

## **CCC WHAT DOES THE BIBLE PART 2**

### **HAVE TO DO WITH 2007?**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

There's an old adage that goes like this: Hope springs eternal. God has hardwired into each and every one of us with a kind of a resilient spirit. There's a kind of optimism in each of us that hopes and believes that just maybe things could be different and better.

The reality is that for some of us that are here this morning life has squashed that hope out of us, that things could be different and better. Whether it's from the past that is checkered by failure or living your life with a sense of condemnation or guilt or an environment that beats us down or people around us that constantly criticize us, all those things tend to drown out the still small voice of hope.

In fact a recent study of American adults showed 92% described their life as being on a treadmill. Working hard, running fast, exhausted, but going nowhere.

But still in spite of all of that... inside of all of us there is hope. Inside of us all whispers those words of eternal hope. Inside each of us is a small voice saying... Could it be? Could it be that this life really could be different? Could it be that we could slow down enough to really to live for what's important rather than what's urgent? Could it be we could gain enough discipline in our finances to really relieve some of the stress in our home? There is just something that rings true in these words – hope springs eternal.

One of the hopes that I'm sure is represented here today is the hope that we could be closer to God in the coming year. As I've been praying for this message and our time

together today... I've been praying for a large number of our people to be motivated to take the spiritual next step in their life... that today will begin a life-changing journey for them.

Today I want to talk about one of the keys that will unlock our spiritual growth and progress and that key is found in an owner's manual. I'm sure a lot of us don't get very excited about opening up a gift and finding an owner manual. I'm sure a lot of us in this room feel like it's almost an insult to our intelligence to have to read the instruction book. But God has provided for us an owner's manual for life. As the designer and builder of life He knows what best and He alone knows best how life should be lived. And He has provided the manual for your benefit and for mine. The owner's manual for life we know as the Bible.

For some of us that doesn't sound very exciting. In fact for some of us when we think about reading the Bible it sounds about as exciting as reading the owners manual for our car. The thought of reading the Bible brings a big yawn. We perceive it as a dry, dusty, boring, ancient, irrelevant book that has little to do with my life in the year 2007.

But I want to challenge you this morning. I submit to you this morning that the most life changing, transforming practice available to us is the consistent encounter with God in His word. In His Living word. In fact, I'll go a step further and say that if you are a follower of Christ you cannot consistently grow and move toward in Christlikeness without a regular diet of His word, the Bible...

So to help us understand this incomparable gift, this incomparable owners manual that God has given us I'd like to look at four different claims that the Bible makes for itself, four promises that God makes to you if you will know it and live it...

### **1. The Bible is incredible.**

It is unique. It is in a class all by itself. It is incredible.

Psalm 19:8 says, "*The commandments of the Lord are right bringing joy to the heart.*" Jesus said in John 17:17 when He was praying to His Father: "*Your word is truth.*"

I want you to think about that...Think about what Jesus just said. Everything that God says is true. Every thing in this book, God's word, the bible is truth. It won't ever lead you astray. There has never been a discovery that has invalidated the Bible. There has not been a scientific,

historical, geographical, psychological or archaeological discovery that has proven the Bible fallible.

I'm confident there would people in the room today that would say, "Wait a minute! That's an awfully narrow claim. That's an awfully dogmatic assertion to make about one book. I'm not so sure I believe that."

We'll first let me tell you that's ok. One of the things that's so great about Calvary is we invite people to come and explore the claims of Christianity. I would just encourage you – examine the evidence yourself. The Bible is credible and Christianity is a reasonable faith.

There are two books I would encourage you to get and read by Lee Strobel. The Case for Faith and The Case for Christ.

Just two brief conclusions before we move on to the promise.

**1. The Bible is both timeless and timely.** It is a book for the ages. Its principles are universal. Its truths last for all time. But it is also timely. It is relevant for you and your life and for decisions that you're facing and problems that you struggle with this weekend.

**2. My view of the Bible will determine the value of the Bible in my life.** This is an extremely important issue. See if the Bible is simply another book a collection of human writings, no different than lets say Shakespeare then really what I do with it or what I believe about it doesn't have much consequence. Whether I read it or follow it certainly isn't all that important. But if it really is the word of God, if it is inspired by God, supernatural, then

what I do with it is of supreme importance to me. And if I understand and believe the Bible to be the word of God then I am more apt to take it seriously. It is an incredible book. Look at the promise. **He says knowing the Bible brings deep joy.**

The commandments of the Lord are right. They're incredible. And they bring joy to followers of Christ.

