

# ROOTED

## "Study"

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

March 19, 2017

How many of these can you guess are found in the Bible?

- Moderation in all things.
- Hate the sin, love the sinner.
- Spare the rod, spoil the child.
- A penny saved is a penny earned.
- To thine ownself be true.
- Do unto others as you want them to do to you.
- God helps those who help themselves.
- Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
- Money is the root of all evil.
- Cleanliness is next to godliness.
- This too shall pass.
- God loves you just the way you are.
- The eye is the window to the soul.
- God works in mysterious ways.

One of the things that bothers me the most is when people know just enough about something to be dangerous. The home owner who thinks he knows about electricity, the guys who's been on one of those trail horses - once, the gal who is sure she can give herself a perm, and the person who thinks they know what the Bible says. Today we're going to talk about the need to study and know what the Bible really says. There has never been a time in modern history when biblical illiteracy has been at a higher level. We have made the Bible a secondary read, taken it out of the curriculum at our school and reduced our faith to what we hear on a Sunday from the preacher. Each of us is called to know what we believe and to do that, we should know what "our book" says. It's like owning a new car and never looking at the owner's manual. We only get it out when something's wrong and then we get frustrated because we can't find what we're looking for. So, let's talk about the spiritual discipline of Studying our faith. Each week in this series we've been taking a look at different disciplines that we can incorporate into our lives that will help us develop a deeper spiritual life.

"Most people who profess a deep love of the Bible have never actually read the book," says Rabbi Rami Shapiro, who once had to persuade a student in his Bible class at Middle Tennessee State University that the saying "this dog won't hunt" doesn't appear in the Book of Proverbs.

"They have memorized parts of texts that they can string together to prove the biblical basis for whatever it is they believe in," he says, "but they ignore the vast majority of the text."

So, today we are turning to the book of Deuteronomy 11 verses 18-21 to see what God says about studying the Bible and knowing what it really says.

As Christians, we affirm that our God is the only God, and that all other gods are false and not worthy of our worship, affirmation, or attention. This is a very bold statement. Why? Because we live in a society in which we have lots of religious options.

Here's the deal: The children of Israel were on the brink of entering a land that was full of people that worshipped pagan gods; in fact, every nation besides God's nation worshipped and acknowledged false gods. The problem that Israel had, in these pluralistic societies, was that they would drift away from worshipping the One and True Living God, to serve these false gods; or, they would try to syncretize the worship of Yahweh, with other false gods. Here in lies the reason that we must be diligent students of the Word of God – by studying the Word of God daily and deliberately, we learn more about God, we learn more about ourselves in view of our God, and then we learn how to live in this world as the children of God. A lifestyle of studying helps us to live the way that God intends. God wants to be our God, and He wants us to love Him exclusively. This is why we are preaching and teaching about Spiritual Disciplines; because, **Spiritual Disciplines = Intimacy with God**

The heart of Moses' message throughout the book of Deuteronomy is very simple, you ready: Be Faithful to God. **By studying God's Word, we learn how to be Faithful to God.** Let me make this point abundantly clear, being faithful to God is a matter of priority and loyalty. The reason that we are faithful and loyal to God is because He is the Only One and True and Living God. Being faithful to God, means leaving no room for the worship and acknowledgment of any other false gods. And friends, please hear my heart: the struggle to be loyal to God and acknowledge Him alone as God, is as real for us today as it was for the children of Israel during the time of Moses. It is this reality that Moses is addressing when he warns Israel to commit themselves, wholeheartedly to the words that he proclaims. Essentially, he is trying to help Israel live in, and enjoy God's promised blessings; but, in order to do that, they must make it their lifestyle to constantly read, teach, meditate and study the Word of God. If you study God's Word you see very clearly how God wants us to respond – obedience. Obedience is God's love language. Jesus says "If you love Me, you will obey My commands."

Obedience? Ouch! Preacher, you want me to sit and listen to you talk about this God who just wants me to obey Him? What's up with your God? Is He ego tripping? – Friends, there are people who really don't understand God enough to know that He doesn't want to dominate and control us. If that was God's goal, He has the power to do that; instead, He wants us to enter a loving relationship with Him, and we do that through obedience. God wants us to obey Him, but not out of formal legalism or out of a lingering suspicion that He was to dominate us, or doom us when we fall short. No, He wants us to obey Him out of a proper understanding of who He is, and His divine and loving will for our lives. God wants us to trust that He knows what's best for us, and that He wants what's best for us! So, how can we know that God knows what's best for us and wants what's best for us if we don't study the Word of God? Scripture, God's breathed out Word, is the method that God uses to reveal His character and His plan for humanity. As believers, when we realize the magnitude of our God, and His plan for us – there's only one faithful response: obedience.

And let me be clear: this message is not about the topic of obedience. But, how can we live up to God's expectation if we don't study to know how to obey or be faithful to God? How can we live in, and enjoy the blessings and provisions of God if we don't know the terms to the covenant? How can we stay focus on God and give Him all our love and allegiance if we don't know how? Moses is telling the people of God that if they abide faithfully to the loving covenant, and live obediently to the God that redeemed them from the oppressive hands of Egypt, and serve their God, on God's terms – that God will bless them.

