, and it can be carried in the pocket. It is so simple that "the wayfaring man, though a fool," need "not err therein." Children can understand it, though philosophers are often puzzled by it. Like the cloudy, fiery pillar that went with the Israelites in the wilderness it is light to those who love and obey God, but gloomy darkness and contradictions to those who refuse to obey Him.



It marks an easy, straight path for humble souls, but it is a rough and tangled labyrinth to proud and wayward men. It has no instruction, or blessing, or comfort for those who despise it, but to those who love it it is sweeter than honey, and more priceless than gold and precious stones. It makes plain the way whereby sinners may become holy, and holiness is an experience which, in turn, makes the Bible plain. It interprets holiness, and holiness interprets it.

Of course, there are some things in the Bible hard to be understood, but if we will pay diligent heed the Holy Spirit will make it plain to us as fast as we are able to understand. The General says that he reads the Bible as he eats fish, eating what he can, and laying aside the bones; but as the years go by he often finds that what he once could not understand spiritually has now become quite plain to him. Things in the Bible, which are hard for you to understand today, may become as clear as sunlight in years to come.

In studying the Bible it will be found that experience in spiritual things makes the Book plain to us. A little ten-year-old girl, who had been much afflicted, prayed to the Lord and found help. Some time later, while alone reading her Bible, she found this text: "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." (Ps. 34:6.) It so fitted her experience that her heart was made glad, and she pointed it out to her mother, and had her mother mark it.

A portion of the Bible ought to be read carefully and prayerfully and lovingly every day. Just as a fire needs fresh fuel, and the body needs new supplies of food every day so the soul that would be strong and holy needs something fresh from the Bible each day.

1. It is through the Word of God that we get faith. I once heard one of the mightiest men of God I ever knew say that he used to pray and pray for faith, but one day he read this text: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17), and from that day he began to read the Bible, fulfilling its conditions and claiming its promises, and his faith grew wonderfully. Although uneducated in the schools, he became full of the wisdom of God, and won many thousands of souls to Jesus, raised up hundreds of workers, inspired thousands more, and had millions of dollars given to him for the work of God.



I have often heard people insinuate that one rose from the dead to add his testimony to what the Bible says that they might then believe. But Jesus denies this. He says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31.) The Bible is that which brings faith and strengthens it, and not seeing departed spirits, or visions, or raptures of any kind.

When Paul and Silas were driven out of Thessalonica they went to the city of Berea and preached Jesus there, and Luke tells us that the people of Berea "were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." And then he adds: "Therefore many of them believed" (Acts 17:11, 12). Belief always follows an honest searching of the Scriptures. If then, you would have strong faith, feed what faith you have on the Word of God.

2. If we are going astray, the Word of God corrects us. A woman, who was out at service, was always grumbling and complaining in spite of the fact that she was treated most kindly. One day, when her mistress was out, she read these words in her Bible: 'Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish' (Phil. 2:14, 15, R V.), and she felt as though the dear Lord Himself had spoken tender words of rebuke and conviction to her. She humbled herself, apologized to her mistress and corrected her ways.

A lady, who had been selfishly seeking her own way instead of God's way, and offering the Lord a half-hearted service, was convicted by these words: "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor: will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?" (Mal. 1:8)

She saw herself offering to God what no earthly ruler would accept, and it broke her heart, and led her to a sincere repentance and humble confession and an utter surrender of herself to the Lord, until she felt His love flooding her soul. Truly, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it 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." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)



3. If we are ignorant, the Word of God instructs us. David says, "Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than my enemies. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts." (Ps. 119:98-100)

Again he says, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." (Ps. 119:129.)

Some time ago, out on the plains of Minnesota, I found a humble young man, who worked on a farm, who seemed to me to be wonderfully wise. I asked him his secret, and he told me that it was constant study of the Word of God and prayer. If he had ten minutes to spare at noon-hour, he did not waste it in foolish talk, or in reading stories or newspapers, but he dugged into his Bible.

