

Engaging the Scripture:

ENCOUNTERING GOD
IN THE PAGES OF HIS WORD

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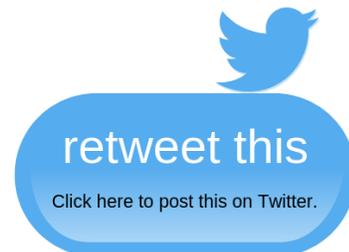
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God's Great Gift

The Bible is one of God's greatest gifts to His people.

Filled with declarations of His nature, it is the very Word of our living and ever-present God. The Bible is a powerful miracle that has been safeguarded for generations. It is our tool and companion in coming to know God.

This gift—Scripture—is vital to soul nourishment.

Second Timothy 3:16 tells us, “*All Scripture is breathed out by God...*” Breathed by Him, it is His very Word recorded and preserved for us.

Additionally, a look through the pages of the Bible reveals much more evidence to the necessity of Scripture to our soul's good health:

- **God speaks to us through Scripture:**

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”

Hebrews 1:1-2

- **The words of the Bible are living and active:**

“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. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12-13

- **Scripture revives our soul and makes the truth known:**
“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” Psalm 19:7
- **It equips us for service:**
“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 complete, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- **The words of Scripture form us into one who can stand strong in the battle:**
“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12
- **The Bible instructs us, encourages us, and helps us endure.**
“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Romans 15:4
- **It helps us come to know God:**
“And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” John 17:3

Spend some additional time in Psalm 119, a chapter replete with the benefits of Scripture! In this one chapter alone, you will find that Scripture nourishes the soul (v. 25), convicts (v. 29), redirects our wayward gaze (v. 37), fills us with hope (v. 49), comforts (v. 50), prompts our praise (v. 62), reassures (v. 75), fosters love (v. 97), leads to wisdom (v. 100), feeds the hungry soul (v. 103), strengthens the weary (v. 107), guards and protects (v. 115), assures us of our inheritance (v. 123), lifts the discouraged (v. 147), and offers peace (v. 165).

All this and more are true of this precious gift of Scripture. Yet perhaps the chief reason the Bible is crucial to the nourishing of our soul is that when we spend time in Scripture, we encounter God. In fact, every time we come to the Bible, we can meet God; we can come to know Him more.

Spending time in the Bible is like stepping into God’s house; we can learn so much about Him by visiting his “home.” Similarly, if you were to step into my house, you would learn much about me from what you notice there. For instance, the many books on the shelves would tell you that I enjoy reading. Toys and sippy cups would be indicators that young children are frequently in my home, and all the photos of my family on display would speak of their value to me. It is the same with the Bible. Everything is there, within its pages, because God desires it to be.

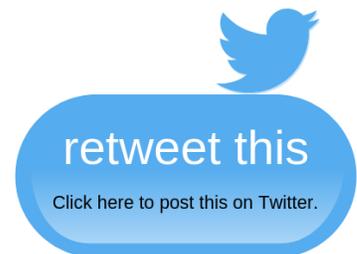
The Importance of Scripture to Jesus

Not only is Scripture of utmost importance to us today, God's Word tells us of its significance to Jesus as He walked this earth:

"But he answered, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4

In essence, Scripture provided His life mission statement. Through it, He was strengthened to resist Satan's temptations and taught to compose the Lord's Prayer. Scripture inspired His wisdom and helped Him to endure the agony of the cross. It was Jesus' intimacy with God's words that empowered Him to overcome by the love of the Father and the power of the Spirit.

Just as Scripture was of most importance to Jesus as He walked the earth, it is vital to the health of our soul today. Whether we truly understand just how vital, most of us desire to spend time in God's Word. As children of the King, we want to know His will and to have His Word inform our lives. We want to know Him and to live transformed lives. Yet, we struggle.



Personal Reflection

1. This chapter is filled with the necessities or benefits of Scripture to the health of our soul. Step into “God’s house” by opening your Bible to some of the verses listed in this chapter. What do these Scriptures tell you about God?
2. Spend time daily filling your mind with Scripture:
 - Open your Bible to Psalm 119 or Psalm 19.
 - Sit with the Scripture and read straight through the passage.
 - Pull up an audio version and listen as the words are read aloud to you.
 - Print out a copy and highlight each “benefit” of Scripture.
3. In your current life season, how do the following verses and Jesus’ example speak to you about the importance of Scripture?

“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.” Hebrews 4:12

“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.” Colossians 3:16

4. Pray. Ask God to fill you with a hunger and thirst for His Word, to reveal your areas of struggle with Bible reading, and to open your heart and mind to this precious spiritual discipline.