Jesus said one time in Matthew 5:18 *"I tell you the truth. Nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone. Not even the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will be lost until everything has happened."*

There's a second claim, the Bible makes for itself... proclamation:

**2. The Bible is enlightening.** It's not just supernatural. It's not just from God. It has practical value. Psalm 19:8

*“The commands of the Lord are clear. [Circle “clear”].*  
Sometimes we tend to think of the Bible as fog. But here  
He says the commands of the Lord are clear.] ...*giving  
insight to life.*” What a testimony to the practicality and  
relevancy of scripture.

**Then the promise that follows: applying Bible truths  
guides me through life.** It’s an instruction book, a  
practical instruction book on how I live my life.

The Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 3 speaking on  
this topic, *“All Scripture is inspired by God [The word is  
literally “breathed out” – it comes from God] and is useful  
[it’s not an outdated book. Circle “useful”. It’s helpful to  
you] for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting  
faults, and giving instruction for right living.”*

The Bible is a kind of compass that when we begin  
to go off course God, through His word will bring us back.

And when we begin to drift and make bad choices and  
wrong decisions, God’s word will put us back on the right  
path. When life becomes overwhelming and confusing and  
we lose our bearings, God’s word becomes a compass that  
points us in the right direction about all issues in life. Do  
you want to know how to have a marriage that will be  
exciting and fulfilling? The principles are here. Do you  
want to know how to raise your kids in a very complex  
world in a way that they will grow up to be healthy and  
spiritually wise? The principles are here. Are you dealing  
with temptations and sins and patterns in your life that you  
can’t seem to break? The Bible has a lot to say about how  
to deal with the struggles you face. Do you want to know  
how to have a healthy relationship and resolve conflict in a  
healthy way? The Bible is full of examples and  
encouragement about healthy relationships. Do you want

to know what God expects of you in terms of your finances and how to handle them in an appropriate manner? The Bible is full up with all kinds of advise and encouragement and counsel about how to handle your finances.

Here's the bottom line – it works. Life just works so much better when you choose to do it God's way. When you operate it according to the owners manual, it just runs better. As you begin to engage the Bible and as your knowledge increases you begin to build a reservoir of truth in your mind and your heart that now you can begin to draw upon. The goal is not just to know the Bible and know Bible facts and Bible stories. The goal is to know the Bible so you can gain insight for life so you can make good decisions so that you can live the life that God wanted you to live.

I've been Christian for a long time and observed a lot of Christians and I have never known someone who is living a passionately transformed Christian life that was not regularly saturating their life with the truth of scripture. It is a practical guide for your life.

There is a third claim.

### **3. It is invaluable.**

Let me ask you a question? How do you view the Bible? Is it that kind of treasure to you? In Psalm 19:10-11 the psalmist says speaking about the commands of the Lord *“They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold, sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the cone. They are a warning to those that hear them. They are a great reward for those who obey them.”* Here we discover that the principles and the lessons and the insights gained from the word of God are more valuable to your life and

existence than your bank account or your portfolio and they are sweet when you follow His truths.

Joshua 1. *“Study this book of the Law continually.*

*Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written it. Only then will you succeed.”*

Meditate on it. Think on it in your mind, chew it over and over in your mind. Here’s what happens. Slowly, as we begin to internalize the truths of the Bible, God begins to us that truth to change our lives. Before long, as the truth of God begins to sink into our minds and hearts, we begin to be renewed. Soon our perspective changes. We begin to make decisions differently. We see life differently as now we begin to take on God’s worldview.

But it doesn’t stop there. He says very clearly that the reason we study and the reason we meditate is so we can be sure to obey.

#### **4. The Bible is infallible.**

It is perfect. It’s incredible, it’s practical. It never leads us a stray. Psalm 19:7 says, *“The law of the lord is perfect.”*

That’s a great phrase. But where I really want to camp is the last phrase of Psalm 19:7 *“It revives the soul.”*

**Here’s the promise: Feeding on the Bible nourishes my soul.** I believe that small phrase reveals our highest calling and the most significant role the Bible has in my life. It is a means by which I can know Christ intimately. When you pick up the word of God and you thumb through the pages and you begin to encounter it you enter into dialogue with God Himself.

