

Reflecting on Scripture

In our sermon series on “The Word” we’ve already discussed a compelling VISION for the Word: understanding that God’s Word is as important as food and that the Scriptures equip us to live the life He’s called us to live. In light of that reality, we have also discussed INTENTION: making it our intention to engage the Scriptures and even the intention (ahead of time) to live out what God teaches us. But vision and intention aren’t enough; we also need practical MEANS that help us experience God through the Word. These are the practices, habits, and disciplines that we employ to be nourished and equipped by God. These are the things we actually do so that the Word of God captivates our hearts and accompanies us wherever we go. This is our focus today.

Opening Question: What, if anything, have you found yourself worrying about recently?

Read Psalm 1:1-3; 119:11, 97-104, 147-48

1. How do these passages describe reflecting on God’s Word?

2. According to these passages, what is some of the fruit of reflecting on God’s Word?

Read Colossians 3:16

3. How would you restate this verse in your own words?

4. How is reflecting on Scripture connected to having the Word of Christ richly dwelling within us?

Steve said:

As the body of Christ, the cupboards of our hearts are to be stocked full of spiritual truth – the “word of Christ.” The word of Christ is to be so deeply embedded in our lives that it informs our thinking and behavior. As we let the word of Christ richly dwell within us, we have the capacity “with all wisdom” to “teach and admonish one another.” To teach is to communicate in such a way that others learn. To admonish is to challenge and plead with others to be faithful to God. If the word of Christ richly dwells within you, you will have this capacity to teach and admonish others.

5. How does it affect you to know that you are called to this kind of ministry in the lives of others?

Steve said:

When we reflect on Scripture, I'd suggest the simple grid of pondering the *meaning* and the *significance* of the passage. This is basically what Brian and I do every week when we preach a passage of Scripture. We spend time studying and thinking about the meaning of the passage and then its significance for us as a church.

6. Does this make sense? What questions do you have about pondering the meaning and the significance of a passage?
7. Earlier, we shared things that we have found ourselves worrying about recently. How would you describe what is going on in your mind when you worry? What can worrying teach us about what it looks like to meditate on Scripture?
8. What are some of the challenges you face when you seek to reflect/meditate on the Scriptures?
9. What are some things that you do or have done to help you reflect on Scripture?
10. In the church-wide reading plan on Matthew that many are doing there is a suggested approach to Scripture: pray, read, reflect and respond. How might following this pattern help you be someone who is allowing God's Word to more deeply dwell within you?

Notes from Steve's Sermon:

Meaning: *Think about the author's original meaning. (Pay attention to context, words, images, etc.)* This is obviously a huge topic, but the basic idea is clear. The authors of Scripture meant something when they wrote what they did. It's just not true that "you can get the Bible to say anything you want" - not unless you violate normal, accepted principles of grammar and interpretation. When we reflect on Scripture, we first want to think about the meaning - what the author meant by what was written.

Significance: *Think about the significance of this passage for your life and for the body of Christ. (Think about the implications for your life.)* This is where you ask the question, "So what? What is the significance of this passage for me and others in the body of Christ?" In this step we take the Scripture very personally. We assume that God wants to nourish, teach, correct, and equip us through His Word. And so we ask the types of questions that invite God to speak directly to us. In this way we "let God be God" in our lives.