

WHY READ THE BIBLE?

March 31, 2019 Psalm 19:1-14 by Bob Branch
@Rest Series, part 9

BIG IDEA: In our chaotic, unstable world, a committed investment in Bible-reading and reflection is indispensable to living in sync with God!

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. ³ They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. ⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. ⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. ⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.

1. CREATION SPEAKS—so, listen!

“since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made...”

Romans 1:20

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant [pure], giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous.

2. It comes FROM GOD. “Of the Lord”

“All Scripture is God-breathed 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.” **2 Timothy 3:16**

Many Dimensions to this revelation of God.

--perfect	--radiant (pure)
--trustworthy	--pure
--right	--firm

3. The Word WORKS. “It is useful” **2 Tim. 3:16**

¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. ¹¹ By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. ¹² But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. ¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. ¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

4. It INJECTS TRUTH.

- Warns
- Rewards
- Reveals the true nature of things/us
- Keeps us from being enslaved to sin

“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** ESV

APPLY: Read 1 ch/day 5 days; 20 min.; Read slowly (Lectio Divina). Listen. Read for relationship.

LECTIO DIVINA—from *Sacred Rhythms*, Ruth Haley Barton

Preparation (*Silencio*). Take a moment to come fully into the present. With your eyes closed, let your body relax, and allow yourself to become consciously aware of God’s presence with you. Express your willingness (or your willingness to be made willing) to hear from God in these moments by using a brief prayer such as “Come Lord Jesus,” or “Here I am,” or “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.”

Read (*Lectio*): Listen for the word or the phrase that is addressed to you. Turn to the passage and begin to read slowly, pausing between phrases and sentences. You may read silently, or you may find it helpful to read the passage aloud, allowing the words to echo and resonate, sink in and settle into your heart. As you read, listen for a word or phrase that strikes you or catches your attention. Allow a moment of silence, repeating that word or phrase softly to yourself, pondering it and savoring it as though pondering the words of a loved one. This is the word that is meant for you. Be content to listen simply and openly, without judging or analyzing.

Reflect (*Meditatio*): How is my life touched by this word? Once you have heard the word that is meant for you, read the passage again, and listen for the way this passage connects with your life. Ask, What is it in my life right now that needs to hear this word? Allow several moments of silence following this reading, and explore thoughts, perceptions and sensory impressions. If the passage is a story, perhaps ask yourself, Where am I in this scene? What do I hear as I imagine myself in the story or hear these words addressed specifically to me? How do the dynamics of this story connect with my own life experience?

Respond (*Oratio*): What is my response to God based on what I have read and encountered? Read the passage one more time, listening for your own deepest and truest response. In silence after the reading, allow your prayer to flow spontaneously from your heart as fully and as truly as you can. At this point you are entering into a personal dialogue with God, “sharing with God the feelings the text has aroused, . . . feelings such as love, joy, sorrow, anger, repentance, desire, need, conviction, consecration. We pour out our hearts in complete honesty, especially as the text has probed aspects of our being and doing in the midst of various issues and relationships.” Pay attention to any sense that God is inviting you to act or to respond in some way to the word you have heard. You may find it helpful to write your prayers or to journal at this point.

Rest (*Contemplatio*): Rest in the Word of God. In this final reading you are invited to release and return to a place of rest in God. You have given your response its full expression, so now you can move into a time of waiting and resting in God’s presence, like the weaned child who leans against its mother (Psalm 131: 2). This is a posture of total yieldedness and abandon to the great Lover of your soul.

Resolve (*Incarnatio*): Incarnate (live out) the Word of God. As you emerge from this place of personal encounter with God to life in the company of others, resolve to carry this word with you and to live it out in the context of daily life and activity. As you continue to listen to the word throughout the day, you will be led deeper and deeper into its meaning, until it begins to live in you and you en flesh this word to the world in which you live. As a way of supporting your intent to live out the word you have been given, you may want to choose an image, picture or symbol to carry with you are a reminder.