If I could say this in love but speak straight to the issue – I’m convinced that our generation that we need to have more followers of Christ who are not as interested in

seeking the benefits and blessings of God as to just seeking God. He is a person who wants a relationship with us. He is not a giant vending machine or a genie in a bottle. He desires a relationship with you. The Bible is about engaging a relationship with someone who longs to know you and the Bible reveals itself to those who long to be known by God.

Here's the point: the key is you keep your soul filled up with God and the power of God. That comes by knowing God and His word.

So let me propose a plan to you, a very simple three-part plan.

1. Marry it. That principle comes from a story in the Bible in Luke 10. Jesus has a traveling ministry with twelve of His disciples. He's crisscrossing Palestine. One day He finds Himself in a little village called Bethany.

Bethany was a favorite place for Jesus because three of His dearest friends in all the world lived there – two sisters and a brother – Martha, Mary and Lazarus. From all we can tell in this story in the Bible, Jesus just shows up unannounced. This has got to be an intimidating moment. For God to show up at your house for lunch unannounced is hard. He didn't email ahead, He didn't call on His cell phone, He just shows up. And what's worse, not only did God show up for lunch but He brings twelve of His friends with Him.

Martha is such a saint. She's the consummate hostess. Nothing really rattles her so even though she doesn't really have anything prepared, she jumps right in, goes in the kitchen and begins to whip up something for lunch. She's doing the right thing, right? What she's doing seems

hospitable, appropriate, Christian. She's serving because that's what Christians do and somebody has to do it. But in the flurry of her preparations she looks around and sees that her sister Mary is no where to be found. In fact, when she finally does find Mary, Mary is just sitting on the floor, in front of Jesus, listening to what He has to say.

That ticks Martha off. She would like to chit-chat with Jesus as well but a meal had to be prepared. So finally the resentment builds up inside of her and she goes over to Jesus and pops off: "This isn't right! Would You please tell my sister that the right and Christian thing for her to do would be to come in there and help me with the meal?"

It's obvious that Martha doesn't have much joy in her tank right now. In fact, there was an emptiness in her busyness

and I think herein lies a major problem for followers of Christ. In our busyness of doing legitimate, appropriate, and seemingly necessary things our souls often get drained and there is an emptiness.

Jesus responds to Martha – and I'm sure His response shocks her – "Martha, Martha, you're so upset and worried about so many things. But, Martha, there is only one thing that is important and Mary has chosen the better thing. It is always the better choice to set at the feet of Jesus. There will always be more demands than time and it is always the right choice to be with Me." If you're too busy to spend time with Jesus, you're just too busy is what Jesus was telling her and is telling you and me. If you're too busy to spend time with Jesus, you're just too busy

Here's my encouragement to you today simple but will make such an impact in your life. Just start reading it.

Someone you say, "I don't understand everything I read!"

Neither do I sometimes.

You say, "I'm new and I don't know that much." Just start! It will enrich and transform and change your life.

Marry it. Spend time at the feet of Jesus.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the clarity of Your word. Thank You for going to such trouble to communicate with us. Thank You for preserving the Bible through these years so that today we can live it and use it and apply it in our lives.

May this year be a new start for many of us as we come to know You more deeply, more profoundly and Your word.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

*“But Jesus told him, ‘No! The Scriptures say, “People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God.””* Matthew 4:4 (NLT)

*Message Notes*

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE  
TO DO WITH 2007?  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. Proclamation:** The Bible is \_\_\_\_\_

- The Bible is both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- My \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible will determine the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible in my life.

*Promise:* Knowing the Bible brings \_\_\_\_\_

*“I tell you the truth, nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone. Not even the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will be lost until everything has happened.”*  
Matthew 5:18 (NCV)

**2. Proclamation:** The Bible is \_\_\_\_\_

*Promise:* Applying Bible truth \_\_\_\_\_ me through life.

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living.”* 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (TEV)

**3. Proclamation:** The Bible is \_\_\_\_\_.

*Promise:* Living by the Bible brings great \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed.”* Joshua 1:8 (NLT)

*“But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do. If you listen and obey, and don’t just hear and forget.”*  
James 1:25 (CEV)

**4. Proclamation:** The Bible is \_\_\_\_\_.

*Promise:* Feeding on the Bible \_\_\_\_\_ my soul.

How to start:

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