

## Study is Transforming

Hebrews, James, Philippians

- On a previous episode, we talked about Bible study being important
- What Jesus said about the word of God helped us understand why this is the case
- In John 17 He prayed that God would use His word to sanctify (that is set apart) His disciples
  
- This set-apartness would be a process for everyone who believed in Christ
- We would, as we walked in relationship with Christ, learn from - and be changed by - truth
  
- Today we want to focus on how study can transform us
- And we'll begin in Hebrews 4 with a description of God's word...

Hebrews 4:12-13

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

- There are no other books that are described quite in this way
- The scripture we have - and that we're reading from today is alive
- And it's powerful
- And it's truth can pierce us in a way that a sword can pierce armor
  
- But it doesn't just stop at the armor
- It pierces even beyond our physical bodies
- Making its way to the soul and spirit
- Laying open the hidden things of the heart and mind
- And determining the intentions hidden within them
  
- God uses His word to reveal things about us that no other book can reveal
- And we are, as it says here, naked before Him
- There is nothing that we are, that He cannot see
- And in this knowledge, we respond to His word, as it shows us what God sees as well
  
- There is another scripture that might help...

James 1:22-25

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

- Whatever the scripture is revealing, God allows us to see it
- We begin to know "what manner" of person we really are
- And so we must not simply go about our business with this knowledge
- We must alter whatever it is that is wrong or ugly or out of place
- This means obedience
- And that obedience changes us deeply
  
- This is not a person who merely takes a passing glance at the scriptures
- He looks deeply
- He continues within it
- He digs in - meditates upon - reads and re-reads
- And that is what changes him
  
- That change is a blessing
- Because it draws us closer to God and shapes our character to be more like Him
- It alters us in just exactly the way that God intends
- And it is personalized, just for us
  
- There is an alternative
- God could reveal the very same things and we could walk away
  
- Perhaps we fear or dislike the deep cut of God's sword - the word of God?
- And the thoughts and intents that its wounds reveal are too disturbing for us
- Maybe we don't even want to look in its mirror?
  
- But disciples must
- For the scripture is what God is using to set us apart for His use
- And it's likely this will be a painful process
- One that cannot be avoided by any successful saint
  
- Then we can go back to Jesus' words and understand His prayer...

John 17:17

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

- The setting apart for which Jesus prayed is done by truth
- Not by that which we tell ourselves (which may not be true)
- Not by that which we hope is true
- Not by that which we wish were true
- Not by that which the world tells us (which almost certainly isn't true)
- But by truth
- From a God who sees all
  
- If we have courage to see and to obey

- We will be changed for good
- What sort of things are in God's word that change us?
- One of my favorite lists can be found in the New Testament...

Philippians 4:8

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

- Without God's word, thinking in this way is very difficult
- But when we do
- This can change every moment of every day for us
- And make us into the people which God intends

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2022*