Studying God's Word gets us to that place of undivided loyalty, and that's the place of abundant blessings. It's when we align ourselves to God in this way, that God blesses us. The more we position ourselves as students of God's Word, and love Him through diligent study – The more God reveals Himself! The Scriptures reveal God nature, His character, His heart, His plan – not only that, when we study the Scriptures, we also find out our true identity, our true status in His eye, our divine plan and purpose for life. It's amazing what God can do, and is willing to do, if we are willing to set time aside to know Him and worship Him through the discipline of study. Listen to this beautiful truth – **By studying God's Word we learn that God wants what's best for us.**

It's important that I remind you that Moses delivered this message with a sense of urgency and concern. Why? Because he knew that the people had a tendency to drift away from God. We do the same thing, we live it out for a next week or so, and then we drift back into how we lived before we heard from God. Knowing this tendency, Moses tells the people of God to be careful. Be careful? Of what? A foreign nation invading their territory? The government? The culture? – No, Moses says to be careful that we don't allow our heart to be deceived and consequently turn away from worshipping to the True and Living God, for a false god. Wow! Moses says don't be deceived. Satan will tell enough truth to get his lie across. This is a real and relevant reality; Moses is telling the people that you can be deceived if you are not careful. So how do we keep from being deceived? We study the Word of God to know God's truth! This is so important. We live in a culture that doesn't affirm TRUTH; truth is subjective in our culture. People will say to us as Christians – how do you know that Bible is truth? And if you don't study to know the God of the Scriptures, and if you don't know the TRUTH revealed in the Scripture – then how can you stand firm in your faith without wavering to the right or to the left? Listen to what the Lord told Joshua, in Joshua 1:7, ***“Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”***

God is a loving father that does not want His children being deceived by false gods that offer false promises! The truth of the matter is this, God loves us too much to allow His children to be misled, deceived, tricked, duped by false gods and false promises. Friends, **studying God's Word keeps us rooted in the truth.**

So, Moses gives his people clear steps for guarding themselves against being deceived. Here are three steps that you can take, starting today to make sure that you are carefully obeying the

LORD's commands and therefore able to receive His multiple blessings. You ready? Here we go:

**1. Commit to a weekly time of study. (v.18)**

The word that is used here is commit. Now, I know that some of us have commitment issues but, you see, God believes in you. God believes that you are capable of making this commitment to learning more about who He is and what the Bible says about how we are supposed to live our lives or He wouldn't have used such a strong word as "commit." We hold this kind of study at such a high level here at CrossPoint Church that we believe every person should be engaged in daily personal devotional time where you are reading the Bible and talking with God. That's one of the reasons you find book marks that layout Bible reading for each teaching series we do. It's also the reason you find "Our Daily Bread" and "The Upper Room" available at our campuses. We go a step further in the area of learning by believing that every person at CrossPoint should be involved in a LifeGroup where you can learn more about God and how to live your life according to what the Bible tells us. If you want help with either of these commitments see me after the service and I'll help get you plugged in.

**2. Make it a part of your family values (v.19)**

We know that there are 936 weeks between the time your child is born and when they turn 18. We take seriously the command we are given by God to teach our children about the ways of God, the Love of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of heaven to those who believe. While, we have your child here at the church for one hour a week, you have all that time at home to teach them the truths of the Bible. And let me remind you that they are learning when they are at home...remember that time your child repeated something you didn't think they heard or understood. This passage reminds us that God has given us our children as a gift and teaching them to study and learn the Bible is an important part of what it means to be a godly parent.

Talk about God in your homes, with your children, when you are traveling, when you go to bed, when you arise from sleep. Don't make the study and discussion of God's Word a church event that happens once or twice a week. God wants us to study His Word, and then share it in our homes. Turn off the TV and talk about God. Log out of Facebook, and open your Bible. Use your meal time as an opportunity to teach about being thankful and that everything we have comes from God. Read the Scripture and pray with your family as you're tucking them in at the end of the day. The church's Facebook page give reminders throughout the week to help parents guide their children into the faith. Sharing God's word at home is essential to our walk with God as disciples. Our children's and student ministries have resources for every age level.

**3. Live it so that people can see it. (v.20)**

Listen to this passage again: "*Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders.*" <sup>20</sup> *Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,*" There are to be outward signs of our faith that are visible and on display for people to see. Jesus said it like this "*Let your light so shine, that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven.*" The Word of God is meant to be shared with the community – The Word of God is profitable in every aspect to those that are being transformed into the image of Jesus. In this season of establishing a strong foundation, with strong and healthy roots, we need to pay close attention to the environments around us that offer us opportunities for us to show Jesus to others.

There should never be a question, in the mind of those who know you, about what you believe. We are to be ready at all times to give a reason for why we live our lives the way we do and believe what we believe.

Let me ask you...if someone ask you today to explain your faith, to give an account of the things you believe, to tell them why you are a Christian...would you be able to? Each of us in this room has testimony of the amazing things God has done for us...we cannot keep that to ourselves. We have a responsibility to share that with other so they can learn from us about the God we love and believe in. Take time today to formulate your testimony. We all have one...what's yours. The world is dying to hear it.