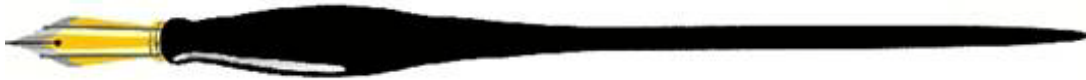


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More Than A Book: A Rulebook for Life



Introduction:

The most popular book of all time is unquestionably the Bible. On average the Bible is produced at a rate of one hundred million copies per year. That is hard to picture in our minds so let's bring that number into a visual comparison so we might know just how many that is: the Bible that I happen to use is of average dimension—just a little more than 1 ½ inches thick. If we were to take just last year's production and set them in a long row like they would set on a bookshelf that row would follow the interstate highway system from here, in Newbern, TN, all the way to Tacoma, WA. And still fill up forty more miles of bookshelves. (2367.42 miles of bookshelf total).

With the incredible popularity of the Bible throughout the world one would think that Christianity would be seeing constant rapid growth. What is the reason that the Bible is not being as influential as it should be in this world? Perhaps it is that too many see it as just a book, when it is truly so much more. To understand the significance of the Bible in this world is easy; to understand and appreciate its transforming power is more of a challenge.

Let's take some time to learn more about this powerful point of hope—the Bible. So that we can effectively change ourselves to become what God wants. Our lesson today will focus on the "Bible as a Rulebook for life".

Why do we need Rules?

Man is helpless. This is a reality that is not comfortable for us to hear, but a reality that we must accept. Jeremiah, many centuries ago, said that we have no personal ability of direction (Jeremiah 10:23). By the first century the situation had not changed; we are told that Christ came to bring us hope when we were without hope (Romans 5:6-8).

Rules are not oppression they are gifts from God. Paul in 1 Timothy 1:5 reveals the commandments of God are from the love of God for the purity of our heart, our good conscience, and our sincere faith. Knowing that God loved us enough to care about what we do, is an important understanding. This was in the

grasp of the Psalmist as he recorded statements such as, “...his delight is in the law of the Lord” (Psalm 1:1-6) and “Oh, how I love Your law” (Psalm 119:97).

God provides rules/commandments to bring us to a better place. The purity of heart comes through obedience (James 4:8-10). Good conscience comes through cleansing (1 Peter 3:21). Sincerity of our faith is proven over time with our endurance (1 Peter 1:6-9). We need God’s rules.

God’s Hope in Rules

We need rules to find the best of this life and the hope of everlasting life. There are rules of relationships. Husband and wife (Ephesians 5:22-33); parents and children (Ephesians 6:1-4); bosses and workers (Ephesians 6:5-9); Christian to Christian (Romans 12: 9-15); and Christians to our fellow man (Romans 12:16-21). There are rules of morality that include: modesty (1 Timothy 2:9-10), physical intimacy (Hebrews 13:4), and integrity of conduct (Colossians 3:5-10).

God’s rules show us His design for our best possible life. Through His instructions He provides: Love (1 John 3:1-3), Joy (John 15:11) and Peace (Philippians 4:7). He also provides the hope of salvation (John 3:16; Romans 5:5-8; Jude 24-25).

Not Pulling Away from the Rules

In a time when our culture is taking a casual approach to most subjects, we must not forget there are still some hard fast rules. God declares that the rules have always mattered. Adam and Eve had a very limited law but it still was enforced (Genesis 3:16-19). Nadab and Abihu were not to tamper with God’s rules (Leviticus 10:1-2). All Christians are expected to “keep” the commandments of God (John 14:15). We are to “give” our selves “entirely to them” (1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16).

God knows best. The Bible is our link to the things we need to know about God, ourselves, and the hope that God provides us.

Conclusion:

With the incredible popularity of the Bible throughout the world one would think more people would see the Bible as so much more than a book. The Bible is the most important book on our planet today; there is no comparable volume. The Bible contains a transforming power that is without comparison. The greatest transformation is beyond the level of character, it is all the way into the soul of man (Hebrews 4:12). God has delivered His “power to salvation” (Romans 1:16). Will you open your heart to obedience and transformation? Your opportunity to begin is now. ~tss

The Gospel Plan

HEAR THE GOSPEL MESSAGE Romans 10:11-16

BELIEVE IT !!! Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6

REPENT – CHANGE Luke 13:3; 2 Peter 3:9

**OPENLY CONFESS — JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD
Romans 10:8-10; Acts 8:37**

**BE BAPTIZED — FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR SINS
Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-39; 1 Peter 3:21**

LIVE ON FAITHFULLY Hebrews 10:35-39; 1 Peter 1:6-9

If you are enjoying The Messenger and you know someone else who would like to receive it. Please forward this copy to them and send their email address and I will add them to the list.

Sean