

WEEK 2:

God Revealed

by High School Pastor
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WEEK TWO:

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MEMORY VERSE

“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

INTRODUCTION

Having spent last week immersed in the intricacies of the Gospel, rehearsing the glories of what God has done for us in Christ, a logical follow-up question is, “But how do we know all this?” God has done glorious things. From creation to redemption, from sanctification to glorification, God has worked with unmatched power and glory. He is the fullness of truth, goodness, and beauty. But how do we know this? We know it because he has revealed it to us. We would have no access to these realities if God did not make them known. Amongst all the marvelous attributes of God we learned about last week, we can add that he is the God who reveals. What are the implications of this? Where does he reveal himself? Why does he reveal himself? What is the purpose of his revealing? Let’s focus on these questions together this week.

God Reveals Himself

All that you see in this world is the revelation of the God who created it. God’s act of revealing himself is the basis of how we relate to the creator God. There is much to be said about how we know this, the purpose of this revelation, and different types of revelation. The goal of this week’s devotions will be to flesh out these essential questions, but first, let’s start with the following assertion.

God has revealed himself in creation and in his Word by his grace unto the salvation of his people for his glory alone.

In Creation

Psalms 19:1-2 says, *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.”* Creation itself sings of our God. All of creation declares the majesty of the creator God. Romans 1:19-20 states this similarly, *“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.”* God has made himself known in creation.

In His Word

Though creation itself pours forth speech of God, declaring his glory, he has spoken particularly in his Word. The Scriptures are the words of God given to his people that they may know him. Consider our memory verse for this week, *“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 Scriptures we hold in our hands, we preach from every Sunday, we memorize and meditate on, are the very words of the living God. He has spoken them, and in doing so has revealed to us who he is.

By His Grace

Now we should not get far in thinking of these things before we remember that it is by his grace alone that he has revealed these things to us. By his mercy and kindness, he has rolled back the skies and given us a view into his infinite glory. By his grace and love, he has breathed out the ever-living declaration of who he is in his Word. We are heirs of this knowledge by the generous bestowing of our God.

This reality should cause us to do at least two things. First, we should praise him from our gratitude. We should live lives thankful for the blessing of revelation. We should take up the Scriptures, not begrudgingly, but with thankfulness to the God who, in his grace, reveals himself, and kindly placed his Word in our hands. Approach the Scriptures with thankfulness. And secondly, this should cause us to be responsible heralds of the Word. We should devote ourselves to knowing this God who has revealed himself. We have a great responsibility to not make

light of such a beautiful treasure. Let us cling to the words of eternal life (John 6:68). And as heralds of the Word, let us point others to this revelation. God has revealed himself to us, so let us bear witness to him.

Unto Salvation

We believe that God has revealed himself to us for a purpose. He has made himself known to us so that we may know him, love him, and praise him. Isaiah 55:10-11 says, *“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out of my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”* The Word of God is going all through the earth and producing faith (Romans 10:17). It is through this faith that we are saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8). The Gospel revealed in the Word of God is our hope of salvation, we would not know the Gospel if it were not for God revealing it to us in his Word.

For His Glory

The last thing we will consider today is that God reveals himself for his glory. All of creation and the Word of God is the theater of God's glory. God has revealed himself so that his blessedness would be known and put on display. The majesty of the King is worthy of all honor and praise. The more that we know God, the more we will glorify and honor him. God's glory is the culmination and purpose of all things.

DEVOTIONAL

Day One The God Who Reveals**The Beauty of God's Self-Disclosure**

At the center of all that we know is the revelation of God. John Calvin put it this way at the beginning of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*: “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” God has revealed himself. That we have any understanding of who God is, what he has done, and what he is doing, is because he has taken it upon himself to show us. God’s revelation of himself is beautiful, profound, and humbling as it bridges the gap between heaven and earth. In revealing himself to us, he makes us heirs of things too wonderful for us (Job 42:3). Today, let’s consider some of the implications of reality that God reveals to us.

