

Title: “The Bible is a Tool for You to Use”

Series: Getting Back to the Bible

Introduction:

Drive through any new community where they are building houses, or where a skyscraper is being constructed, and you will find a preponderance of tools. There will be saws, and hammers, and concrete mixers, and drills, and so on. You’ll also find tools at the place you go to get your car fixed, but there you will find some different ones – wrenches, welders, screw drivers, hydraulic lifts, and more. Go to the beauty parlor and you’ll find even more tools – combs, scissors, and hair dryers.

No matter where you go, or what kind of work you do, you will find tools for that specific job. A screwdriver drives in, or removes, screws. Scissors cut hair. A computer computes. You get the idea. There is an old saying, “Use the right tool for the right job.” And there is a lot of truth to that – you will build a house a lot quicker driving in nails with a hammer or nail gun than you will using a rock.

Have you ever thought of the Bible as a tool? Not to build anything, or change your appearance, or construct a new highway – but instead, have you considered your Bible as a tool to use for life change? Or how about for discipling others? Or maybe as an instrument to guide every step of your life? In this series, “Getting Back to the Bible” one of my goals is for you to use the Bible in such a way, because I believe you will see demonstrable, positive, results.

Let’s learn five specific ways we can use the Bible as a tool.

1. SEARCH IT

Do you know how many Google searches are performed each day? In 2013 the average was 5,922,000,000 per day. How many Bible searches do you think are performed every day? If you aren't doing it, that is one less than should be. And the same goes for me, and everyone else who doesn't put this wonderful tool to good use.

Jesus said:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. -- John 5:39 (ESV)

Notice that Jesus clearly tells us that it is the Scriptures that “bear witness” about Him. If we want to know Jesus – who He is, what He stands for, and what He wants from us then we better make sure and search the Word of God to find out.

Look what the prophets of old did:

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. -- 1 Peter 1:10–11 (ESV)

These prophets understood that the Bible, among other things, was a tool to search and learn. It wasn't just a book to place on the shelf, or to get out when the preacher was coming for a visit. It was and is a tool to be used.

So how do you search it? By reading it. By getting a concordance and looking up everything the Bible has to say about a certain subject. By downloading Bible Software for your computer or an App that you can use on your phone or tablet device. There are plenty of resources available – we just have to use them.

2. EXAMINE IT

Illustration:

¹In an interview, Billy Graham was asked this question: "If you had to live your life over again, what would you do differently?" His answer: "One of my great regrets is that I have not studied enough. I wish I had studied more and preached less. People have pressured me into speaking to groups when I should have been

¹ *Christianity Today*, September 12, 1977, p. 19.

studying and preparing. Donald Barnhouse said that if he knew the Lord was coming in three years, he would spend two of them studying and one preaching. I'm trying to make it up"

Consider these early Christians in Berea:

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. -- Acts 17:11 (ESV)

Did you notice how often these people were examining the Scriptures? That's right, they were doing it "daily." Every single day they sat down and studied what God had revealed to them in His Holy Word. They held the Bible to be important enough to make the study of it a part of their daily routine. And notice something else – for this they were described as being "more noble than those in Thessalonica." Now I'm sure that was not the reason they were doing it, but it shows how much God respects a person who takes the time to diligently examine His Word.

The good news is that you are not alone – the Holy Spirit will guide you.

These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. -- 1 Corinthians 2:10–13 (ESV)

The Spirit is given to us precisely that we might understand what God has revealed to us. You don't have to be a Bible Scholar or have a Seminary education to understand God's Word. You just have to be willing to open your heart and study it with the Spirit's assistance.

3. MEDITATE IN IT

Study and meditation are two different things. Both are good and necessary. In fact, they complement each other. The book of Psalms begins with it.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. -- Psalm 1:2 (ESV)

Often when we think of meditation we picture someone from the Hindu or Buddhist religions, sitting with legs folded on a mat, and contemplating their navel. But that is not what Biblical meditation is about. When we look at it in the Bible we see a specific purpose.

I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. -- Psalm 119:15 (ESV)

Notice in both Psalm 1:2 and here in Psalm 119:15 that there is a specific focus for the person meditating. They are focused on learning God's Word, understanding His precepts, and focusing on His ways. In other words, Biblical mediation is taking a passage or passages of Scripture and focusing on them in a prayerful manner until we have a good handle on what God is trying to communicate to us through them. It isn't an emptying of the mind, but instead, a filling of the mind and heart with the goodness of God.

When you use this tool, you will be rewarded with an intimate relationship with God.

4. DELIGHT IN IT

Illustration:

In Frederica Mathewes-Green's book, "The Jesus Prayer," she says:

²My hunch is that you are already sensing something of God's presence, or you wouldn't care. Picture yourself walking around a shopping mall, looking at people and the window displays. Suddenly, you get a whiff of cinnamon. You weren't even hungry, but now you really crave a cinnamon roll. This craving isn't something you made up. There you were, minding your own business, when some drifting molecules of sugar, butter, and spice collided with a susceptible patch inside your nose. You had a real encounter with cinnamon—not a mental delusion, not an emotional projection, but the real thing. And what was the effect? You want more, *now*. And if you hunger to know the presence of God, it's because ... you have already begun to scent [God's] compelling delight.

² Frederica Mathewes-Green, *The Jesus Prayer* (Paraclete Press, 2009), pp. xiii-xiv.

When you begin to desire God's Word as much as a Cinnabon, you are doing this thing right! God wants us to desire, to delight, and to devour His Word with pleasure.

I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. -- Psalm 119:16 (ESV)

For I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. -- Psalm 119:47 (ESV)

Unfortunately, some people I talk to don't take delight in God's statutes and commandments, but rather try to ignore them, or even run from them if they are aware of them. Thankfully, that is not true of most of us in the Church. We enjoy hearing from God's Word, and if it is something we enjoy then we will long for it, participate in it, and desire more and more of it. If you find that you do not take delight in God's Word, then frankly, there is something wrong with your Christian walk. If this is the case, then you need to immediately seek the Lord and ask Him to examine your heart and to help you get back on the right track. God enjoys it when you enjoy His Word. Please, don't let anything get in the way of this.

5. DECLARE IT

After we have searched God's Word, taken the time to examine it, meditated upon it, and enjoyed it, we will find that we cannot keep it to ourselves. We must declare what we have learned to others – we have a need to share what God has revealed.

Like the Apostles:

"We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." – Acts 4:20 (NASB)

And like the Psalmist:

With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. -- Psalm 119:13 (ESV)

And like the prophet:

Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. -- Jeremiah 23:28 (ESV)

Not only is declaring God's Word a means of evangelism, it is also a tool which helps us in our walk with the Lord. It is not just for others, it is also for us.

Who learns the most in a classroom? The teacher or the student? Most will say the teacher. This is also true for those who share God's Word by declaring it to others. We will not only learn more from it than those we declare it to, but we will draw more and more close to the God we are declaring!

Conclusion:

So is your toolbox full yet? Do you feel you have the right tools for the job? Are you ready to begin digging into God's Word, not just to say you did, but to begin changing your life and growing in your relationship with the Lord?

I hope your answer is "Yes," because if it is, and you really begin to do these things, your life will never be the same again. I know that's a big promise, but I mean it with every ounce of my being. You will never be the same again.

And guess what? I have confidence in you that you will pull through and do exactly what we've talked about here today. What do you say we do it together?

May God Bless you as you go about His business this week.