

EXPERIENCING God in the Bible

How do we experience God when we read the Bible?

The Seminar Series: The Bible

- **The VALUE of the Bible...***What value should we place on the Bible?*
- **The RELIABILITY of the Bible - Part 1...***Can we trust the Bible?*
- **The RELIABILITY of the Bible - Part 2...***Can we trust the Bible?*
- **APPROACHING the Bible ...***What attitude should we have as read the Bible?*
- **UNDERSTANDING the Bible ...***How do we understand and interpret the Bible?*
- **EXPERIENCING God in the Bible...***How do we experience God when we read the Bible?*
- **PERSEVERING in the Bible...***How do we experience God through the Bible for a lifetime?*

INTRODUCTION: *Expectations matter!*

Our goal in approaching God's Word is awe & intimacy...

- *We want to be humbled and amazed by the majesty of our King*
- *We want to be satisfied with the joy and delight of knowing God as our Father*

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Studying the Bible

The role of the Holy Spirit in studying the Bible is to make the truth come ALIVE. The Holy Spirit enables our hearts to spiritually see and taste the reality of what we read in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

Jonathan Edwards on spiritual understanding...

"Spiritually to understand the Scripture, is to have the eyes of the mind opened, to behold the wonderful spiritual excellency of the glorious things contained in the true meaning of it...When the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness or true moral good that is in divine things is discovered to the soul, it as it were opens a new world to its views. This shows the glory of all the perfections of God, and of everything appertaining to the divine Being."

"It is possible that a man might know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the Bible, and not have one beam of spiritual light in his mind; because he may not have the least degree of that spiritual sense of the holy beauty of divine things which has been spoken of, and may see nothing of this kind of glory in anything contained in any of these mysteries, or any other part of the Scripture."

"This is the work of the Spirit: to shine the light of truth on the glory of Christ so that we see it for what it really is, namely, infinitely precious." - **John Piper, God is the Gospel, page 91**

We NEED the Holy Spirit because the world we live in, as well as our hearts and minds, have been infected by sin

- 1) We need the Holy Spirit to **learn** and **understand** what the author intended along with its connection to the themes of the Bible - Luke 24:27
- 2) We need the Holy Spirit to **see** and **savor** the beauty of Christ because we are naturally blind to this reality - 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 1:16-21; Psalm 119:18
- 3) We need the Holy Spirit to **woo** us from our other loves that rival God in our hearts - Psalm 119:35-36
- 4) We need the Holy Spirit to **resist** our enemy who seeks to hinder the impact of the Bible in our lives - Revelation 12:9; Matthew 13:19

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"The Spirit is not given to make Bible study needless, but to make it effective...without the Spirit's help there can be no grasp of the message of Scripture, no conviction of the truth of scripture, and no faith in the God of Scripture. Without the Spirit, nothing is possible but spiritual blindness and unbelief." - **J.I. Packer, Fundamentalism and the Word of God, page 112**

The Daily Experience

Two word pictures to set healthy expectations...

A Feast vs. A Well-Balanced Meal

Slow-Cooker Christian Experience

Romans 12:2 - *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Renewing of our **Mind** → Transforming of our **Desires** → Empowering of our **Will**

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - *16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

The Holy Spirit uses our study of the Bible to...

- Teach
- Rebuke
- Correct
- Train

The 'X' Factor - *God meeting us in the midst of trials and hardship through His Word and prayer*

The Holy Spirit enables us to spiritually see and taste the realities we read in the Bible. He makes truth come alive. Sometimes this comes in the form of spiritual feasts but oftentimes it is more in the form of day to day well-balanced spiritual meals. He, over time, through His Word, renews our minds, transforms our desires, and empowers our will to follow Him. He is committed to using trial and hardship to deepen our understanding of Him through bringing His Word to bear in our situations.

Where do I go from here?

- **EMBRACE** the slow-cooker Christian experience...Don't give up...Commit to eating well-balanced meals!
- **PRAY** Psalm 119 Prayers
 - Psalm 119:18** - *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*
 - Psalm 119:36-37** - *36 Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! 37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.*
- **RECEIVE** the trials and suffering that your King & Father has brought...embrace His Work through filtering them through His Word & prayer
- **FALL FORWARD** - Commit to immersing yourself in the Bible more and more during this seminar. God wants to communicate to you!
 - The Psalm 119 experiment** - read & pray through Psalm 119:121-144 this upcoming week
- **LEARN** to eat a well-balanced meal of Bible study