Exodus 3:14-15

As Pastor Koby shared last week, towards the beginning of the book of Exodus, God reveals himself to Moses at the burning bush. I’m sure most of us know the story, whether from Sunday School classes, storybook Bibles, or Disney’s *The Prince of Egypt*. This is a story we often encounter early in our Christian walk. This is a deeply important passage to the narrative of Scripture because in it, God reveals to Moses his name. When Moses asks what God’s name is, he responds, “*I AM WHO I AM*” (Exodus 3:14). While this is not a traditional name, it tells us much about who God is.

As we learned last week, God is entirely from himself. No other being can say truthfully “*I AM WHO I AM*,” in the way that God says it here. God is the source, the origin, the creator of all things. Everything that we see and do not see is entirely derived, except for God. God is the Uncreated One, the Creator of all things. Everything in creation derives its being from God, yet God is the only one who is underived. He is entirely from himself. Now this is important because it teaches

us that God is entirely other or transcendent. He is over and above creation in such a way that he needs nothing, can be threatened by nothing; he is infinite and entirely from himself. And yet, he chooses to reveal himself to us. He does not need us, and yet he stoops down to reveal himself to us.

The second half of the passage shows us this. *“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM,’ and he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and this I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”* (Exodus 3:14-15). God reveals himself in three ways. First is the one we previously mentioned, *“I AM WHO I AM,”* the second is like it, *“I AM sent you,”* but the third describes I AM as the God of their fathers. If the first name depicts God as the God who is transcendent, the last depicts God as the God who is near.

Yes, God is entirely over and above all things, transcendent over creation. But he is also the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. He is over and above all things, but he is also in relationship with his people. He is the God who is transcendent, but he is also the God who reveals himself to his people.

IMPLICATIONS

God With Us

God can be known! This staggering and baffling reality is at the heart of the Christian faith. The God who is transcendent, creator, infinite, and glorious beyond measure has brought us into his divine conversation that we may know him. We are not left to wander through our world of mystery—with its pains, trials, grandeurs, paradoxes, beauties, etc., alone and without a guide. God is not distant, stepped back from creation to let us meddle our way through and define our own realities. The fact that God has revealed himself to us teaches us that he is a God who cares to lead us. He is a God who cares to bring us to himself. He is a God who bends to his creatures and gives to us the precious jewel of the knowledge of who he is.

All Things in Relation to Him

One of the classic questions in all of life is “Why am I here? What is my purpose?” Countless stories have been written, movies made, and ballads composed where characters seek this answer in their life. We believe that one of the core purposes for our being here is to reveal who God the Creator is. The purpose of all creation is to proclaim and reflect the glory of the Creator God. If ever you feel purposeless, if ever you think that your life means very little, reject that thought! You were made to reveal the God in whose image you were made.

So often, we can feel the weight of the bounds and limits of creation. What is the point of my life? What is the point of any of this world we wander through? Consider, if the world itself declares the glory and beauty of God, is anything meaningless and pointless? Rather, since all of creation is the self-disclosure of God, all things are immensely valuable. There is not a valueless atom in all of creation.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How do we see both God’s transcendence and nearness in creation and the Word?
2. Write down a moment in your life when God revealed to you more of his character through his Word.
3. In what ways do you, along with the rest of humanity, reflect the glory of God?

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DEVOTIONAL

Day Two General Revelation

Psalm 19 is one of the clearest places in the Scriptures that describes the role of creation in revealing the creator. *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge”* (Psalm 19:1-2).

As we come to the topic of general revelation in theology and doctrine, what is most often discussed is creation’s **inability**. What I mean by that is that most often when general revelation is discussed, it is about the first chapter of Romans’ declaration that general revelation is insufficient to bring humans to a saving relationship with God. Romans 1:18-20 says, *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”* This speaks to the reality that ALL have borne witness to the revelation of God in creation, and we have perceived these things. Yet in every case, in every human, but for Christ, *“for although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened”* (Romans 1:21).

