
Becoming Christlike – New Testament Application of Old Testament Lessons

NT 2 Keep Yourself

We will begin with some additional New Testament Reflections on I Samuel 1-23.

The Word

We saw last time that in Luke 24 on the road to Emmaus Christ pointed Cleopas and the other man to the Word. If you go back through the gospels you will find many times that Christ pointed to the Word, its significance, its truth. Other places he would confront the Pharisees or Sadducees, “Have you not read...?” He was ever pointing them back to the Word as recorded in the Old Testament.

Repeatedly the Epistles talk about the Word.

Think about how God placed Psalm 119 right smack in the middle of the Bible. Psalm 119 explicitly mentions the Word in some fashion in all but a few of its 176 verses. [119:84,90-91,120, 122,132,149] That should really get our attention. It covers everything before and after. God is saying the Word is truth. I am my Word. You can’t separate me from the Word. Christ said, “I am the living Word.”

In Psalm 119, 12 times it declares the Word is life. 7 times it declares the Word gives understanding. The word “understanding” never appears that many times in any other book.

Look at the world around us! How are we going to understand ourselves, the world, history, the past, the future, and the present?

There is no other way to understand than for God to tell us in His Word. It is the light. It is the only light, yet people can’t see it. Why? Because the devil has blinded the minds of those who believe not. The problems people encounter are because they don’t know the truth, but we are privileged to know it.

The ESV Study Bible has this chart along with a lengthy note on how Psalm 119 focuses on The Word

English	Hebrew	Meaning
law	<i>torah</i>	instruction
testimonies	<i>edot</i>	what God solemnly testifies to be his will
precepts	<i>piqqudim</i>	what God has appointed to be done
statutes	<i>khuqqim, khuqqot</i>	what the divine Lawgiver has laid down
commandments	<i>mitswot</i>	what God has commanded
rules	<i>mishpatim</i>	what the divine Judge has ruled to be right
word	<i>imrah; dabar</i>	what God has spoken

I had mentioned proving the Word. God wants us to prove His Word. It already is true. He doesn't need to prove himself. He will be faithful to all he has said. Then we will know everything is true by proving it for ourselves.

Psalm 145:13

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. [**The Lord is faithful in all his words** and kind in all his works.]⁶

I Kings 8:56

56 "Blessed be the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. **Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant.**

God has promised rest, not one word failed. What a comfort to each one of us. In the past every promise God made not one word failed. Then, the Christ came as promised. Then, the gift of holy spirit came as promised. Then, here we are in the church age with all that God promised and has given us through Christ. Then, we know that the trumpet is going to sound, the dead in Christ will rise first, those who are alive and remain will be gathered together to meet him in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. And we will have NEW BODIES! (Couldn't we use those now?)

Joshua 23:14

14 "And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that **not one word has failed of all the good things^a that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.**

Think of all the words in God's Word. Not one of them has failed. They are God's Words. They are truth. They are alive. They are sharper than any two-edged sword.

Look at how Revelation ends...

Revelation 22:18

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, **19** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

God make it very clear that no one is to mess with HIS WORD. The Word gives us light, life, truth, hope, understanding so we should read it.

Ginosko

Last time we mentioned the Greek word "ginosko" which means experiential knowledge. There is a positive and a negative side to this experiential knowledge. One's shared experience of climbing Mount Everest can inspire and help someone who desires to climb it. To really know you'd have to climb Mount Everest.

One's shared experience of overcoming drug addiction though it is a negative experience can still share with another the freedom at the other end of recovery. It can express how one will need to alter his life, lifestyle, and find different friends. By experiencing all this the recovered addict can help others.

Words describe, but we can experience and that is why we want to prove the Word. So that we have that experiential knowledge of the Word working to share.

Peter

We looked at Peter in John 21 and in I Peter 5. We saw that the very impetuous Peter of the Gospels became the unshakeable Peter of the epistles. The change that he experienced after Pentecost coupled with his experiential knowledge of Jesus enable him to over-all live faithfully for the rest of his life. (Outside of the incident where Paul went and corrected him for hypocrisy.)

Testify and Witness

Now would be a good time to do a word study on the words "testify, testimony, witness, and bear witness". The reason these people testify of what they witness is because they have experienced something and now they tell their experience.

Someone might say they don't believe in the City of David or the Pilgrimage Walk and you can say, "I have been there. I sat on the southern steps of the Temple. You can't talk me out of that because I have been there".

God says taste and see that the Lord is good. Taste it. Experience it. Prove it.

John 3:32

32 He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony.

John 21:24

24 This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

John might say: Look I lived it. I was with Christ. I was there for his ministry, the miracles, his crucifixion, his death, I was standing there with his mother, when Christ said behold your mother, behold your son. That was me! I was there. I experienced it. I lived it. I know it. I experienced the Day of Pentecost. I spoke in tongues. I was there in Acts 3 when Peter and I ministered healing to the lame man, and he was healed. I can testify to those things.

In John 1-24 the word testify and witness occurs repeatedly.

John 1:6,7

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

John 1:34

34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Sonⁱ of God."

John 3:11

11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you^f do not receive our testimony.

