

Intro: What was the Greatest Gift you have ever received?

When I was 16 my mom gave me the keys to my first car! I was KING of the world!

My buddies and I ruled the road! All I had to do was pay for gas and insurance...it was amazing!

There is nothing better than a gift that touches the heart! That is at the heart of the Christmas series we are beginning:

God's Greatest Gifts: Looking at the different gifts that God has given us as His children that bless us and set us free!

Gift #1: The Bible (The Word of God)

6 Different Things the Bible Does for us that make it One of God's Greatest Gifts!

1. The Bible Brings Us Spiritual Life.

- Accepting what God's word teaches us leads us to salvation
James 1:21: "...*humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*"
- Accepting what God's word teaches us gives us the assurance we sometimes need that we know Christ.
1Jn 5:13: "*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*"
- Sharing what the word of God teaches with others helps them have true spiritual life with Christ
Phil 2:16 "*hold out the word of life-- in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.*"

Illus: Jesus talking to his disciples one day, telling them what was essential to their spiritual life

Joh 6:63 "*The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*"

2. The Bible Nurtures and Nourishes Our Spiritual Growth.

- The Bible is as important to our spiritual life as food is to our physical life!
Job 23:12 "*I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.*"
Luke 4:4 Jesus
Deut 8:3 "*He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna...to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*"
- The Bible provides spiritual nourishment to help us live and grow.
1 Pet 2:2 "*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation*"

Illus: Two Boxers equally matched in skills and abilities. One you feed and train. The other water only for two weeks
Bring them into the boxing ring...let them go...Who will win?

Rom 7:14-19 We all have two "men" living within us: Carnal and Spiritual.

The one that you "feed" and nourish WILL carry the day!

3. The Bible Keeps Us From Sin.

- The Bible helps us discern our own heart!
Heb 4:12 "*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*"
- The Bible serves to warn us off from something that is wrong when we have it in our hearts.
Ps 119:11 "*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*"

Illus: Reading this week in Job, came across a verse that just impacted me like a hammer!

Job 31:7 "*if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled,*"
What could be more appropriate at this time of the year when we are bombarded by images of what we NEED!?

4. The Bible Convicts Us When Have Sinned!

- The Bible brings us to repentance by convicting us when we sin.
Jer 23:29 "*Let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the LORD. "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"*

Illus: Oklahoma Wesleyan University Presidents Blog: Dr Everett Piper

5. The Bible Purifies Us When We Do Sin!

- Jesus prayed for us and told us that HE would use the word of God to purify us from sin
John 17:17: "*Sanctify (to make holy) them by the truth; your word is truth.*"
- Paul Told us that God "washes" our hearts and our lives with His word
Eph 5:25-26: "*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word...*"
- God cleanses us with His word when we sin
1John 1:9 "*If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

Illus: When we read the bible there is an entire process that we go through...

Keeps us from sin

Convicts us when we do sin

Purifies us from sin when we confess: **AND IT IS ALL BASED ON HIS WORD!**

6. The Bible Provides Light and Direction In Living For God!

- When we don't know what to do the bible shows us the way
Ps 119:105 *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."*
- The bible gives us strength when we need spiritual help
Ps 119:28 *"My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word."*
- The bible helps us determine truth from error.
2 Tim 2:15 *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."*

Illus: Many times when we are confused the bible will give us very direct and unerring insight into what we should do!
Sometimes it is very clear in how it addresses a situation.
Sometimes a verse we have memorized, studied, heard, read will come to mind and clearly shed light

CONCL: 5 Things We Should Be Doing With God's Word

Have you ever had a Christmas present you never unwrapped?

Many Christians are that way with the bible

1. Read it
2. Study it
3. Memorize it
4. Teach it (Children and others)
5. Share it