Why we must have Personal Devotions

(The Necessity of a Quiet time alone with God – Part 1: The Word of God)

8/3/16

Introduction:

**** No Disciple can live successfully without a Daily Quiet Time in God's Word***

Every Day I must Read God's Word because…

I. I need <u>Spiritual Nutrition</u> for my health, strength, & growth
(I Pet.2:2; Heb.5:14)

II. I need a <u>Cleansing Bath</u> from the filth & defilement of sin
(Psalm 119:9)

III. I need an <u>Accurate Reflection</u> of my life from God's perspective
(James 1:25)

IV. I need <u>Guidance & Direction</u> into God's Will for my day
(Ps. 119:1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 105)

V. I need a <u>Defensive Weapon</u> to fight off Satanic deception & temptation
(Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17)

VI. I need a <u>Valuable Lesson</u> from God's School of "Higher Learning"
(2 Tim. 3:16-17)

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God has spoken!

The Bible is not just any book. It is God's Word! Eight Rational Proofs for Inspiration

1. Unity - The Bible was written by means of 40 different writers, in three languages (Hebrew and Aramaic - O.T.; Greek - N.T.), over a 1,500 year period, and yet the Scriptures have only one theme: namely, Jesus Christ and His salvation of mankind through His sacrificial and substitutionary death (See: Lk. 24:25-27; Jn. 5:39, 46; Acts 10:43, 18:28; I Cor. 15:3).

2. Prophecy - Fulfilled by Jesus at His first coming (Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:27; Jn. 19:24)
   The odds of only 8 prophecies fulfilled by Christ would be 1 in 280,000 plus 27 zeros (See: Hefley - p.24,25; "What's so great about the Bible" David C. Cook Pub. Co.)
   EX: Ps. 22 - written about 1,000 B.C.
   Is. 53 - written about 750 B.C.

3. Honesty - Shows people as they really are. The Bible's heroes are not "sugar-coated!" Rather, the faults of even the greatest are brought out (Abraham, Moses, David, Peter).
   The Bible also describes sin as it is; heaven and hell as they are; and God as He is (example of the tension between election and free will - If man wrote the Bible, he would have relieved it).

4. Durability - The Bible has lasted through the ages, though attempts have been made to exterminate this Book as no other (EX: Jer. 36:1-2, 27-28).

   Voltaire, the French infidel, said: "Another century, [and] there will not be another Bible on earth." After his death, his printing press was used to print Bibles!

5. Power - To change (transform) lives.

6. Freshness - George Mueller said: "*I read through the Bible 100 times, and each time it is new to me.*"

7. Scientific Accuracy -
   The earth is round (a circle) (Is.40:22)
   The earth hands on nothing (Job 26:7)
   The life of the flesh is in the blood (Gen 9:4; Lev. 17:11)
   Circumcision on the 8th. day (Lev.12:3)
   universal flood
   Uncountable multitude of stars (Gen.15:5; Jer.33:22)
   Plants and animals reproduce only after their kind (species) (Gen.1)
8. Historical Accuracy

Proven by - Recent archaeological discoveries (cities discovered; customs proven etc.)
Comparing the Bible with other historical writings contemporary with the Bible (Ex. Josephus)

God has providentially guarded (protected) His Word.

Promises of Preservation

a. *Psalm 119:89 - "Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven" ("settled" = stands firm).*

b. *Psalm 119:152 - "Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever."*

c. *Psalm 119:160 - "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever."*

d. *Isaiah 40:8 - "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever."*

e. *Matthew 5:18 - "For verily (truly) I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled" (cp. Lk. 16:17).*

f. *Matthew 24:35 - "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."*

g. *I Peter 1:23-25 - "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."*

You need to take in God's Word daily...

The Bible is a Book of Power. It has the power to totally transform your life!
"Transformation" - The Holy Spirit's use of the Bible to change (totally transform) a person's life from condemnation to salvation and from sin unto Godliness.

**** No Disciple can live successfully without a Daily Quiet Time in God's Word***

Ro 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Every Day I must Read God's Word because…

I. I need <u>Spiritual Nutrition</u> for my health, strength, & growth

The Bible is <u>Nourishing Food</u>

... so that you can <u>grow</u> into maturity (I Pet.2:2; Heb.5:14)

a. It is <u>milk</u> that causes growth (I Pet. 2:2)

b. It is <u>meat</u> that gives strength (Heb. 5:14; I Cor. 3:1-3)

I Peter 2:2 -
"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"
V. 2

"As newborn babes" = as recently-born nursing babies.

Babies have a natural desire for milk. They are born with a natural instinct to suck. They crave milk. They can't make it without their "bottle."

Only milk satisfies the hunger of an infant. Those mothers who experienced the joy of 2:00 a.m. feedings know exactly what Peter means (Barbieri, p. 47).

Peter is not necessarily addressing young Christians; rather he is saying that all of us,, no matter how old in the Lord, should be like newly born babes and share their intense craving for milk.

"Desire" - Aorist imperative meaning to "begin desiring," to "start desiring."

Apparently, the people to whom Peter writes had lost their appetite for God's Word, so Peter exhorts them to regain it.

"Desire" - to long for; to crave; to have an intense hunger.

David had such a craving for God (Psalm 42:1-2 - *"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"*).

SEE: Psalm 119:20, 40, 131. David was a man *"after God's own heart"* as evidenced by his love for God's Word (Ps. 119:47, 97, 127, 163, 165). God's Word was sweeter than honey (v. 103) and of more value than silver and gold (v. 72).

The fact that God commands us to have a *"desire"* for His Word, tells me that such "desire" is not always automatically in our hearts.

We need to be exhorted to "desire" God's Word.

The Bible is to the soul what milk is to the body.

