



The New Life in Christ

Lesson 3

The Word of God in our Everyday Lives

Israel in the Wilderness

The Old Testament tells us the wonderful account of how God rescued His people, Israel, out of the land of Egypt. They had been slaves there for over two hundred years; they were cruelly treated by the king (called Pharaoh) who tried to kill all the baby sons born to the Jews. Israel cried to God to tell Him of their troubles; He heard their cry and sent them a saviour, Moses, to rescue them from Egypt. Their salvation depended on them obeying *exactly* God's words through Moses. Failure to obey would lead to death. They were commanded to keep the Passover feast together on one night. They were told to stay in their houses until God called them then, on that same night, they had to leave Egypt together. God told them that Moses would lead them to the land of Israel, the land He had promised to Abraham many years before.

When they left, they were pursued by Pharaoh's armies to the bank of the Red Sea. One of the great miracles in the Bible is that of God parting the water of the Red Sea so that Israel could cross to the other side – and then God drowned the Egyptian army as it tried to follow. The Apostle Paul tells us that this was a type of baptism:

"Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea."
1Corinthians 10:2

Within months Israel had travelled to Sinai to receive God's laws. They eagerly promised Moses that they would obey this God who had just saved them.

"The LORD called to Moses out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel..."

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him.

All the people answered together and said, "**All that the LORD has spoken we will do.**"
Exodus 19:3-8

It was in their everyday lives that God now tested them to see if they really meant what they said. When they were hungry and thirsty, would they remember God's words and trust Him or would they forget what He had told them? One of the saddest events in the Bible is the record of how all the adults (except two) who made this promise to God failed Him and died in the wilderness because of their sins. They never reached the Promised Land.

Just before he died, Moses taught the children of those who perished a great lesson for their own lives so that they too would not fail.

"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it,

that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.
You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.
You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

This message is unmistakable; *God's words must be part of their everyday lives*. They were to talk about them continually and to teach their children about them. It was only by making the Scriptures part of *everything* they did that they would be able to remember the importance of God's words and to obey them.

Look at this comparison between the Children of Israel and ourselves. Our lives are like theirs!

The Children of Israel

They were slaves in Egypt.

The Passover lamb was provided by God as a sacrifice to save them.

Israel left a life of slavery in Egypt.

Israel crossed the Red Sea.

The people were given God's Laws.

They were told that these Laws must be part of their everyday lives.

Israel disobeyed God and died in the wilderness. They did not reach the Promised Land.

Disciples of Jesus Today

Before baptism we are slaves to sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ was provided by God. He died on the cross to save us.

We must leave our old life of slavery to sin.

We must be baptized.

We are given God's Word to guide our new lives.

We must read the Bible everyday and let it influence and guide everything we do.

If the Bible is not part of our everyday lives we shall not reach the Kingdom of God.

What Does the Bible Mean to You?

It is sometimes surprising to meet disciples who are not really interested in reading and learning from the Bible in their everyday lives but who expect to be part of the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns. If we do not find God's Word exciting and inspiring now, if we do not want to learn from it *every* day, why should we expect a place in a future Kingdom in which the Bible will be the at the centre of life for evermore?

Please think about the following questions and try to answer them honestly for yourself.

1. Why is the Bible important to you? Does it just make you feel 'important' to own one or is it a precious part of your life?
2. How often do you open it and read it? Every day? Every week? Just sometimes? Do you read all of it or just your favourite passages?
3. Can you find your way around it? Do you know where the book of Psalms is? Where Jude is? Where Micah is?
4. Can you find Bible passages to tell other people what you believe?
5. Can you quote from memory Bible passages to support what you believe?
6. Does the Bible thrill and excite you as the Word of God?
7. Does reading the Bible help you to change the way you live and behave in your life? If so how?

Why is it Difficult to Understand?

Parts of the Bible are difficult to understand. God has not written it in a way that tells us all the answers as soon as we turn to it. Look at these words:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD."
Isaiah 55:8

In our last lesson we saw that repentance must lead to a complete change in our lives. We must leave our old life behind and begin a new life which is 'God centred' rather than 'self centred'. This is especially hard at the beginning. We find that we cannot easily understand God's words. His ideas and His thoughts are pure and lovely. Our thoughts and minds are sinful. We have to develop a new way of thinking – making God's thoughts and God's ways our own. Where do we learn of these – from the Bible, but we have to search them out. If we are to be kings – that is to share the Kingdom of God with Jesus Christ when he returns, then we need to search out from the Scriptures everything that God teaches us about Himself and His purpose. The more we do this, the more our faith in Him will grow.