Now, what this teaches us is that God has made himself known in creation, so much so that everyone has perceived him. Yet, we are unable to worship him as we ought, due to our sinfulness, but instead turned to a life contrary to him. It says later, in Romans 1, that we worshiped the creature rather than the creator. Now this brings us to the language of inability. General revelation itself cannot bring someone into proper relationship with God, but it is not because of any lack in the creation, but because of the corruption of sin in humanity. Creation proclaims his invisible attributes; humans perceive these attributes and reject them.

Even the Rocks Will Cry Out

The constant theme throughout Scripture is that creation bows to the will of its creator. From the sun standing still in the sky so that Israel can finish their battle (Joshua 10), to the sea splitting so Israel can walk through on dry land (Exodus 14); from the ravens collecting food to feed Elijah (1 Kings 17:6), to Jesus causing the fish to overflow his disciple's nets (Luke 5:4-7); all creation works for the purposes of God, to reveal his glory and power. The purpose of all things is to proclaim the glory of God. Creation itself participates in the glory of God.

IMPLICATIONS

Enjoyment

One of the joys of relating to the world now through faith is that our eyes have been opened to the grandeur of the God who creates. We see creation from a new perspective and our eyes are opened to the majesty of our God even in things like the distant stars, the earthy dirt beneath our feet, the deer on the hillside, and the scattered trees throughout our world. When we recognize that God is the creator as well as the giver of all good gifts, we can begin to realize the gift of creation around us. God has given us many blessings in his creation to enjoy, so long as we receive them with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:5). The Christian is now able to relate to the creation as we were meant to.

C.S. Lewis states this reality well in *The Problem of Pain* when he says,

“The settled happiness and security which we all desire, God withholds from us by the very nature of the world, but joy, pleasure, and merriment, He has scattered broadcast. We are never safe, but we have plenty of fun, and some ecstasy. It is not hard to see why. The security we crave would teach us to rest our hearts in this world and oppose an obstacle to our return to God: a few moments of happy love, a landscape, a symphony, a merry meeting with our friends, a bath or a football match, have no such tendency. Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.”

Creation is beautiful and to be enjoyed so long as it calls us to admire its

creator, and live in proper relation to it. God has revealed himself in creation; let us behold his beauty and glory in it!

Care for Creation

If God has made his glory and beauty known in creation, shouldn't we care for it? Shouldn't we make an effort to preserve and sustain it? I have often heard the sentiment, "the earth is going to burn one day anyway, why not milk it for all it's worth?" This is the wrong way to relate to God's creation. If creation reveals the beauty and glory of God, is it not something to be treasured and cared for? Adam's role in the Garden of Eden comes to mind. *"The Lord took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it"* (Genesis 2:15). Just as we are to steward all things that God has given us, let us also tend to and care for the creation that the Lord has placed us in.

Seeing Creation Through A Biblical Lens

When we believe, and our eyes are opened to the glories of God in this world, our relationship to God's creation must be different from what it was previously. Romans 1:25 teaches us that before we were made alive in Christ through the Gospel, each and every one of us *"exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator..."* Wrapped up in our sin, we worshiped things rather than the creator of those things. Our lives became about greed, lust, pride, misordered passions and desires, and the like, rather than properly submitting to the Creator and enjoying his creation as we were called to. But! God has made us alive in Christ. He has illuminated our hearts and minds to see him through the eyes of faith.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How should your view of creation change once you become a believer in Jesus Christ?
2. How are God's people called to care for and enjoy God's creation?
3. In what ways does our understanding of creation become a catalyst in our daily life? In evangelism? In worship?

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DEVOTIONAL

Day Three Special Revelation

Psalm 1:1-2 says, *“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.”* He is blessed who LOVES the law of God. We are called to delight ourselves in the Scriptures. This is very often a challenge for us. Far too often, the Scriptures feel to us old and foreign, long and challenging, dull and confusing. How are God’s people to delight themselves in the Bible? Why should they? The answer to these questions is one and the same. The Scriptures are the living testimony of the living God. Within the pages of your Bible are the words of eternal life which reveal the God who loves you.

