

# Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: January 31, 2010

## Why Read the Bible?

by Dan Trygg

**“Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.”**

Psalms 119:105

I was talking with someone the other day, and they were mentioning how it was hard to convince people to read the Bible. “They simply don’t see that the Bible is relevant today,” was the observation that this Christian worker had made. This little interchange kind of stuck in my craw, and I have been coming back to it, mulling it over in my mind. **Why read the Bible? Is it relevant to life today?** Is it relevant to the average person, or is it only for “religious people”? **Is it relevant to people of all ages, or only for “older people”?** If I was not particularly inclined to be a “church person”, would the Bible still be important for me to read? What benefit could come from reading it? Is it really all that big of a deal? You may say, “I’ve tried reading it, and it is *hard*. It is *boring*. Why go through all of that? I can find lots of other things to do with my time that are more fun, why drudge my way through that old book?” Even if you mean no disrespect, **“What makes the Bible so significant that I can’t afford to ignore it?”**

Maybe we should start by asking **what does the word “relevant” mean?** Some synonyms are “pertinent, applicable, significant, appropriate or important”. So when we ask, “Is the Bible relevant?” what we are really saying is, “Is the Bible *pertinent* to my life? Is its message and teaching *applicable* to me? Would its counsel be *significant* for my life? Is what it has to say *appropriate* to where I am in life? Would it fit with *my* situation in life? Is what it contains *important* for my *present* life, or my *future*, going forward from here, ...or *both*? The answer to all of these questions is a resounding **YES!!!** In fact, **I cannot express how critically significant and important the Bible can be for you, if you will read it and apply its teachings to your life. You are never too young or too old for what it has to say.** It is right on time with practical and personal guidance *for you* at this particular stage in *your* life. Furthermore, **if you will take the time to study and follow its wisdom, you will save yourself from waste, pain, heartache and disaster, and will be able to build a better foundation for your future** (Matt. 7:24-27).

You see, **the Bible is *not* just a bunch of stories, or a religious history book.** Understanding what the Bible *is*, and what it is *for*, will help us learn how to approach it to read it *effectively* and benefit from what it has to say. **It is a historical record of God’s interaction with people**, but it is more than that. **It is a record of the unfolding of God’s plan to save humankind** from the confusion, corruption and consequences of human sin. **It warns us of the deception, distraction, devastation and destruction at work in the world around us**, directed against us by the devil, his demons and the evil world system around us. **It is a record of generation after generation of people *just like us*, who lived in the midst of these opposing agendas.** **We can learn from *their* mistakes**, and *avoid* the pain and disaster they brought into their lives by their poor choices. **We can benefit from the examples of men and women of faith and courage**, who overcame the pressures of the world around them and accomplished great things for God and were a blessing to others. **It is a testimony of love**, a dramatic account of God’s patient preparation for the greatest love-risk in history, the investment of His own life for *yours*, **so that you might know and appreciate Him as the One who loves you more than any other.** Are you going to let *that* story be unread and unappreciated? It not only tells us about the ancient past, to help us understand how we got to where we are today, but it also tells us what is to come. **Do you want to know what is going to happen at the end of the age? Read your Bible!**

**Did you know that God’s word can bring health to your physical body?** (Prov. 4:20-22) **Did you know that His word can give you emotional peace?** (Psalm 119:165; Prov. 3:1,2) **Did you know that His word can restore your inner strength?** (Psa. 19:7; 119:25) **Did you know that His word can make even simple people wise?** (Psa. 19:7; 119:98-100) **Did you know that it can bring you joy?** (Psa. 19:8; 119:14) **Did you know that God’s word can help you move forward in life, and give you success?** (Josh. 1:8; Deut. 30:9,10) **Did you know that His word was given to you to be a benefit, to protect and help you through life?** (Deut. 6:24; 10:13) **Did you know that God’s word can help you be a better parent, and enable your children to do well in life?** (Deut. 4:40; 5:29; 6:1-7; Prov. 22:6) **Did you know that His word can help you live longer?** (Deut. 4:40; 5:16; Prov. 3:1,2). **Did you know that studying and following His word can help you overcome bad habits and bondages to sin?** (Jn. 8:31-36) **Do you understand that learning and following God’s word will bring His favor, blessing and protection into your life?** (Deut. 28:1-14; Prov. 3:1-26)

*So, if you want to be healthy, happy, emotionally and physically well, ...if you want to move ahead and have success in life, ...if you want to have good relationships and raise your children to be a blessing and to do well in life, ...if you want to have people think well of you and respect you, ...and if you want to live a rich, full life, with the*