"It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out."
Proverbs 25:2

The Inspired Word of God

The Bible makes a unique claim for itself; it is 'inspired' which simply means 'God breathed'. Just as we use the breath in our lungs to power our voice and make ourselves heard, so the Bible gives us a picture of God speaking words to us.

The Apostle Paul wrote about this in his letter to Timothy:

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

2Timothy 3:14-17

There are a number of very important points made in these verses.

1. **All of the Bible** is inspired; we find as much encouragement and help in Old Testament books as we do in the Gospel message. Without **every** word our spiritual development as disciples of Jesus will be incomplete.
2. How can we learn about the 'good works' that we should do in our lives unless we read about them in the Bible?
3. Timothy has **learned** about God from the Bible. His study has made him **firmly believe** the **truthfulness** of these things – his faith has been **increased**. (Note that he had been taught about the Bible from being a child. When we look at 2Timothy 1:5 it is probable that he was taught by his mother and grandmother. This is a very powerful lesson about how we should teach our children and grandchildren).
4. Now he must **continue** in the things he has learned. This is an important point. He cannot just say that he now knows enough and need not read and study the Bible anymore, Bible reading is an essential ongoing part of his everyday life.

No wonder Jesus taught that:

"Man shall not live on bread alone, but by **every** word that comes from the mouth of God."
Matthew 4:4

Why it is Important to Read the Bible

We know that if we do not eat regularly we will starve to death; physical food is essential for life. Spiritual food from the Bible is just as essential. Without daily spiritual food from the Bible we will die spiritually and God's Kingdom will be lost to us. If we feed on the Word of God every day then we will grow spiritually.

- It is a living and active word which helps us to examine our hearts honestly to see what really motivates us (Hebrews 4:12).
- It strengthens us to resist the desire to sin which is there in each one of us (Psalm 119:9-11).
- It is able to build us up and make us spiritually strong (Acts 20:32, 1Peter 2:1-2)
- It rebukes us when we are wrong (2Timothy 3:16)
- It helps us to keep ourselves separate from a wicked world (John 17:14-17)
- It increases our faith (Romans 10:17)
- It gives us examples of how we should live our lives as Godly men and women (Colossians 3:1-17)
- It reveals to us God's purpose for the earth and for the men and women who will live on it in His Kingdom (Psalm 72)
- Above everything else, it tells us about the love of God in providing the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation – and about how we must show this love to others. (1John 4:7-21)

The Word made Flesh

The most important reason for reading the Bible is that it teaches us about Jesus Christ. He is described as the 'Word made flesh'. By this we understand that he lived according to God's Word every moment of every day. For him indeed it was 'a lamp to my feet and a light for my path' (Psalm 119:105). It was his Bible which showed him how to live every part of every day in a way which pleased his Father. Just before he died on the cross, Jesus prayed to his Father for his disciples (we find this prayer in John 17). He said that he had completed the work God gave him to do. He had taught his followers about God; he had given them both God's message and the exact words God had spoken to him.

"For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment- what to say and what to speak.

And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."
John 12:49-50

These things were vital for them because he was about to leave them and to ascend to heaven. What did they need to be strong in his absence? – The Word of God! 'Sanctify them (make them holy) by the truth; your word is truth,' he prayed.

This prayer is for us today as well. It is through the Word of God in our lives every day that we will grow spiritually to be like Jesus. It will help us to keep ourselves separate from an evil world and will help us to be ready to meet the Lord Jesus Christ at his return.

Checklist for Spiritual Growth

1. Read part of the Bible every day. Use the Bible Reading Planner or the Bible Companion provided by your tutor to ensure that you read all parts of the Bible.
2. Before you read, pray that God will help you to understand what you read.
3. If you have a family encourage them to read with you.
4. Keep a list of questions in a notebook about what you read and do not understand. You can then ask your tutor or any Christadelphians for help with the answers to these questions.
5. Meditate on (think about) what you read. If you can find a quiet time to do this, then this is the best way. Also, in your everyday life think about what you have read from the Bible and try to apply the lessons you have learned.