

## Day 2

## Rooted in truth - Living in the Word

My kids love the song, "Read your bible, pray every day and you'll grow, grow, grow! Don't read your bible, forget to pray and you'll shrink, shrink, shrink!". This simple song has a very powerful and honest point as we consider being rooted in God's word which is,

**"alive and powerful, cuts between soul and spirit and exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." - Hebrews 4.12**

To flourish in this year ahead, we must have a daily devotion to our bibles. The Word of God has never been so accessible as it is today, yet we must choose to access it each day. A popular song for our youth by Josiah Queen states, "We got dust on our bibles, brand new i-phones, no wonder why we feel this way". I think if we are honest, most people would confess that they need a better devotion with their bibles this year. What's your immediate reaction to how your bible reading is going?

Reading Nehemiah and Ezra, we witness this profound moment when, after 70 years of living in foreign exile, Ezra is asked to read the Word of God to the people. Imagine 70 years of your faith without hearing, knowing or reading what the Word says! We believe that,

**"[The] word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path." - Psalm 119:105**

Without the Word, we are blind in a dark world, clueless to know the steps we are to take, and how to live like Christ.

I have always been encouraged to, "find your why for what you believe" from scripture and develop my own convictions out of the Word. Don't spend your life like the exiles with 70 years of not knowing what the Word of God says. This year commit to reading, studying and getting a deeper grasp of the truths of God so that you know the ways to walk in a dark world. Are there any aspects of following Jesus you need to discover your "why" for this year? How can you deepen your faith-convictions in the Word this year?

I am struck by a few reactions to Ezra's reading of the Scriptures. In Nehemiah 8:9, the people wept as they heard the words of the law and realised how far they and their predecessors had drifted from God's ways. In Nehemiah 9:3, the response to hearing the Word was confession of sin and worship for a quarter of the day! How are our hearts positioned and what is our response as the Word of God exposes us to the realities of our sin? How is the Word of God enabling you to worship our heavenly father in awe and reverence?

John 15:5 states,

**"If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing."**

As we consider staying rooted in scripture, I want to suggest four ways of devotion to the Word of God that will enable us to remain in Jesus and to flourish this year. Like anything in life, I believe remaining rooted in scripture takes intentionality and persistence in order to flourish. Which of these suggestions could you consider starting this year?

## Hearing the Word of God

Romans 10:17 says,

**"Faith comes by hearing the word of God."**

A great way to grow our faith is to listen to scripture daily through a speaker or to read it out over ourselves. Try speaking out your bible instead of reading it internally only. Try listening to the Word of God instead of music and allow it to build faith in you. It is an amazing way of feeling the power and emotion that comes through the scriptures. What ways could you hear the Word of God in your daily rhythms?

## Knowing the Truth That Can Set You Free

John 8:31-32 says,

**"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

Memorising scripture, particularly in areas of personal struggle which we all have, can be the difference between walking free and living trapped in the pits of sin. In Ephesians 6, the Word of God is described as the sword of the spirit and is the only offensive weapon out of the full armour of God. The Word is a weapon with which we can attack our struggles, insecurities, temptations, grief, anger and unforgiveness. Many can walk with a limp or carrying great pain in life when all along the Word of God could be the cure and simply knowing the truth could be the key to your freedom! Where are you struggling in life at the moment? Do you know the scriptures of truth to set you free in the situations you find yourself in today?

Matthew 4:4 says,

**"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord"**

and Matthew 6:11 says,

**"Give us today our daily bread."**

I have found time and time again that the questions of life, direction needed and comfort sought has been found in the scriptures. A habit of reading the Word of God daily enables us to decrease our self-dependence and instead, helps us seek God's heart for us in and through the word. For me, waking up early to get into the scriptures has been life-changing. Are you getting daily bread at the moment? Where could you start reading the word of God daily?

## Public Reading of Scripture

In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul encourages Timothy to,

**"devote yourself to the public reading of scripture"**

I want to encourage us to do the same. There is such power in God's Word spoken out over one another. In one-to-one catchups, community groups, church gatherings and family times, let's read the scripture aloud to one another. God's word carries a heavenly authority and eternal truth. Where and to who could you read the word of God this week?

In conclusion, let's make this a year we can truly say that we read and found freedom in the Word of God,

that we flourished because the Word of God was a key part of our life and we didn't let another year go by where we said, "I need to read my bible more". His Word brings abundant flourishing life!