John 5:39

39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me

Acts 4:33

33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Now the miracles that are taking place are giving voracity to the Word and the resurrection.

I John 1:2,3

2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— **3** that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:8

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth

Acts 3:15

15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

Acts 5:32

32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

Acts 10:39-43in

39 And we are **witnesses** of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **40** but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as **witnesses**, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** And he commanded us to preach to the people and **to testify** that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. **43** To him all the prophets **bear witness** that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The reason people stand up and give their testimony is because of what they have experienced!

The Best of Times, The Worst of Times – Election Year Challenge

Last time we made an analogy of how these are the best and worst of times in this information age that we live in because of technology. The current technologies available enable people to feed themselves on the world, the flesh and the devil 24/7.

How did people survive 6000 years without cell phones? There is the constant temptation to check in on politics, or sports or whatever one is most drawn to.

As a political science major and sports enthusiast Micheal understands this temptation of the cell phone being right there. He has made an Election Year Challenge to himself to refrain from spending time on these things.

Election hype will be constant 24/7 up till and then even after the election. Spending time on all this incoming information will not help us with our spiritual growth and our goal to grow up in Christ to spiritual maturity and become more Christlike.

A freind who had a recent medical challenge voiced that he had had enough focus on “self” with what to expect in the procedure and the recovery and just longed to get back to Colossians 3: 1-4

Colossians 3:1-4

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your^a life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

What a great heart this demonstrates!

God wants us healthy, so we aren't distracted with illness.

We have seen repeatedly that all the New Testament writers direct our focus on THE HOPE. Christ in the gospels, Paul, Peter, John and James they are all saying LOOK, FOCUS ON THE HOPE.

There is a contant lure to put our attention on earthly things and be consumed with them. We can and must exercise self-control not to be sucked into it.

We must challenge ourselves to be aware of our time and focus it on God and growth to maturity and not on what is temporal. Let us commit to setting our affection on things above.

This concludes our introductory reflections from last session.

Keep Yourself – Stay Intentional – Maximize your Time Spiritually

If we want to maximize our what is available to us as believers in the age of Grace, there is a great deal we can learn from Proverbs to help us stay free of the world.

As you read slowly and carefully and with focus, remember that every word has the life of God in it.

Proverbs 22: 17-21

17 Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge,

Inclining the ear and hearing the Word means that we decide to be intentional. We surround ourselves with people who speak the Word and are positive. Incline the ear so that we can hear the word. Let's use our ears and all the members of our bodies as God intended them to be used.

In the Old Testament the word “hear” meant to hear with your ear and your mind and your soul and to believe it and apply it. The “words of the wise” are the Word, God’s wisdom. Not the wisdom of some professor or stock advisor or some expert in any of a gagillion fields.

Listen to me, believe me, apply your heart to my knowledge.

[18](#) for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips.

It is instructing us to keep those words within us. It is easy for them to slip out and be replaced by things of the world.

It will be good for us if we do, it will be fruitful and beneficial. Keep them and guard them in our hearts. We must have a plan in place as to how we are going to carry this out, so we are filled with the Word.

We know from the gospels that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

For it to be ready on our lips it has to be in our hearts so that we can speak it to ourselves and to others. We need a plan. We have to be intentional about getting the Word in front of our eyes, meditating on it and driving it into our minds and hearts.

[19](#) That your trust may be in the Lord, I have made them known to you today, even to you.

SO THAT, for the purpose that, our trust may be in the Lord. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word. What is going to increase our faith and our trust in God is if we are filled with the Word. Again, so that we can speak it to ourselves and to others.

Are we actually doing this and living this? Are we looking to God with trust in every situation and challenge of life?

[20](#) Have I not written for you thirty sayings of counsel and knowledge, [21](#) to make you know what is right and true, that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?

We know from Revelation; these words are trustworthy and true!

Proverbs 4:20

[20](#) My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.

Not the sayings of philosophers and CEOs and stock advisors and talk show hosts and politicians and sports announcers...but be attentive **to my words**.

[21](#) Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart.

Why? If we don’t keep them in sight they will escape. Keep them within your heart. Who is responsible to do this? I AM. No one else can do it for me

[22](#) For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their^b flesh.

LIFE and HEALING! If that is not an incentive to do this, what is?

[23](#) Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

We must keep our own heart with vigilance, with diligence. Again no one else can do it for us. It is our free-will choice to do it. We need a plan. We need to schedule time in our daily lives to be reading the Word, meditating on it, building it in our hearts.

We will be talking about The Parable of the Sower, Self-Control, and Reflexives which will enable us to do this.

Proverbs 3:1-6

1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments,

2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.

God is promising long days and long years and **personal inner peace**. We are not going to have it externally. There are going to be wars and rumours of wars and conflict and violence from this day forward (as there has been throughout history) until the Lord returns. At Christmas we see “Peace on earth and good will towards men.” That is not going to happen. Christ even said he was going to set a man against his father and people against their household.

God does promise us His peace, an internal peace and calm in the midst of all storms IF we have his Word built in our hearts.

3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

That is going to take some time and effort. What are we writing on the tablet of our hearts? We have the spirit within to assist but we still need to take action and write it our hearts.

