

December 22, 2024

The Word of God

Stephen Marcy happened to walk by a dumpster, and he saw a small New Testament Bible lying on top of the garbage. He said, "I thought enough of the Bible not to let it be thrown away, so I took it out. That little New Testament became my constant companion at work and on my subway and bus rides to and from work every day. I began to read it more and more. Although I was a Christian for years, I began to enjoy its truths and inquire into its message more deeply."¹

Is there value in reading the Bible? We need only turn to Paul's letter to Timothy. Writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, the apostle Paul explained why God gave us the Scriptures and why they have value for us: "Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character, so that the person who belongs to God can be equipped to do everything that is good" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

So here we have a succinct statement of what the Scriptures aim to provide for those who love God and want to follow their teachings. But to understand fully what this text tells us, we need to consider some questions about the Bible.

- *Is the Bible a guide on all matters of history, science, and geography?* That has never been its expressed purpose.
- *Is the Bible a rulebook of dos and don'ts?* Certainly, the Bible includes rules and guidelines, and the Ten Commandments provide moral law that has withstood the test of time. But serving as a rulebook is not the Bible's primary function.
- *Is the Bible simply a book of wise sayings?* Wisdom Literature is part of the Bible, and we find wisdom throughout its pages. But that's not all the Bible is for us.
- *Is the Bible a textbook or an instruction manual?* If you answered yes, is that all it is?
- *Is the Bible a reliable guide to cite in support of political positions?* Unfortunately, the Bible has been used in the past by some Christians to defend slavery, segregation, laws forbidding interracial marriage, the subjugation of women, the denials of voting and equal rights for women, and more.

So what, then, is the Bible? Before we board that train, let's remember that the Bible was written for us. God's Word was written to benefit us and written with human beings in mind. We should expect the Bible to help us and free us, not to hurt us or enslave us. The Bible helps us "to be wise" in a way that saves us through faith in Christ (verse 15).

There's a saying that's making the rounds of social media: "The Bible isn't cake for special occasions; it's bread for daily use." How do these ideas affect how you read and understand the Bible?

1. How much time do you spend reading and studying God's Word?
2. Why do you read the Bible?
3. What are the passages in God's Word to which you need to pay more attention?

¹From "A Personal Testimony on the Impact of God's Word," by Stephen Marcy, Good News Apologetics (December 2009).

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