



Biblically Centered

Living a life defined and directed by Scripture

Each of us regards the Bible as God's written word. However, if we are honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that we don't know the Bible as well as we would like. Furthermore, we also have a difficult time applying the things that we do know from Scripture to our everyday life. The goal of this session is to examine the discrepancy that exists between what we believe about the Bible and what we practice, i.e. how we conform our lives to Biblical truth.

God has given each of us special revelation through His written Word, the Bible. The Bible is God's holy, inerrant word. God's word serves as the foundation of our life. It is essential to understanding God, mankind, history, and life in general. It is not merely a book of stories or of suggestions to regulate our behavior.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God^(s) may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Q: What are some observations you can make about these verses?

"Teaching" is the most general term and refers mainly to imparting doctrine. "Reproof" is used for the "conviction" of a sinner. "Correcting" literally means challenging behavior in hopes of "restoring to an upright position or a right state." This term would apply to believers. "Training in righteousness" refers to instruction given for the purpose of Godly Christian living, i.e. how we relate to God and to one another.

The Bible is not an end in itself, however. Merely reading it or even memorizing it does not produce magical results in our lives. It serves as a means to a greater end: glorifying God in our thoughts, words, and actions. This can only be done through careful study and meditation on the scriptures. It is in the application of Scripture that we see the type of life change that God's Word is designed to bring about. Through the application of Scripture, we set our lives apart from the world and become more like Christ.

James 1:21-25

²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

Q: What is the benefit we receive when we become doers of the Word?

THREE BLESSINGS OF A BIBLICALLY ORIENTED LIFE

1. Change in Life Perspective

Romans 12:1-2

*1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, * I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.*

One of the results of the fall of the human race is that we were born into a selfish world with a self-centered nature. This condition can be seen in even the smallest members of the human race, children. Paul, writing to the church in Rome, reminds us that we need to experience a transformation from a human centered approach to life to a God centered approach to life. Paul refers to this as a renewal of the mind or changing the way you think. One way that this renewal of our minds occurs is through the study and application of God's Word.

Q: What does this verse say about the benefits of a “renewed mind?”

2. Strengthened Character

Psalms 119:11

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

The Scriptures tell us that what we hear in our words or see in our actions are an overflow of what exists in our hearts. A corrupted heart is capable of all sorts of evil thoughts and actions. Fortunately, God has given us a standard of moral excellence in His Word to constrain this type of behavior. As Christians, our character is strengthened and we become more like Christ as we follow His commandments for our lives.

Q: Can you think of an example when God's Word treasured in your heart kept you from disobeying Him?

3. Roles and Responsibilities Defined

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Every day each of us performs several different roles. Each of these roles also comes with various responsibilities. Unfortunately, we get many of our ideas about what roles and responsibilities we should have from the culture. God's design and intent for the universe often runs contrary to our culture. We must make a personal decision about who we will listen to. Will we conform our lives to Biblical truth or to cultural pressures?

Q: What are some of the roles and responsibilities of men, women, parents, kids, etc. that the Bible addresses?

Final Thoughts

- It is the vision of Mars Hill Community Church that the Scriptures would become your basis for all of your decisions. You can only grow in this area if you are willing to ask yourself some hard questions:
 1. Am I studying my Bible?
 2. What areas of my life do I need to focus on (marriage, finances, attitude, etc.)?
 3. How can I start applying what I have learned in this study?
- You can build your life around your own beliefs and ignore God's Word, but it will still be inspected according to His Word.

Personal Application: Are you Biblically Oriented?

1. If someone asked me to tell them what the Bible is about, would I be able to answer them? What would be my answer?
2. How often does the Bible factor into my decision-making process?
3. When I process through decisions, am I able to recall scriptures or easily find scriptures that guide me in that decision?
4. How often, aside from weekend worship services, do I open my Bible and spend time reading/studying it?
5. If the Bible is central to the Christian life, what keeps me from knowing the Bible as well as I would like?

Examples of personal goals to help you become Biblically Oriented:

1. Commit time every day to reading the Bible.

2. Keep a journal of what you read and write down questions, observations, etc.
3. Find a “biblical” mentor to help you work through your questions.
4. As you read and interpret the Word, think through measurable ways that you will apply what you’ve learned.
5. Attend the worship service regularly.
6. Take notes on the sermon, follow up on those notes during the week and come prepared for the following week.
7. Choose a system for memorizing scripture.
8. Listen to recordings of sermons (by whomever) in the car, while exercising, etc.
9. Read through and “master” a book of the Bible each month.
10. Purchase and read through a commentary as you study the Bible.
11. Join a Life Group where you and a couple of others keep one another accountable in your study of the scripture and share your personal insights.
12. Complete one “topical” study in the Bible a month to familiarize yourself with how the Bible addresses certain issues (i.e., marriage, parenting, prayer, etc.)
13. Set aside a time away from your desk, family, phone, TV, etc. and meditate on God’s Word.
14. Study an Old Testament character (Moses, Ruth, David, etc.)
15. Choose a topic related to a current event once a month and study how the Bible addresses that issue.
16. Before making major decisions, get alone, fast, pray and study the Word to seek God.
17. Pick one verse a day to write on an index card, keep in your pocket or on your desk, and memorize and meditate on it each day.