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“Making 2006 an Abundant Year, ‘in Christ’”
Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 11:6
By Tom Snyder

I love to teach, and be apart of bible studies... I use to say “the bible has come alive to me’. In truth God’s Holy Spirit has awakened me and is revealing His truth through His Holy Word.... It is exciting to be studying the scriptures, and be reading something you may have read several times before, and suddenly you experience a new insight.... The scripture didn’t change, but your level of understanding is growing, and your heart and mind are opened to new insights..... spiritual insights.

People have asked; why should we study the bible?

The scriptures tell of eternal truths and bear witness to the promises and commandants of Almighty God..... They tell of God’s love for His creation and His desire to fellowship with His people..... Through out the old and new testament, God continually calls out to the world to trust in Him..... He pours out His love to those who will listen and obey His commands, commands that only bring joy, fulfillment, hope, redemption and love.

The bible contains life lessons, parables, historical accounts and spiritual revelations that guide us to salvation in Jesus Christ, and instruct us in living a fully alive, spirit filled, joyful, and abundant life. The bible is medicine for our soul.

Jesus said; I have come that you might life, abundant life.

Let us pray.....

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight oh Lord my strength and my redeemer..... bring us your word Lord God....Amen...

This morning, I would like share with you several scriptures, that have had a profound impact on challenging me into studying the bible.... they have helped draw me into a deeper, and closer walk with Christ..... The scriptures can bring strength, hope, conviction, encouragement, and truth, to our hearts and minds.....in a world that seems desperate for answers....the bible is a great place to start

Let us start with, II Tim 3:16-17 All scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work....Now this is good to know... Look at all these things, scripture is good for.... teaching, we certainly need that ...rebuking and correcting ...we certainly know a lot of others who need that.....well..... we might need some of that once in awhile....and in a world where right is wrong... and wrong is right.....we certainly need training in righteousness.....

But... do you believe this?..... Do you have faith enough to believe this scripture?.....

How can we grow in our faith.... when our faith is lacking?.....

Heb 11:6 ...says without faith it is impossible to please God.....

Now I’m really in trouble... I’m questioning scripture...my faith is lacking and I can’t please God.....

I need some faith fast...Have you ever felt like that?..... I have spent a lot of time in prayer.... calling out to God... increase my faith..... Lord help my unbelief.....forgive me Father for my unfaithfulness.....Each time, I come to the realization that during these times of doubt, I had not been consistent in studying God’s Holy Word.....and spending time with Him..... Have you been there?.....There is hope.....

Let's look at Romans 10:17 ...it says...faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.....once again we are pointed back to the bible, God's Holy Word, the bread of life.....In the old testament, Moses told his people, "man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord....."

Jesus used these very words to rebuke satan when He was being tested after fasting for forty days and nights.....

Jesus used scripture three times to rebuke satan's temptations.....Each time Jesus replied, "it is written", and then he quoted scripture..... satan fled....

James 4:7 tells us to resist the devil and he will flee..... We need to equip ourselves with the word of God to help us face the trials of life.....there is power in the spoken word of God.....

Do you remember the "shema"....given to Moses by God for the Hebrew nation?...

Hear O Israel: The Lord your God, the Lord is One...Love the Lord Your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength...These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts...Impress them on your children...Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up....Tie them as symbols on your hand and bind them on your foreheads...Write them on your doorframes of your houses and on your gates.....

How do we obey these commands, if we have not read these scriptures?.....

Once we have read them do we take them to heart? Do we speak about these things to our children?..... are we proclaiming and living out these commandments of God?.....

Do you remember the story Steve told this summer, about an old Cherokee who was teaching his grandson about life? The old man said, " there is a fight going on inside me. It is a terrible fight. It is between two wolves. One is evil-he is anger, envy, greed, lies, guilt, resentment, and ego.

The other is good- he is love, peace, joy, hope, truth, kindness, and compassion.....The same fight is going on inside you.

The grandson thought about it for a minute and asked, grandfather, which wolf will win?.... the grandfather replied, The one you feed..... I love that story.....

