



**Introduction:** *This Sunday we come to the end of our series on Intentional Discipleship. The previous nine weeks have covered ways in which we can be more proactive about living the Jesus way in many areas of our lives. All these sermons have used the Bible for reference, instruction and the Holy Spirit's illumination. Today we focus on how to intentionally nourish ourselves with the Word of God.*

**Read Psalm 119: 105-112.**

**1. The Word of God is Truth      Verses 105-107**

- It's important to reference our lives with the truths found in the Bible rather than rely on childish ideas remembered from home, School, Sunday School or even on irrational superstitions because .....
- Scripture is 'God breathed' by the Holy Spirit': **2 Timothy 3: 16.**
- The Bible contradicts many common preconceptions about God:
  - 'Jesus was a good man, but not God'. Jesus was with God from the beginning: **John 1: 1-2; 14.**
  - 'You'll go to heaven as long as you have lived a good life'. Nicodemus: **John 3: 3-5; 16.**
  - 'If life is going wrong, God is punishing you'. God is love: never vindictive: **1 John 1: 5 and 4: 7-10**
- Nevertheless, it needs to be read understanding its cultural context, the things that scholarship can teach us and the limits of any translation. We need to discover the underlying principles behind the superficial meaning and beware of being slavishly literalist or of taking verses out of context.

**2. The Word of God is our heritage and teaches us to Grow in Grace      Verses 108-112**

- Key passages learned from the Bible when we were young come in very handy when life gets tough.
- Eg: **Philippians 4: 4-7:**  
Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**3. The Word of God is Unique**

- The Bible is so much more than a book made of paper and ink – it is communicating something very precious: not just what 'God said' ..... but what He **is saying**. Present continuous: so often we read it to discover what God said, rather than to learn what **He is saying**.
- The Bible is 'God-breathed', not just written: God in-spired or in-spirited it. Open it and say 'WOW!'
- The Intentional Disciple will have big questions and may not find answers in a particular chapter or verse of the Bible. They will find that the Bible is a gateway to a personal encounter with the Living God.
- Just reading the Bible is not enough – that's like reading a recipe and never getting round to enjoying the meal. As with food, the Bible nourishes our souls when we savour it and make it become part of us.
- Just knowing the Bible is not enough – that's like buying a car and learning all about its gadgets and joining the club; but never getting in and driving it! Bible Studies should never become an end in themselves.
- When you read the Bible with understanding in your heart:
  - You know the Holy Spirit is waiting *alongside* you before you open the book.
  - You start expecting Him to reveal things to you: to point out things you didn't know.
  - It's a tutorial, a date, a personal audience with your Creator.

**Memory Verse: 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path'. Psalm 119 verse 105**

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**Questions for discussion:**

- 1. Jenny testified to an Ishmael song years ago 'introducing' her to Psalm 119. Can we think of anything similar?**
- 2. Can we think of any passages or statements in the Bible that need to be mined for their underlying principles to make them understandable to 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians?**
- 3. Share any favourite Biblical verses you have learned and have found to be helpful in a particular circumstance.**
- 4. Have you ever thought of reading the Bible as having a 'Personal Audience' with your Creator? WOW!**