People told him that he would get narrow if he did not read other books, but he found that they were the ones who got narrow, and when they became confused by the assumptions of evolution, spiritualism, the new psychology, Dowieism, and the like, he, although not educated in the schools, had no difficulty in solving all their problems through his knowledge of the Bible. Like David, he found himself wiser than his enemies, his teachers, and the elders, through God's Word.

Jesus said to certain people who were in error about certain doctrines, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God leaves one exposed to all sorts of error and cunning craftiness of men, but when we hide God's Word in our hearts, and have the genuine experience of holiness, we get filled with His great thoughts and are truly wise, and if we humbly watch and pray we are safeguarded from error.

4. The Bible gives us great and loving thoughts of God, and makes our hearts tender toward Him I have read the Bible through many times, but there are some parts of it that so reveal the love of God in Christ to me that I can never read them without tears.



A friend went into the quarters of two of our Swedish officers, and found them sitting at the tables with open Bibles, weeping. He thought they were in great sorrow, and asked them what was their trouble. They said, "Oh, we are weeping for joy at the goodness of God! See here what we have read: 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' Think how good God is, and how He cares for us to number the very hairs of our heads."

I found a dear young friend weeping one day, but they were tears of joy. "Look here," he said. "at what the Lord has said to me today: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest to your souls.' My father died," he said, "and my eyes were dry, and my mother died, and I couldn't shed a tear. My heart was hard, but God has made my heart soft, and now I weep for joy as I read His tender, loving words."

Truly God's Word fills the humble, believing heart with joy. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart," said Jeremiah.

The truth is, that we love the Lord no better than we love His Word. In proportion as the Word is precious to us, so is He Himself precious to us.

5. Do you want to know Jesus better? Read the Bible. The Bible, under the Illumination of the Holy Spirit, reveals Him to us. It is there that we see Him a tender babe, born in a manger, in a stable among the cattle, and hunted for His life by cruel Herod.

It is there that we find Him humbly toiling at the carpenter's bench, fasting and praying, and tempted by the devil in all points like as we are, doing good, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of forgiving love, having compassion on the poor and sorrowful and sinful, preaching the Gospel, warning men of the judgment to come, declaring both the love and the wrath, the goodness and the severity of God, and at last laying down His life a sacrifice for our sins.

It is there that we see the open grave, the risen Saviour, the ascending, glorified Lord, into whose



hands is given all power in heaven and earth to be used in behalf of His holy ones on earth; to be used for their defense, their guidance, their spiritual education, their deliverance, their support, their warfare, their uttermost salvation, and their final triumph over all the power of the enemy, over all earth and hell. Read the Bible to see and know Jesus.

6. Do you want to pray with more faith and power? Read the Bible. It is there that you will learn God's will, become acquainted with His mind, and find His promises to encourage your faith.

7. Do you want to speak to the hearts of saints and sinners with more effect? Read the Bible. It is there that you will get truth that is sharper than a two-edged sword, that is like a fire and a hammer. It is there that you will get truth that will comfort mourners, arouse the careless, instruct the ignorant, enlighten the perplexed, lead the blind, encourage the fainthearted, rest the weary, steady the young, renew the old, that will convict and convert and sanctify and fill the heart with perfect assurance.

8. Do you want to hold out faithful to the end, and not make shipwreck of faith?

Read the Bible, and "observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Josh. 1:8.)

A recent writer has well said, "Of course, it is much easier, and therefore much more agreeable to our spiritual laziness, to go to a convention or revival meeting and claim a filling of the Holy Spirit than it is to peg along day after day, month after month, year after year, digging into the Word of God. But a 'filling of the Spirit' that is not maintained by a persistent study of the Word, will soon vanish," just as a fire that does not daily receive fresh supplies of coal will go out, or a man that is not properly fed will starve. Oh, the blessings that have been lost because they have not been renewed day by day by a loving study of God's blessed Word!

"Search the Scriptures," said Jesus. Do not think you are too young, or too ignorant, or too busy. Do your best, and stick to it, and the Holy Spirit will become your teacher, and you shall become



wise unto everlasting life. (2 Tim. 3:15-17.)