Do you find that you do not delight in reading the Bible? Give yourself to it, and slowly, perhaps imperceptibly, it will become the delight of your life. You will begin to feel and see and know what Herman Bavinck so clearly says of the Scriptures,

“Holy Scripture is not an arid story or ancient chronicle but the ever-living, eternally youthful Word, which God, now and always, issues to his people... In it, God daily comes to his people. In it, he speaks to his people, not from afar but from nearby. In it, he reveals himself, from day to day, to believers in the fullness of his truth and grace. Through it, he works his miracles of compassion and faithfulness. Scripture is the ongoing rapport between heaven and earth, between Christ and his church, between God and his children. It does not just tie us to the past; it binds us to the living Lord in the heavens.”

As we discussed yesterday, Psalm 19 describes beautifully how God has revealed himself in his creation. But this is not all Psalm 19 has to say about God’s

revelation. The Psalm goes on to describe another aspect of God's revelation: his revealing himself through his Word. If creation implicitly reveals to us who God is, Scripture explicitly reveals to us who God is. The Word of God is the clear and pointed revelation of who God is, and for that reason, we typically refer to it as "special revelation" or "particular revelation."

The Scripture is where God most clearly makes known to us who he is, and Psalm 19:7-11 saves no words in describing its beauty. "*The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple*" (Psalm 19:7). God's revelation of himself in the pages of Scripture is perfect, it is sure; the psalm goes on to say that it is right, pure, clean, true, more to be desired than gold, and sweeter than honey.

John Flavel speaks well of the surpassing splendor and value of God's Word.

"Many natural men have very fine brains, searching wits, solid judgments, nimble fancies, tenacious memories; they can search out the mysteries of nature, solve the phenomena, satisfy the enquiries of the most curious; they can measure the earth, discover the motions of the heavens; but after all take up their place in hell, when, in the meantime, the statutes of the Lord (by the help of his teachings) make wise the simple, Psalm 19:7. It is no matter how dull and incapable the scholar be, if God undertake to be the teacher."

The Word of God gives us that knowledge that is most essential in all the world. It describes to us the God who made us and his saving plan to bring us back to himself in Christ. The knowledge of the Scriptures outshines all other knowledge in the world combined.

It is this revelation that waters and grows God's people. God's revelation of himself in his Word is that which produces life, meaning, and growth in the hearts of his people. Consider Isaiah 55:10-11, "*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*" The Word of God is effective in all that he purposes it for!

The Word of God is our means to the knowledge of God, which is the lifeblood of our soul. There is no greater knowledge in this world than the knowledge of God. This knowledge brings life itself. More to come on that in a couple of days.

IMPLICATIONS

Immerse Yourself in Scripture

The more you spend time in the Scriptures, the more you will feel your need for them; the more you will thirst for them and draw upon them for life and hope. We must be clear that this typically does not happen overnight, and more so, may wax and wane throughout your life. But the call for Christians to give themselves to the Word of God stands the same. Paul's words to Timothy describe this well: *"Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching... Practice these things, **immerse yourself in them**"* (1 Timothy 4:13, 15). We are called to immerse ourselves in the Word of God, to flood our minds and hearts with its truth. Geoffrey Thomas describes well the results of this,

"Do not expect to master the Bible in a day, or a month, or a year. Rather expect often to be puzzled by its contents. It is not all equally clear. Great men of God often feel like absolute novices when they read the Word... So do not expect always to get an emotional charge or a feeling of quiet peace when you read the Bible. By the grace of God you may expect that to be a frequent experience, but often you will get no emotional response at all. Let the Word break over your heart and mind again and again as the years go by, and imperceptibly there will come great changes in your attitude and outlook and conduct. You will probably be the last to recognize these. Often you will feel very, very small, because increasingly the God of the Bible will become to you wonderfully great. So go on reading it until you can read no longer, and then you will not need the Bible any more, because when you close your eyes for the last time in death, and never again read the words of God in Scripture you will open them to the Word of God in the flesh, that same Jesus of the Bible whom you have known for so long, standing before you to take you forever to his eternal home."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you feel yourself thirsting for the Word of God? Be honest, we do not always feel this way. Explain.
2. How long have you been reading the Scriptures? Has it always felt life-giving to you? Explain your experience.
3. What are a few ways that you can make Scripture reading a habit in your life?

