

FAITH ANCHORS

We have been talking about bridging the divide between the way our lives look and what the word of God says. We discovered that one way of bridging that divide is by developing childlike faith and to have faith, you need to be a person of the word. We then realized that the quality of one's faith is directly proportional to the quality of word one has. When you mishandle God's word, your faith is not likely to work to the degree to which it was intended to work by God.

In this regard, I want to talk to you on the subject matter **FAITH ANCHORS**. Your faith must be properly anchored in the word of God. Big ship vessels are kept in place by the means of anchors. Without the anchors, these vessels tend to drift away. The same is true with your faith, if you are not strong in God's word, your life will drift away. We are going to systematically look at how to correctly handle God's word in order to anchor our faith.

- At the center of handling God's word appropriately is **one's attitude towards the word**.
- John Maxwell once said, "your attitude determines your altitude" and this is so true regarding God's word. With the right attitude, you will climb high in your understanding of God's word and will increase your faith.
- Most kids have a bad attitude towards vegetables but are excited about sweets. It is possible to have a great appetite for other things and not God's word.

John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- Jesus was challenging the disciples to permanently seek after God's word. He was giving them a formula to obtain results in their walk with God.
- The right attitude entails **prioritizing the word of God**.
- You will make time for whatever is of value to you – we do not have a scarcity of time, but rather a scarcity of value alignment.

John 6: 67 So Jesus asked the Twelve, "Do you want to leave too?" 68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life.

- When you see the need for God's word, you will pursue it and you will pay attention to it.

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- When you prioritize something, you are committed to it. It takes personal commitment to get into the word and you will not require monitoring from the pastor, your friends and the like.
- To prioritize the word means that you establish a routine and a schedule for it. What you don't plan for, will never get done.
- To prioritize the word also means that you are willing to invest in it – there is nothing as valuable as having a comprehensive Study Bible.
- One of my hobbies is cycling and to be honest with you cycling does not come cheap – I have seen people buying bicycles with the same value as a small vehicle. What is the point; they value their hobby and are willing to invest in it.
- A good student of the word is willing to invest resources into their spiritual growth and development.
- Another aspect of a good attitude is to place weight and honor on God's word by **taking time to study the word.**
- Everyone can read the word but not everyone has a heart to study the word – it takes effort!

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- Keep in mind that studying is a different exercise from reading. When you study something, you deeply invest your time and attention in what you're reading.
- Effective bible study takes much thinking and understanding – we do the thinking and God gives the understanding.
- The attitude we should have was rightly expressed by the evangelist George Whitefield when he became a Christian:

"I began to read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees, laying aside all other books and praying over, if possible, every line and word. . . I daily received fresh life, light and power from above."¹ – George Whitefield

- The clearing of your misty view of the resurrected Christ will take diligence, purpose, focus and great discipline in studying scriptures.

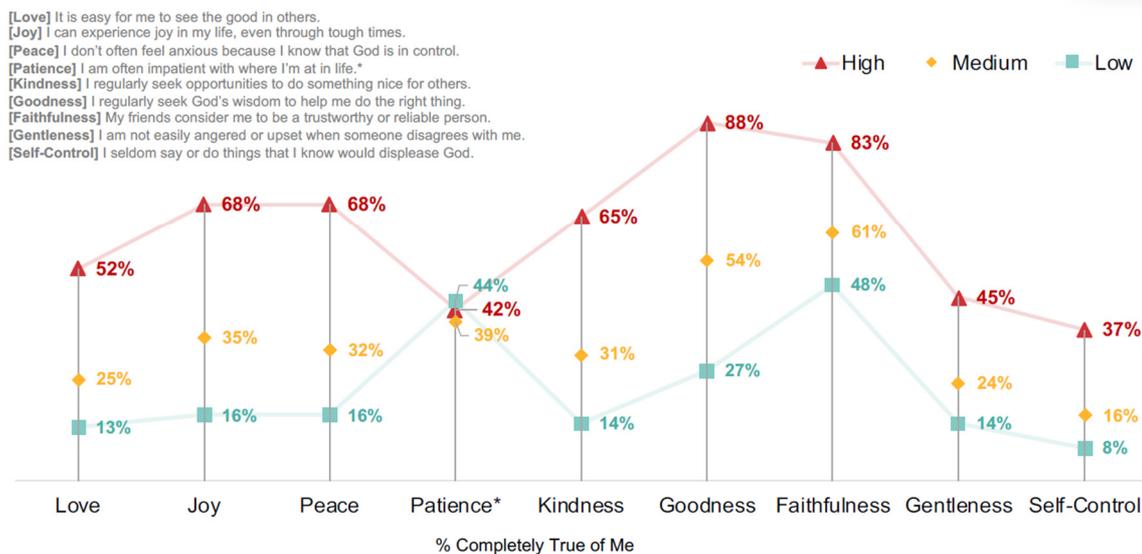
¹ Arnold Dallimore, George Whitefield, 1:81

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- Anyone can rightly divide the word; anyone can get hold of the treasure found in the word – the key issue is diligence. You will have to work hard and think hard in order to make progress.
- There is no such thing as instant or inspired interpretation. The single biggest hindrance to handling the Word correctly is expecting instant payoff. Remember, 90 percent perspiration, 10 percent inspiration².
- There is a direct correlation between one’s level of engagement with God’s word and the level of transformation in one’s life.

Lives reflecting the fruit of the Spirit

Practicing Christians, by Bible engagement level



- Results of a Barna Group survey³ commissioned by the Assemblies of God affirm that people who engage in the Bible are transformed and conformed into the person God intends them to be.
- As you can see in the chart above, those who spend at least four days a week in 15 minutes of Bible reading experience transformation in how they respond to life circumstances and people. They actually undergo a personal increase in the activity of the fruit of the Spirit.
- To understand the chart below, remember:
 - The triangle represents someone who spends at least four times a week in Scripture.

² A Practical Guide for Studying God’s Word by Gary Smith (2009)

³ <https://news.ag.org/articles> - FAITHFUL BIBLE READING MAKES FOR STRONGER CHRISTIANS

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- The diamond represents someone who spends less than four times a week in Scripture.
- The square represents someone who spends little to no regular engagement with Scripture.
- Note that all of the participants in the study called themselves practicing Christians, and all of them said they attended church at least somewhat regularly. The only difference, besides the activity of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, involved their level of Bible engagement.
- My aim in this teaching is to give you principles that will assist you to correctly handle scripture in order to conduct an effective bible study.
- In other words, we are all called to be students of God's word.

1. What makes you a good student of the Scriptures?

To be a good student of the word, you need to meet at least three preliminary qualifications.

1.1 You must know what the goal of Bible study is.

- The goal of Bible study is to obey the truth, not to master facts, and for transformation rather than information.

John 14:21 Whoever has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.

1.2 You must be born of the spirit (regenerated/born again)

- The word of God is spirit and can only be understood by a person of the spirit.
- In other words, there must be a willingness to submit to principles that contradict the natural and earthly ways.
- It does not matter how intelligent you are in the natural, no amount of natural intelligence will make you understand God's word, you need to be spiritual and to be guided by the Holy Spirit, the author of the word.
- The word will make sense to those who approach it with a childlike humility.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural man does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

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1.3 You must have the right tools.

- You need to have the right tools for the job at hand and to know how to use them - like translations, commentaries, and dictionaries.
- The ultimate purpose of Bible study is not understanding, but responding and the right response depends on correct understanding.
- Usually, your understanding is highly influenced by the way you approach and interpret scripture.