> ***"Sincere" =*** EX: In America, many milk containers and milk products have the word "real" printed in bold red letters to emphasize the pure, genuine, pasteurized,a nd homogenized nature of the milk in the container.
>
> ***"Sincere" -*** [*adolos* - a negated form of *dolos* (guile - v. 1)] The word means without guile, without deceit, without impurity.
>
> The Word of God is pure, unadulterated, uncontaminated.

This word was used of corn, wheat, barley, oil, wine, and other farm products that were free of contamination (Reinecker, p. 750).

The Bible is genuine; it is pure. It only tells the truth, always; it will never deceive.

Because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, it has no impurities or contaminants introduced by man.

"Milk" - the Bible is called "milk" because like milk it is a basic necessity to life. It nourishes our spiritual life, like milk nourishes our physical bodies.

Calling upon believers to crave the *"milk"* of the Word is by no means implying that believers were not mature enough to handle the *"meat"* of the Word (cp. Heb. 5:12-14; I Cor. 3:2). God is simply showing our need for the basic nutrition found in God's Word.

Why should believers consume the Word? ***"That [hina] you may grow thereby."***

Christian maturity comes only to those who have a daily intake of the Word of God.

You see, you mature as your faith grows; and your faith can only grow as you learn, trust, and obey God's Word (*"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the Word of God"* - Rom. 10:17).

The word ***"grow"*** is passive, indicating that the growth is not self-induced.

Just as you have no control over you speed and rate of growth physically (you simply eat, sleep, and exercise, and somehow the growth process occurs irrespective of your desire to grow [Mt. 6:27]), so, if you consume God's Word, the Word will cause you to grow.

You cannot independently manufacture your own spiritual growth. God causes you to grow as you receive the needed nutrients of His Word.

The critical text reads: "that you may grow in respect to salvation."

NOTE: One does not grow into receiving salvation (obtaining salvation requires "birth" [the new birth], not growth). But one does grow into the benefits and blessings of his/her salvation (cp. Phil. 2:12) by a daily drinking of the Word.

You can measure your spiritual growth by the quantity of the Word you are drinking in daily:much milk - much growth
little milk - little growth
no milk - no growth

Our physical bodies drink milk and only grow to a certain level and then stop (EX: 6'2"). There is no limit, however, to the growth we experience by drinking in God's Word.

Your spiritual maturity as a Christian will increase in direct proportion to the amount of time, interest, and diligence you invest in the Word (cp. Barbieri, p. 47).

Unfortunately, Bible reading for many is like an "occasional snack" that barely provides any substantial fullness to our spiritual stomachs.

Col. 3:16 says, however, that you should *"let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"*

How strong is your appetite for God's Word? You answer is "an index of your Christian health" (Hiebert, p. 124).

Do you want to know why you feel "weak" spiritually? Why you have no power over your fleshly impulses? Why you struggle to do what is right? etc. The reason is because you have neglected your milk!

There are a lot of spiritually malnourished, dehydrated, weak Christians struggling with their walk with the Lord. The reason: they are not drinking their milk.

II. I need a <u>Cleansing Bath</u> from the filth & defilement of sin

The Bible is <u>water</u>

... so that you can have a <u>clean</u> <u>heart</u> (Eph. 5:26)

Ephesians 5:26- *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"*

Joh 17:17 <u>Sanctify</u> <u>them</u> through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Ps 119:9 Wherewithal shall a young man <u>cleanse</u> his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

III. I need an <u>Accurate Reflection</u> of my life from God's perspective

The Bible is a <u>Mirror</u>

...so that you can <u>see yourself</u> as <u>God sees you</u> (James 1:23-25)

It reflects the mind of God and the true nature and condition of man.

James 1:23-25 - *"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.* ***But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein****, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."*

Ro 7:7 What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, <u>except</u> <u>the</u> <u>law</u> had said, Thou shalt not covet.

IV. I need <u>Guidance & Direction</u> into God's Will for my day

The Bible is a <u>Lamp and Light</u>

... so that you can have <u>guidance</u> and <u>direction</u> into God's Will for your life (Ps. 119:1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 105)

Psalm 119:105 - *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

It offers <u>protection</u> from danger and <u>guidance</u> into the right way.

V. I need a <u>Defensive Weapon</u> to fight off Satanic deception & temptation

Matthew 4:4

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Note Christ's response to Satan's Test:

1) He did not ignore the temptation (took positive action to overcome it).
2) He did not defend Himself. He could have said, "Satan, this feat is no problem for me, but I refuse to obey you."
3) He did not reason with Satan.

Note Christ's Weapon: The Word of God

1) This shows the Bible's authority.
2) This shows the Bible's continuing relevancy.
   The verse was originally stated some 1,400 years ago, yet still was useful.
3) This shows the Bible`s varied applicability.
   Was originally given to Israel, and now is used against Satan.
4) This shows the Bible's suitability - to handle needs of all occasions.
5) This shows the Bible's inspiration - "God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16); "every word" (v. 4)

NOTE: Though Christ's words while on earth had equal authority with the written Word--He appealed to the written Word!

How much more should we?

The Bible is a Sword

...so that you can fight the enemy (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17)

Hebrews 4:12 - *"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

Ephesians 6:17 - *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"*

a. The Holy Spirit's offensive and defensive weapon is the Bible (Eph. 6:17). God is speaking by no other means today.

b. According to Heb. 4:12, the Bible as a sword is:

   (1) Living ("quick" KJV)
   (2) Powerful
   (3) Piercing - ("sharper...piercing")
   (4) Penetrating ("dividing asunder")
   (5) Convicting ("discerner [judge] of the thoughts and intents of the heart")

VI. I need a Valuable Lesson from God's School of "Higher Learning"

2 Tim. 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and 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.