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Day Four Authority & Inspiration

As Christians, we believe that the Scriptures are the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God. You may know some of these words, or all of them, but what this means is summed up well by the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* when it says, “Holy Scripture, being God’s own words, written by men prepared and superintended by his Holy Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed as God’s command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.” God’s Word is the truth around which all the universe spins. God’s Word is the norming norm, the measuring standard by which all other measuring tools are to be measured.

One of the key places that we gather our understanding of God’s inspiration of Scripture is from 2 Timothy 3:16-17. It says, “*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.*” These verses affirm that Scripture is the outworking of God himself. He has taken an active role in the writing of Scripture, working through the original authors in such a way that Paul can characterize all of Scripture as “*breathed out by God.*” This is a very important word for us. God, having breathed out his Scriptures, teaches us that the entirety of the Bible is cohesively inspired, authoritative, and infallible. God himself has taken care to speak to us through his Word. Though the Scriptures have many human authors, settings, contexts, and literary forms, God himself is the divine author.

In John 20:30-31, John states his purpose for writing his gospel, “*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*” Purpose statements are always helpful because they get us to the heart of the matter.

John wrote his book so that the reader would believe in Jesus and have life in his name. This is undoubtedly the purpose of the book of John, but there is something else we can gather from these verses.

John points to the reality that Jesus did many other things in the presence of his disciples. He states this reality again in John 21:25, *“Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”* Twice now, John refers to all the other things that Jesus did. When I first came across these verses, I began imagining and wondering about what all those things could be. But I am increasingly convinced that this is not why John has told us this. These verses, especially John 20:30-31, are not pointing us to all the other signs that are not written, but rather showing us the necessity and importance of the ones that are written! **These are the signs** that we need so that we may believe. The Scriptures give us all that we need to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and to find life in believing. This statement speaks to the significance and power of the revelation we have in the Scriptures. These are the things that we need. These Scriptures are authoritative.

The God Who Safeguards

We are often quick to think of God’s inspiration of Scripture as a single moment in time, influencing the Biblical authors to pen the words on the page. While this is undoubtedly true, it does not speak to the centuries upon centuries that God has divinely and providentially carried his Word. Yes, God’s hand was active as Moses wrote the words of Genesis-Deuteronomy, but it was also active over the past 3000 years to bring us that same testimony. God has worked his will through the generations to safeguard his Word and bring it to each believer who has laid eyes on it through thousands of years.

IMPLICATIONS

Sitting Under, Not Above, the Text

The proper posture of the reader of God’s Word is the posture of reception. We come to the text of Scripture to receive what God has revealed. With open hands, we sit, letting Scripture teach us what is true and real in this world. There

is an inclination in the reader of Scripture to stand over the text and tell it what it means or pick and choose what is true and what is not, but this is a deadly mistake. We do not shape the Scriptures; we must let the Scriptures shape us. We must sit under the authoritative Word of God and let it change our minds and hearts. This process takes patience, humility, and wrestling as we seek to understand what God has spoken to us through his Word.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the purpose of John's Gospel according to John 20:30-31? Why does it matter?
2. Why is it so tempting to try to make the Scriptures say what **we** want them to say? How do we combat this tendency?
3. How has your reading of Scripture changed your thinking? What specific beliefs and ideas has the Bible corrected in your life?

