

How Will You Spend Your Time In 2019?

Did you catch last week's message, ["What Do You Want From Him?"](#), it has a lot to do with transformation if you're into that sort of thing. ☐

One Thing

If there was just *one thing* you could focus on that you knew would please God the most, what do you think that would be?

Luke 10: 25 *One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"*

26 *Jesus replied, "What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"*

27 *The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

28 *"Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"*

In my opinion, the expert asked the most important question anyone could ever ask. It was a great question. He got the Master's attention and possibly thought to himself *"This man is so popular, I'll only have time for one question. Hmmm.... I know what to ask!"* And so he did. "Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"

Of course, it's a two-fold answer; it seems that it's a package deal. As though God made sure that the two are inseparable. The other references found in Matthew and Mark both say "The second is equally important". They are both considered "the greatest commandment".

What's harder to do?

Personally, I don't know what the greater challenge is, loving an invisible God or loving my neighbors (others). I find both to be very difficult at times. The one thing I am certain of is that I absolutely cannot love others unless I love God. If I do not love God, I do not have it in me to love others. On top of this, Jesus issues another commandment in John 15:

John 15: 12 *This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13* *There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends*

Whoa! That's literally impossible for me alone, and it turns out that I am right:

John 15: 5 *"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.*

Have you ever asked yourself "What can I do to Love God more?"

After all, it is the greatest commandment. How do we love an invisible God? Good question.

How do we love anybody? I'm not an expert by far, but I know some of the basics of loving someone include:

- Getting to know them
- Investing my time with them
- Being attentive to them
- Giving my heart to them

This is, at the very least, what He wants. Not only that but in comparison to loving others, we are to love Him much more:

Luke 14: 26 *"If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and*

children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.

Talk about a “challenging passage!”

This hasn't always been easy for me to read. At first glance, it is disturbing to me. The key words here are “by comparison”. Restated, using my words: “If I am to be His disciple, I must love God so much that I hate others, even my own family, by comparison”. It's still tough for me to comprehend, but I think the more I love God, the more I will understand it.

OK, so now that we can see how much we are to love God and how important it is, let's discuss how we love Him. Since He is invisible, how do we get to know Him?

Colossians 1: 15 *Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.*

That helps. From this, we know that Jesus is God in the flesh. So then, how do we get to know Jesus?

The gospel of John starts out like this:

John 1: 1 *In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

”

14 *So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.*

Now, this is cool.

This equates Jesus to the Word of God and that the Word is God. To me, this means that the Bible's ultimate message is the written representation of Jesus, “the one who is, who

always was, and who is still to come" **Revelation 1: 4**

My logic then concludes that spending time in the Word of God equates to spending time with Jesus. The Word is really all we have. Any book that is written about the Word or that uses the Word, is not the Word, but simply a by-product of the Word.

I think I've said something like this before. If you really wanted to get to know someone, let's say someone named Chris, would you read books about Chris, spend time with people that know Chris, or would you spend time with Chris? The first two options are not bad, but what if the books about Chris were a bit off-base and you couldn't really trust the author. Or what if someone talked about Chris as if they really knew Chris, but it turns out they don't know Chris at all?

Do you see where I'm going with this?

If we really want to get to know Jesus, we need to read straight from Him. He is our daily bread:

John 6: 32 *Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. 33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

34 *"Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."*

35 *Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*

Along with establishing a habit of reading the Word, two other practices should also be developed in order for our love to grow.

Two Other Activities

The first is prayer and the second is close fellowship with other believers, people who are just as excited about spending time with Jesus as you are.

Prayer opens up the necessary dialogue that should always continue to grow and develop. This is not easy, but necessary and invaluable. Pray that God will reveal Himself to you and that He will help you to discern His Word. After spending some time in the Word, the ability to understand it increases as long as our hearts remain soft.

The fellowship with others is necessary to stay grounded in the Word and to practice our love on others.

Get this right, this is foundational

These three activities of reading, praying, and fellowship are foundational and essential for true, sustaining growth. Notice how they each require time, are personal attention. It is through these disciplines that we will learn how to love God and love others, practicing the two greatest commandments and putting us on His path.

Psalm 32:

8 *The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.*

I will advise you and watch over you.

9 *Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."*

10 *Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord.*

11 *So rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!*

According to what we learned earlier, these 3 activities need to be prioritized higher than anything else we do. This is seeking Him first.

Matthew 6: 33 *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

New habits are not easy, but well worth it

Just like starting any new habit it is not easy, especially when the devil will do anything he can to keep you from getting closer to God. But this is one habit that will put you on the road to a peaceful and satisfying life that only Jesus can offer. Will you seek Him?

Hebrews 12: 1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*

Here is a brief list of other verses about the Word itself:

Psalms 119: 105 *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.*

Isaiah 40: 8 *The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever."*

2 Timothy 3: 16 *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. **17**God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

Hebrews 4: 12 *For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*

Will you learn to love God in 2019?

Dear Lord, I want 2019 to be different. I want to do all that I can to get to know you more. I know how distracted I've been and those distractions have come between me and you. Please help me live a life that is truly pleasing to you. You are all the really matters and I'd be crazy to let anything get in the way of loving you more. Thank you for bringing me to this realization and helping me to prioritize things differently from here on out. In Jesus name, Amen.

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