The Old Testament believers were told to do this. They were not very successful; that is why they were taken captive in Babylon and others were scattered. They learned that they needed to write the Word on the tablet of their hearts. At least they came back and kept it together long enough for the Messiah to be born. We need to write the Word on our hearts, Why?...

4 So you will find favor and good success^a in the sight of God and man. **5** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. **6** In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

With the Word alive in us we will be asking God, “What will you have me to do?”

What's Within Will Win

Remember those 4 W's and live by them. It takes intentionality and focus. So that the Word comes to mind when we need it. We saw the word “keep” repeatedly because it is up to us to do.

Reflexives

A reflexive is a grammatical construction where the subject performs the action of the verb on itself.

Keep yourself pure. (You Timothy, keep yourself pure, you have to do the action on yourself.)

He humbled himself. (Jesus did the act of humbling himself)

He gave himself. (as a ransom.)

He made himself obedient. (Free-will, no one is forcing it. You have to do it.)

These occur all over the New Testament. We will take a concentrated look at them because it is a key to keeping the Word within us.

Acts 20:28 NIV

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. Devil will not keep watch over us.

The devil will not keep watch over us.

The people in the world will not keep watch over us.

We must do this in order to keep the Word in our heart

I Timothy 5:22

22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; **keep yourself pure.**

This will take self-control and self-discipline. As Paul wrote to Timothy, he had to recognize his role in that. It is not just going to happen. There is opposition out there from the world, flesh and devil!

I John 5:19

19 We know that we are from God, and **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**

Ephesians 2:2

2 in which you once walked, **following the course of this world**, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience?

Hebrews 13:5

5 **Keep your life free from love of money**, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Why? Because the purchasing power of money will entice you to satisfy "SELF" with an endless stream of things that the flesh wants. "I want this, oh to get it I need more money, what do I need to do to get more money?"

James 1:27

27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and **to keep oneself unstained from the world.**

I John 5:21

21 Little children, **keep yourselves from idols.**

Why? Because idols are EVERYWHERE and they tweak our flesh trying to keep us entangled, they lure us to pursue them to worship anything and everything other than God including the worship of self and the satisfaction of our own pleasures.

Jude 1:21

21 **keep yourselves in the love of God**, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

The only way we can keep ourselves in God's love is if we do those other things:

keep watch over ourselves

keep ourselves pure

keep ourselves free from the love of money

keep ourselves from being stained by the world

keep ourselves from idols

THAT will then enable us to keep ourselves in GOD'S LOVE. So we can actually manifest the love for God and for other people.

It is a rare person who is actually going to do this. The scripture says there are few who are going to do this because it necessitates dying to self and living according to this higher plane.

The commitment that God requires in order for us to be Christlike is written throughout the Gospels and the epistles and it is as plain as day. Yet very few Christians are willing to accept this.

Very few will do this because we don't see any examples of others around us living like this.

You may say, "Didn't Christ die so I would not have to?" That is a great question.

Yes, Christ did die physically as the penalty for our sins in order for us to have eternal life.

If we want to be Christlike in this life this is what it is going to take? Why would we want to become Christlike?

In gratitude, in gratefulness, to give glory to God, to step on the devil's face and let him know that the wisdom of God is seen in heavenly places, to let him know the mystery of what God accomplished in Christ that we have Christ in us the hope of glory, that it can actually be done! That despite living in flesh, in the world, with the devil that we can actually reckon the old man dead and ourselves alive in Christ!

It is like the child who gets an allowance every week and saves it up so he can buy his dad a gift.

God has given us so much. He has given us the gift of Christ in us. What can I give back to him in return? We can say here, God, here is the gift of my life:

Romans 12: 1-3

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers,^a by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.^b **2** Do not be conformed to this world,^c but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.^d

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

As a community. As a group of believers. Here is a group giving their lives and loving one another, manifesting what God intended. They will know you are my disciples by the love you have for one another. Why is that such a big deal?

Most love is poisoned by self-interest.

Jude 1:21

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

It takes a daily effort to keep ourselves in God's love. We have the opportunity to bless God, honor, praise and glorify God both as individuals and as a group of people.

Great commitment is necessary to see this take place. This is why the mystery or sacred secret was lost. Signs, miracles and wonders stopped happening, but they should be following those who believe today as they did during the Book of Acts. They should be happening in the physical realm so people would know there is a spiritual God. This would get people's attention, drawing them to the Word.

It is very difficult in our contemporary Christian culture because of the norms and traditions. There is a lack of wholesale complete commitment to God where we actually do what Christ said. Deny self and follow me. Don't try to save your life in this world.

50 years ago when Michael took his first Bible class the teacher laid out a challenge. He said if you put aside all your other reading material and only read and study Ephesians in three months you will not know yourself and neither will your friends and neighbors.

Today it would have to be to put aside all other input from our eyes, ears and minds...internet, podcasts, texts, emails, TV.... Put it all aside and do nothing but focus on the Word of God. If we do this it will bear fruit and truly we will not know ourselves in 3 months time.

God is faithful to his Word.