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Day Five Wrestling With The Scriptures

Have you ever finished reading a passage of Scripture and immediately asked yourself the question, “What on earth does that mean?!” If so, you are like 90% of Bible readers, and the other 10% are those who have not read much of the Bible. The Scriptures are full of challenging passages, confusing stories, culturally distant contexts, and strange literary forms. Most Christians quickly come to a point in their Bible reading where they walk away puzzled. What are we to do with this? Why is the Bible so confusing at times? Who decides what confusing passages mean?

Wrestling With the Text

One of my former Bible teachers liked to use the illustration of wrestling with the text. Now, if you are currently picturing yourself putting your ESV Study Bible in a headlock, that’s not exactly what he meant. The image of wrestling with the text describes the process of reading a passage over and over, meditating upon it over and over, and studying its surroundings over and over until you come to a better understanding of what is being said. This is the process of not letting go of the text until it blesses you (drawing on the biblical account of wrestling in Genesis 32:22-32). To wrestle with the text is to not give up on understanding it when things get confusing.

Hans Boersma depicts the need for this practice:

“Chewing the text is hard work. The rational mind is at work, thinking about what the text is saying, trying to figure out how the words function in the context of the passage, the book as a whole, and the entire canon; trying to understand the genre, the structure of the passage, and so forth... we must take our time chewing the text

itself. What is more, we should be glad to engage in this laborious activity of thinking about what the text might mean.”

A Worthwhile Journey

Though it is often challenging, working to understand the Word of God is utterly worthwhile and rewarding. Reading the Scriptures is a process of growth and formation that leaves the reader a different person than when they first arrived at the text. God has spoken, and his children are called to listen. In Psalm 1, the psalmist depicts the blessed man as a tree planted by streams of water. Elsewhere in Scripture, God’s Word is the rain which waters the earth, not returning void, but accomplishing the purposes that God has given it (Isaiah 55:10-11). The believer is the one who drinks from the water of God’s Word. It is the nourishment to his soul, the very words of eternal life (John 6:68).

So press on! Though understanding the Scriptures is often challenging, it is the great life-giving task of the believer. We are called to seek God out, to know him more, to give ourselves over to following him. The way we do this is with the Scriptures before us, always striving to know our God more and more.

IMPLICATIONS

People of the Book

One of the things that binds us together as the people of God is our love of the Scriptures. We are a people who love, live by, and long for the Word of God. One of the greatest blessings that the Lord has given us in our wrestling with the text is one another. God has placed you in a community of believers who think differently from you, who have lived different experiences from you, and who have a plethora of insight about the Scriptures we hold dear. God has given you brothers and sisters to help you understand his Word. How we read the Bible together takes many different forms, from Life Groups, Bible studies, sermons, to casual conversations with friends. All our interactions with each other that are centered around the Word of God can be an arena to grow in our love and understanding of the Scriptures. Let’s not neglect the gift that God has given us through community. Let’s wrestle with the text together!

Further Up and Further In

In the final book of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, C. S. Lewis describes the protagonists of his story galloping into the “New Narnia,” Lewis’s depiction of heaven. The characters, ascending to their new reality, take note of the new depth and meaning they found in the new creation. They find that all this new reality made their former lives appear like shadows of heaven. The character leading the way shouts as he races on, “Come further up, come further in!” This beautiful image depicts the reality of what heaven will be. Heaven will be the place where we continually grow in the knowledge of God for the rest of eternity. John depicts eternal life as this when praying to the Father, *“and this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent”* (John 17:3). This God who made us and saves us, who reveals himself now only in part, is the God we will spend the rest of eternity knowing more and more.

The Scriptures that we pore over now, the Scriptures that we wrestle with, are just the beginning of what will consume our eternity: knowing God our Creator more and more.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you experienced a moment when you finally understand a challenging passage of Scripture? Describe your experience.
2. How is “wrestling with Scripture” a community activity among the people of God?
3. What Scripture verse have you been “wrestling” with lately? Who can you reach out to this week to begin a productive conversation about that passage?

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