

“Life’s Most Important Instruction Book”

No Regrets Breakout Session

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Description:

We’ve heard a lot about it. We’ve read portions of it, or maybe even all of it. We’ve understood some of it, but to be honest, some of it confuses us. It’s supposed to help us, but we never seem to have time to read it. We know it has important answers, but we may not even know where to find them. We’re talking about the Bible. What’s it all about? Why is it important? We’ll look at these questions and more in this session about “Life’s Most Important Instruction Book.”

Biography:

Brian T. Whitaker is a pastor and author living in Wausau. He has a passion for relating biblical truth to everyday life, to draw people closer to Christ. Brian’s most recent published works are *Christmas for the Family – A Short Novel* and *Christmas Hope – A Short Novel*. He writes regularly on four blogs, including “Christian Husbands and Fathers,” “Help for Widows and Widowers,” and “Whitaker Writings.” Brian is married to Kristin, and they have three children. You can read more on his website: www.whitakerwritings.com.

Outline

1. Introduction

2. Why is the Bible important?

a. The Bible is “Life’s Most Important Instruction Book.”

Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 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.

Matthew 4:1-11

b. What the Bible says about itself

1) It’s the very Word of God

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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.

2 Peter 1:20-21

...no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2) It’s essential to life in Christ

Psalm 19:7-9

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

Proverbs 4:13

Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.

Matthew 4:4

But [Jesus] answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Deuteronomy 32:46-47

Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land....”

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

John 8:31-32

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

3) There's blessing in following it

Jeremiah 15:16

Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts.

Psalms 1:1-2

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Joshua 1:8

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

4) It's Truth with a capital "T"

John 17:14-17

"I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by your truth; your word is truth."

Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

Luke 24:44-45

Then [Jesus] said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

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Psalms 119 – The longest chapter in the Bible is completely about the value of the Word of God.

Here are some selected verses:

9 – How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

11 – I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

80 – May my heart be blameless in your statutes, that I may not be put to shame!

89 – Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

93 – I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life.

105 – Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

111 – Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.

160 – The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

2 Chronicles 34 – whole chapter, but especially v. 27:

“Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD.”

3. If the Bible is so important, why is it so hard to read and study it?

1 Peter 5:8-9

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith....

Blog posts:

“Why I Stopped Brushing My Teeth”

“A Battle Worth Fighting”

4. How do I READ the Bible?

a. Start with a good translation

b. Start (or restart or continue) a daily habit

1) Set a time and place

2) Make a reading plan

Read through the Bible in a year?

* 1189 chapters in the 66 books of the Bible

* At “pulpit reading” pace (reading from the front of the church), it takes about 70 hours to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

* If you read 4 chapters a day, you will finish the entire Bible in 10 months.

* If you want to spread it out over an entire year, read 3 chapters a day, and five on Sundays

For Bible reading plans, visit www.bibleyear.com

3) Be Creative

c. Lean on the Power of the Holy Spirit

John 14:15-17

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another

Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

John 16:13

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

d. Join with others who study the Bible together

5. How do I STUDY the Bible?

a. Ask good questions

*What does this passage tell me about God?

b. Use good tools to study the Bible

1) Study Bible

2) Dictionary or Bible Dictionary

3) Concordance (obsolete)

4) Other Tools (Bible Atlas, Commentaries)

5) Computer Programs, Apps, and Online Tools

* Olive Tree Bible Reader (also called Bible+)
www.olivetree.com

* Blue Letter Bible
www.blueletterbible.org

* You Version
www.youversion.com

* Bible Gateway
www.biblegateway.com

* Logos Bible Software
www.logos.com

d. Interpret Scripture with Scripture

e. What about passages which seem to contradict?

6. Remember: Our task is more than studying – it's living it out!

James 1:22-25

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

Matthew 7:24-27

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against the house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

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."

7. Conclusion

Whitaker Writings – www.whitakerwritings.com

Also check out my blogs:

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