It speaks so clearly about the importance of the things we "think of" and "focus on" and, how our thoughts and choices... shape and impact our lives.....

Philippians 4:8 says it this way, ...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praise worthy, think about such things, put into practice, and the God of peace will be in you.....if we desire to live spirit filled lives of peace, joy, hope, and love.....let us fill our hearts and minds with those wordsIf we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, we need to study His word..... now..... let us put on the armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-18

.....be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so you can take your stand against the devils schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the spiritual forces of evil, in the heavenly realms.....Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything to stand, stand firm with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,....with the breastplate of righteousness in place,....and your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace....In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one....Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.....With this in mind be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.....WOW....

Where do we begin? Each time I read this passage, I feel the spirit of God come upon me. It speaks volumes to me.... we could spend hours on this passage..... what I would like to focus on today, are the six pieces of armor..... Did you notice that all the armor is for protection or defense.... Except, the sword of the spirit.....The sword is the only offensive weapon, which is the word of God.....What hit me when I first read this, was that I was in a spiritual battle... and my only means of going on the offense, was with my knowledge of scripture, the word of God.....I was in a battle, with little to no ammunition....I

couldn't win.....I could protect myself with the helmet of salvation.....I could try to fend off the flaming arrows with the shield of faith.....but we already know my faith is lacking when I stray from God's word.....the breastplate of righteousness is too heavy for me.... my righteousness is as filthy rags, except by the grace of God..... I have sought truth all my life.....but the truth of the world will not protect me..... Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the lightand how will I be ready to share the gospel of peace, if I have not studied the words of the Prince of Peace?.....Let me say that again....how will I be ready to share the gospel of peace, if I have not studied the words of the Prince of Peacethese words have convicted.... and challenged meI began actively reading, and studying the bible.....my faith, began to increase.....my prayer life grew more and more.....and I felt God's presence in my life more than ever before.....and it has continued to grow, with each page that I turn....

Many years have passed since this revelation I still have so much to learn, and many things I do not understand.....There are many scriptures and passages in the bible I do not fully grasp... and some that I truly agonize over..... I continue to struggle with areas in my life, and things I witness in the world around me, but God is faithful.... and the truths contained and revealed through scripture are more real and important to me than ever..... I see these truths lived out in the lives of faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, all over the world.....I do believe the bible is the inspired Word of Almighty God.....

Scripture tells us to trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path... and Jesus said, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.....

God has blessed me in ways, that I never could have dreamed of.....
My heart's desire is to be used by Him.....to be faithful and obedient to His call, and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, with the rest of my life.....

We do not worship the biblewe worship the one whom the bible speaks of ... Jesus the Christ.....Emanuel....the Prince of Peace...the Ever Lasting Father....the Lamb of God....the Savior of the world.... if you want to know Him more.....read His book....spend time with Him in prayer.....spend time together with other brothers and sisters in Christ.....start a small group bible study..... .Start a group with your family.... or in your neighborhood..... or right here in our church.... Let us make this new year, 2006..... a year that we dedicate.... or rededicate... our lives to growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.....Let the love of Christ change your life..... and then go out into the world sharing the "Good News"Let us live lives, of fully alive, spirit filled, people of God.....

If there is anyone listening today who hasn't invited Jesus Christ into his or her life...maybe today is the day...maybe your thinking it is time to give this Christian stuff a try.....there are many who set out to prove the bible and Christianity to be foolish....and became some of the greatest ambassadors for Christ, the world has ever knownas Matt has said ..there is a place in God's heart only you can fill....and He loves you so much.....He desires to have a personal relationship with you.....Christ gave His life for you.....let us live our lives for Him....
Jesus said," I have come that you may have life..... abundant life'

I would like to share a song with you, it is called, " Word of God Speak "

I'd like to use this song to lead into our time of prayer.....Lets just close our eyes and prepare our hearts and minds to come before the Lord...and rest in Him.....

Let the word of God... speak to you.....