

Committing to God's Word in the New Year

Text: Matthew 7:24-27

Date: Sunday, December 27, 2009, 2:30pm

Series: Agape Sunday

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Introduction: Open your Bible to Matthew 7:24-27. This afternoon we are asking ourselves "**Why Should We Commit Ourselves to Reading through the Entire Bible in 2010**"?

Three words give us a reason to commit reading from Genesis to Revelation in 2010.

- God's Word is a **FOUNDATION** that will stabilize your life and eternity.
- God's Word brings **TRANSFORMATION** that will cleanse you and change you to Christ's likeness.
- God's Word will save the **GENERATIONS** to come.

Our words for this afternoon are: foundation, transformation, and generations.

- I. First, God's Word is a **FOUNDATION**. Commit to reading the Bible in 2010. Build your life on Christ's Word! In **Matthew 7**, Jesus said if your life is founded on His Word, you will have a ROCK solid foundation. If not, your life will be as uncertain as a house built on the sand. He said in **Matthew 7:24**, "whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock". The rains come, the floods come, the winds blow, and nothing touched it. It was built on the ROCK!!

But he says in **verses 26-27**, "...every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

If you are going through life without daily Bible reading, you are headed for a collision course! Your life is going to sink like a house built on the sand.

We need to commit to read the Bible through this year because, the Bible is God's **sufficient** Word to man and profitable for every area of my life. It is sufficient and able to shore up every area of our life. You need nothing else! You do not need psychology. You do not need friends. You could be forsaken by father and mother, or by your spouse if you are married. You can come under hard times, but one thing you cannot do without is GOD'S SUFFICIENT WORD. It is profitable and sufficient. Nothing else gives you the wisdom and answers for all of life. You've got to commit to reading through God's Word! Look over at 2 Peter 1:3-4.

2 Peter 1:3-4, "...his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and

precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature". In the Word of God, the Lord has given us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness".

ALL THINGS! We have everything we need in the Word of God. Do we believe we need the Bible for the little things, and then get the professionals and the medicines for the really hard things? No, God's Word is sufficient if we will submit to it.

We hear a lot about Psychologists—you know if we really have a problem we will go to a Christian psychologist. What does a Christian psychologist teach? They teach whatever the leading psychologists are teaching and try to configure that with the Bible. Now immediately we have a problem. Does God's Word ever change? Never. Is it ever out of date? Never. Yet we understand that modern psychology changes about every three years. Take four major psychologists: Freud, Skinner, Rogers, and Erickson. They all contradict each other. Some of them think the others are hogwash. They are radically different psychologies. And all of them were in direct opposition to Biblical Christianity. All of them opposed Christianity.

Here is the truth: Either the Bible is sufficient and pertains to all things for life and godliness or it doesn't. You cannot say, "Well there are some things in life that the Bible does not pertain to" because the Bible says His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through what?

- Through "the knowledge of Christ" and
- through "His great and precious promises".

Where are those **two** things obtained? Through the **Word of God!**

You cannot say that the Bible is relevant for all things that pertain to life and godliness and then say that secular psychology needs to help the Bible out. God doesn't need that help.

The Bible is sufficient to answer and address every need and problem the Christian faces. We meet Christ in His Word, and He is able to guide us through every problem and meet every need. Through the Word we are birthed into God's kingdom, and we are made "partakers of the divine nature". That's what we need! The Bible is sufficient because through the Bible we are brought to know God, and God is sufficient!!

We need to commit to reading every verse of the Bible in 2010 because it is the only thing that will give us all things that pertain to life and godliness! It is sufficient for every difficulty and challenge you face. It will bring you to know God which is your greatest need!

II. God's Word brings **TRANSFORMATION**—We need to commit to read the Bible through this year because, the Bible is God-breathed and tailor made to transform every area of my life. God's Word will **clean** you up! **John 17:17**, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth".

A. Transformation takes a **time** commitment. We are commanded to meditate on the Word "day and night" (**Psalm 1:2**).

Illustration: I did some digging during our Christmas time at Jill's parents house. I found my mother-in-law's Bible. In the back, there was a record of the beginning and ending date for each time she read through the Bible. I counted from April 1988 to April 2008, she had read through the Bible at least 40 times.

Godliness and faithfulness do not come mysteriously. It's hard work. You've got to hide God's Word in your heart. **Psalm 119:11**, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

- B. Transformation takes a **tenderness** of heart. You've got to come to God's Word as His God-breathed authoritative revelation of Himself. You don't need to conform God's Word to your life. Your life needs to be conformed to God's Word!

You've got to be able to receive it as authoritative in your life. If you receive it that way, it will be profitable for you. In other words, it will transform you from the inside out and bring you to maturity in Christ. That is exactly what 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says. It always brings the results of transformation. It is profitable.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

We need to receive God's Word in FOUR profitable ways...

1. Receive it as **Doctrine**: *The Bible tells us what is right*—The Bible tells us every thing that is right. The Bible gives us the truth about everything—God, man, heaven, hell, etc. You don't need to hear what I THINK about God. You need to hear what God has revealed about Himself! We need to read the Bible through this year because it teaches us the truth about ourselves and about God.
2. Receive it as **Reproof**: *The Bible tells us what is NOT right* —this word literally means "refutation" of error. The Word of God alone can tell us what is not right in our lives.
3. Receive it as **Correction**: *The Bible tells us how to make things right*—The Bible is the only guide to help us to reconcile and to make restitution for that which is not right.
4. Receive it as **Instruction**: *The Bible tells us how to KEEP things right*—a Christian who diligently studies and applies the Bible to every area of life will grow in holiness and change into Christ's likeness and image.

Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." If you follow the Word, you will grow and mature.

Psalm 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the

scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

III. Finally, God's Word will save the next **GENERATION**.

Why do we need to read through God's Word in 2010?

A. First you are accountable for this **current generation**.

1. You are accountable not only for yourself, but also for your **brother**. Remember God asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?".

What was Cain's response? Look over at **Genesis 4:9**, "And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" In other words, Do we have a responsibility to watch out for and care for one another?

What is the answer? YES!

- a. Jesus told us we are to love one another—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples by your love [and care] for one another" (**John 13:35**).
- b. to lay down our lives for one another.
- c. We commanded by Paul to exhort and counsel one another in the Word of God.

- **Romans 15:14** tells we are able to admonish one another—we have the competency! "...ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another".
- We are also commanded to do it! We are commanded to "**comfort one another**" with the Words of the Bible (**1 Thessalonians 4:18**).
- The writer to the Hebrews tells us in **Hebrews 3:13** to "exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And in **Hebrews 10:24**, "let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works".

2. **How** are we accountable for one another?

- (1.) We are to "receive one another" - Romans 15:7
- (2.) We are to "edify another" - Romans 14:19
- (3.) We are to "serve one another" - Galatians 5:13
- (4.) We are to "bear one another's burdens" - Galatians 6:1-2
- (5.) We are to be "forgiving one another" - Ephesians 4:32
- (6.) We are to be "submitting to one another" - Ephesians 5:21
- (7.) We are to "exhort one another" - Hebrews 3:12-13
- (8.) We are to "consider one another" - Hebrews 10:24-25
- (9.) We are to be "hospitable to one another" - 1Peter 4:8-10

Application: You need to read Gods' Word for your brother and sister in Christ. You are accountable to help them along in the Christian faith. You are to be an example

of Christlikeness to them. You cannot do that without being constantly in the Word of God.

How can we exhort one another to follow the Word of God if we are not constantly in it? How can we comfort one another with God's promises if we do not know them?

3. You are also accountable for every **unsaved person** around you. We are to be ready to give an answer! **1 Peter 3:15**, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear".

I want to ask you, how can you give an answer to every person around you who are in all kinds of situations if you are not in God's Word?

We are commanded in **Matthew 28:19-20**, to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (ESV).

A disciple is a follower of Christ. You are to make Christ-followers and teach the all He commanded. How can you do that if you are not in the Word of God on a daily basis?

- B. Second, we are accountable to teach the Word of God to the **generations** to come. If have children, you are accountable to teach them the Word of God.

We need to commit to read the Bible through this year because if you have children you are commanded to diligently teach the Bible to them.

1. Now you may be here today and you have no children. That's fine. If you are a child of God, then you are a father or mother to all the children of this church.

In **Matthew 12:48-49** Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!"

2. **Deuteronomy 6:6-7** tells us that we are to teach the Word of God diligently to our children.

In the Jewish family, the single most famous verse is the so-called the *Shema* from Deuteronomy 6. "*Shema*" is the Hebrew word for "hear" or "listen" and it comes from that verse, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The *Shema* was traditionally recited by every Jewish child and adult at the start of each day and at the conclusion of each day. But equally important for the PARENTS of the children, and for all Christian parents are the verses that follow.

How can we encourage our children to love the Lord with their whole being? We read verses 6-7 of Deuteronomy 6, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach

them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Application: You need to commit to being Bible saturated this year because you have a duty not only to your fellow adult believers, you have a duty to your own children if God has given them to you and to all the children of the church.

3. Speaking of the precepts of God's Law [The Jews name for the Bible], Asaph told us in **Psalm 78:4-6**, "We will not hide [THE PRECEPTS OF GOD'S WORD] from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. 5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: 6 That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children".

Explanation: During the time the synagogues were instituted after the return from captivity, from ages 5-10, every Jewish child was to study only the Old Testament Scriptures. A Jewish father was expected to lead the entire family in all spiritual matters--including spiritual education.

Illustration: When I was in Spain, we met several Jewish people—several of them had just finished their time in the Israeli army, including women. Each one I would bring to the Hebrew Bible to Isaiah 53. They were all familiar with the verses. They had many passages completely memorized.

Application: What a testimony. These were not even believing Jews. What about the children of this church? Are we in the Bible enough to teach them? Are we Bible saturated people?

Conclusion: Let me encourage all of you to begin today, even before the New Year. Write today's date down and the word "began". When you finish write that date, and mark that you finished it.

You can use one of our Read through the Bible pamphlets, or you can simply begin in Genesis which is what I'm going to do. If you read 5 pages a day and finish the chapter you are on, you will read the Bible in a year. If you read 10 pages a day, you will read the Bible twice through in a year.

It may be good for you to read through the Bible in a conservative modern translation. I am going to be reading through the ESV this year.

I pray that God will move upon all of us to read through His Word this year. Why?

- God's Word is a **FOUNDATION** that will stabilize your life and eternity.
- God's Word brings **TRANSFORMATION** that will cleanse you and change you to Christ's likeness.
- God's Word will save the next **GENERATION**.

