

New Life Evangelistic Center



Journey Into God's Word

Dear Brother and Sister,

You are about to begin one of the most exciting journeys of your life. I call it exciting because if you faithfully continue this journey of reading through God's Word, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, you will be discovering treasures you have never before experienced.

As we begin our reading in the Book of Genesis we discover a Master Artist at work. This Master Artist is God. It is God who is the foundation of life. He is the subject of life. As we journey into His Word we see that unless He is the center of life, the center of our life, everything will be out of balance. As we study the Bible we see that this being out of balance, is rebelliousness against God and His purpose for life, and is called sin. Sin destroys all that it touches including God's creation. Yet in the middle of such destruction God provides hope through the restoration provided by His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we make our journey we will actually start from three different points and read forward from these positions at the same pace. The first starting point is Genesis. As indicated earlier Genesis shows us how God is the source of all life. God speaks and life is created. Now as we study the written Word of God let us believe His life will bring forth faith in our lives in a new and powerful way. Genesis makes it clear that you have been created in the image of God (Gen.1:27). Being created in God's image means we are reflecting God's nature. Reflecting this nature of God causes us to seek our satisfaction in God the Giver of life.

The second place we will start our journey from is the Psalms. In the Psalms we see the passionate prayers of those who desire to find their satisfaction in God. As we study the Word of God my prayer is that your desire for Him will grow like never before. When your desire grows and you draw closer to God you will see that even though life at times can seem unfair, the fact is God is faithful. This is a message that appears over and over in the Psalms.

The third place we begin our journey is in the New Testament from Matthew. In the Book of Matthew we discover the antidote to the sin that we saw tainted creation in the Book of Genesis. This cure for our fallen world is Jesus. Matthew shows us how this heavenly King can revolutionize our world and enable us to participate in the Kingdom of God both now and for all eternity. This participation provides us a satisfaction that nothing in this world can offer.

To help you get just a taste of what a journey into God's Word can provide, let us spend some time in exploring this satisfaction that comes from being in fellowship with the Creator of the universe. This is possible through the life that Jesus provides (John 10:10).

In the Psalms we are told to "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps.37:4)*NIV*. This Scripture points out if you get the desires of your heart before you delight in the Lord these desires can easily become idols.

Delighting in the Lord involves experiencing a satisfaction in Him you can find in no one or anything else. As we journey into God's Word we discover that being satisfied with the fact that God has everything under control frees us from anxiety and fears. Now continue the journey and you will discover passages like I Peter 5:7(*NIV*) which says, "Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares for you". As I read the Scriptures and apply what I read, I discover I can remain satisfied in the power of the Almighty God who is Love. As this happens, I know I do not need to live in fear of the future, for His grace is all sufficient. In passages such as Isaiah 41:20, He declares, "Fear not for I am with you, be not dismayed for I am your God, I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand".

Our battles are not with other people but are within us as to where we will find satisfaction. That is why Paul prayed in Eph.3:16-19(*NIV*) that each of us would be strengthened in our inner man to the extent we would find complete satisfaction in God and His love. "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God". Wow! Now that is satisfaction, and we are told how to get satisfaction, by reading the Bible.

This satisfaction comes from abiding in God's love and grace "the fullness of God" each and everyday. As we do this our work for the Lord becomes worship to the Lord as we discover joy and satisfaction in all we do for Him.

Journeying through God's Word teaches us how to handle problems. Did you know that even Jesus was troubled? In John 12:27 we hear Him Saying, "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, "Father, save Me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour". In other words, the distressing, troubling temptation for Jesus was to despair and give up not carrying out His mission. The flaming darts were thoughts like "it's not worth it or it won't work or just give up".

John 12:27 and John 13:21 say Jesus was troubled but He did not give up. He found satisfaction in the Father and told His disciples in John 14:1, "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me". Jesus was warning the disciples against giving in to despondency and depression and letting it fester and spread – so He says fight back: believe God, believe also in Me. The first shock waves of depression are temptations not sin, but Jesus knew how quickly they could become sin if allowed to grow unopposed. When you read Matt.26:36-39 concerning the agony in Gethsemane, you see how Jesus fought off the depression of unbelief and found satisfaction in God the Father. Look at the following five steps to victory we can find in the Scripture selection.

1st You see He chose some close friends to be with Him in verse 37 we read "He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee".

2nd Jesus opened His soul to them and said in verse 38 "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death".

3rd As we study this scripture we see Jesus asked for their involvement in the battle to intercede through prayer and be watchful in verse 39, He is requesting "Remain here and keep watch with Me".

4th Jesus poured out His heart to His Father in prayer "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me"(verse 39).

5th He finds satisfaction in the will of the Father by resting in it and knowing God is in control. The rest of verse 39 shows Jesus declaring, "Yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt. Then we read in Hebrews 12:2 that Jesus looked to the grace that existed beyond the cross, "For the joy set before Him (He) endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God".

Only as we read God's Word and apply it to our personal lives will we discover the victory that can be ours. This is the journey that we are about to begin together. This week let us read Genesis 1-10, Psalms 1-10, and Mathew 1-7.

Before I conclude this first lesson into the Journey of God's Word let me share with you from the first 16 verses of Psalm 119. Please read these verses carefully, as they are taken from the Message Bible, and then state in your own words why you believe this journey is so important for you at this time. "You're blessed when you stay on course, walking steadily on the road revealed by God. You blessed when you follow His directions, doing your best to find Him. That's right—you don't go off on your own; you walk straight along the road He set. Your God, prescribed the right way to live; now your expect us to live it. Oh, that my steps might be steady, keeping to the course you set; then I'd never have any regrets in comparing my life with your counsel. I thank you for speaking straight from your heart; I learn the pattern of your righteous ways. I'm going to do what you tell me to do; don't ever walk off and leave me. How can a young person live a clean life? By carefully reading the map of your Word. I'm single-minded in pursuit of you; don't let me miss the road sign you've posted. I've banked your promises in the vault of my heart so I won't sin myself Bankrupt. Be blessed, God; train me in Your ways of wise living. I'll transfer to my lips all the counsel that comes from your mouth; I delight far more in what you tell me about living than in gathering a pile of riches. I ponder every morsel of wisdom from you, I attentively watch how you've done it. I relish everything you've told me of life, I won't forget a word of it."

How wonderful the Word of God is and what a privilege it is to journey into it under the leading and anointing of the Holy Spirit. I pray a special blessing will come upon you as we now begin this journey together into the wonderful Living Word of God.

Yours in Christ Service,

Larry Rice