***blessing of God watching over you and your family, then God's word is very relevant!!! And, of course, if you want God's will for your life, it is indispensable.***

I don't know too many people who would *consciously choose* to become physically sick, or an emotional wreck, ...full of sadness, depression, anxiety, bitterness and unforgiveness..., or who would *want* to get stuck in a dead-end job, ...or would *desire* to struggle with money woes, ...or who would *prefer* relationships full of arguing, disrespect, deceit and betrayal, ...or who *want* to raise their children to become argumentative and disrespectful, or *desire* their kids' lives to end in disaster or shame. No one *wants* to be the butt of gossip and have a reputation of dishonor or disgrace, or have the wrath and judgment of God coming down on their head. **Most people don't plan to die young, or end up in ruin, beat up, bruised and broken by life, ...yet it happens every day!**

**Why? Because people do not take the time to carefully plan their way in life.** They do not take seriously that this world can be a dangerous and deadly place to those who are careless, impulsive and foolish. They are deceived into believing that they are immune to the tragedies and negative consequences that others get into. **They are blind and naïve to the snares and traps of the enemy.** In many cases, the family backgrounds and social groups they come from are so entrenched in unhealthy and destructive patterns that they are "set up to fail". The consequences of their parents' sins *are* visited upon them, so that **what is unhealthy appears to be "normal" to them.** What is tragic comes to be *expected*, and hardly raises an eyebrow. How *sad!* What do the scriptures say? "It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A dog returns to its own vomit,' and, 'A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire'" (2 Peter 2:22). The "default pattern" they learned growing up, or that promoted by our culture, is all screwed up, and leads to disaster. However, "disaster" is happening to so many, we don't even think we are doing too badly, after all! **Unfortunately, many of the "religious crowd" are doing no better, because they often don't read and follow the counsel of God, either.** They get their navigational signals more from the world around them than from God's word. Remember, **God doesn't give you a "free pass" just because you believe in Him, or go to church. The consequences still follow bad or foolish choices.** The word, "consequence", literally means that it "sequentially follows with" the choice being made. God very clearly tells us that we will reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7).

**So, why study the Bible? Because it is a God-given resource to guide us in life.** Isaiah 59 describes the plight of those who are giving no heed to God or His counsel, "We grope along the wall like blind men, we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at midday as in the twilight, among those who are vigorous we are like dead men."<sup>11</sup> All of us growl like bears, and moan sadly like doves..." (vss. 10,11a). **We can either try to figure things out as we go, hoping that we don't get caught in traps, snares and consequences that are too damaging, ...or we can utilize the help God has given us to "light our way".** The Bible says that God's word is a "lamp to our feet and a light to our path." Can you remember times when you were stumbling around in the darkness, trying to find your way, and tripped over something? Did you stub your toe? Why? Because you *thought* your way was safe and clear, but it *wasn't*. Did it matter that you *believed* that there was no danger? Actually, this *false belief* could have made things *worse*, because you were not being as cautious as you might have been if you had thought there might be danger. **One of the sad realities is that many people do not grasp the permanence or finality of some of the consequences we can bring into our lives.** We don't always get "do-over's" in life. Sometimes we are forever scarred or diminished by the consequences we produce. We cannot undo what we have done. We had better choose well, because we only go through life one time. We don't get a second run-through. God can take our worst mistakes and work them out for a good end, if we love Him and want to serve Him (Rom. 8:28), but the original possibilities may be forever lost to us.

**The Bible is like a gold mine. It is rich in treasure.** Some of it may be on the surface, easily picked up and cashed in. **Most of the truth-treasure, however, requires a little work on our part. We have to dig for it.** We need to pull out the rough pieces, clean them off and refine them before we can appreciate the brilliance of them. **We shouldn't be surprised that the Bible is difficult for a beginner.** We are reading about God's interaction with people in another time, a different setting, and with circumstances that are often very different from our own. Interspersed among all this background "dirt", if you will, are these important, timeless truths. Most of them are clear enough for even the novice; though some may require a bit more expertise or understanding to uncover, clean up and utilize. **Just because something is hard or uncomfortable does not mean it is not worth pursuing, however.** I have worked with hundreds of people, and most of them find it difficult to read the scriptures, initially. It doesn't take long, however, for them to develop the skill and understanding to find their time in the word of God to be most rewarding. **What matters is the openness and expectation of the heart. God will reveal Himself and His truths to you as you read, if you really want to understand and follow His will.**