

Are We Ready To Tell?

1 Peter 3:15 [Living Bible] *“Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord and if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell them, and do it in a gentle and respectful way.”*

Why?

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray...”*

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They [Christians] overcame him [Satan the deceiver] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, **they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

If we claim the title of a Christian this is our part of the **work we are to do now** in this evil present world.

Remember we have been invited by Christ to work with Him **right now** in this present world and life.

Matthew 11:29-30 [NIV] *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

The picture painted by this statement of Christ to his disciples is that of two animals linked together in a double yoke fulfilling a task of work.

Christ is the lead animal and we yoked to Him learn from His example.

Christ overcame Satan’s power of death over us by His sacrifice.

Hebrews 2:14 [NIV] *“Since the children have flesh and blood, He [Christ] too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy, [render useless] him who holds the power of death, that is the devil.”*

Our part of the work to overcome Satan’s influence in the world is our testimony, [**Revelation 12:7-11**].

This testimony is partly fulfilled by being a light, a good example for others to see and follow, [**Matthew 5:14-16**].

But it is also a verbal witness of why we live the way we do.

2 Timothy 2:15 [NIV] *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of Truth.”*

How can we then be ready and a fully equipped workman as far as rightly using God’s Word as a testimony to overcome Satan’s influence in this world?

I believe we find all the guidelines we need in one short passage of scripture.

Proverbs 2:1-6 [NIV] *“My son, **if** you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and **if** you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and **if** you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”*

Here we find eight requirements of a student and these are followed by two results of applying the eight suggested requirements of good studying.

“IF” - this shows that it is conditional but also **not** forced on us; we have a choice to accept the conditions, but we will only receive the benefits stated in verse five if we apply all conditions in verses one to four.

a) **“Accept my words”** - take hold of, seize, infold. A very positive and active response.

James 1:21 [NIV] *“Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”*

God’s Word will save us **if** we receive it humbly, **not** in a judgmental attitude.

We can hear or read God’s Word acting like a bottle with a cork in it and however much of the *“Water of God’s Word”* is poured over us none of it will end up in us. The cork we have that prevents us from storing up God’s Word within us could be prejudice, pre-conception, cynicism.

Psalm 1:1 [NIV] *“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”*

All too easily we can drift into such an attitude.

It is very dangerous to *“sit in the seat of the mockers [scornful]”*

We may have been let down by a fellow Christian whom we trusted or soured by some experience we have lived through.

What we are actually doing is gradually tuning God out of our lives.

Don’t just look for what we find agreeable in God’s Word but accept and act on those parts which may hurt us, that we find painful to hear or read because it means moving out of our *“comfort zone”*.

Psalm 1:2 [NIV] *“But his delight is in the law [word] of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.”*

We are in an age when the majority of people resent being told what to do.

God’s Commandments are **not** given just to make life difficult, but for our benefit because of the Great Love He has for us.

b) **Proverbs 2:1** [NIV] **“Store up my commands within you”**. Reserve, protect as something valuable.

If we resent God telling us how to conduct our lives then we will have to humbly change and *“store up”* God’s Word as something of eminent value.

John 6:63 [NIV] *“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”*

“Spirit” – God Breathed.

Hence they are *“life”*.

Greek word *“zoe”* always related to God-given eternal life, the life that God has.

Not *“bios”* a physical life as found in all animals and plants.

c) **Proverbs 2:2 [NIV] “Turning your ear to wisdom”.**

This is something that is difficult in today’s western society.

Very few people are really used to giving full attention to anything.

We are inflicted with background music when we wish to concentrate on conversation with a friend.

Young students try to do homework with one eye on the television, or while being plugged into a Walkman.

This type of listening!! is not what is referred to here when it comes to God’s Word.

The Hebrew word means to prick up your ears – give heed – mark well – attend – all indicating total concentration to what is being given to us.

“**Wisdom**” to make and teach beneficial choices in life.

d) **Proverbs 2:2 [NIV] “Applying your heart to understanding”.** Stretch out to – bend towards – turn aside to.

“**Your heart**”. Feeling – intellect – our will – the very centre of our whole being.

The very driving force of our lives physically and spiritually.

e) **Proverbs 2:3 [NIV] “Call out for insight”.** Addressing a person by name – with idea of accosting them.

“**Insight**”. Perfect understanding of meaning – separate mentally.

f) **Proverbs 2:3 [NIV] “Cry aloud for understanding”.** Lift up – a committed upward direction, earnest, heartfelt prayer.

“**Understanding**”. Discretion – skilfulness – willingness to change.

g) **Proverbs 2:4 [NIV] “Look for”.** Search out – strive after.

“**Search**”. Diligently seek for.

h) **Proverbs 2:4 [NIV] “Treasure”.** Hidden riches – buried treasure – something greatly valued.

Matthew 13:44 [NIV] “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

Seeking buried treasure involves a lot of hard work digging here and there until we find it.

Searching diligently for the original usage of words in concordances is likened to digging for treasure in a field.

The best way to train our mind is to apply ourselves to the study of God’s Word in a systematical, orderly, prayerful, dedicated way, for **the Christian Bible is the most logical and practical book in the world.**

Such study will make us “*sharp of mind*”, for this is what God promises us.

Proverbs 2:5-6 [NIV] “then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

“Understanding the fear of the Lord.”

1 Peter 17 [NIV] *“Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.”*

A worshipful fear of God.

God gave us life, He sustains our life or future hoped for life is in His hands.

Proverbs 9:10 [NIV] *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”*

It is the lack of this reverent fear of God in this world that results in all the bad choices that humans make that lead to pain, suffering and oppression.

“wisdom” – the ability to separate mentally, distinguishing between different things if they are good or bad.

“knowledge” – awareness, asserting by seeing clearly.

“understanding” – intelligence and skilfulness of mind.

All this understanding and application of God’s Word is our job now as a Christian and is preparing us now for our future job in the Kingdom [family] of God.

Revelation 1:6 [NIV] *“...and has made us to be a kingdom of priests...”*

Revelation 5:10 [NIV] *“You have made them to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.”*

Priests are teachers and leaders who are to be living examples of God’s way of life.

Our text book will be God’s Word, The Christian Bible.

Revelation 20:12 [Jerusalem Bible] *“And I saw the dead, great and small alike standing in front of His throne, while the books were lay open [the books of The Bible opened to their understanding]. Another book was opened which is the book of life. The dead [now resurrected] were judged according to what was written in the books, as their deeds deserved.”*

Our future job is to teach others from God’s Word, The Christian Bible. We need to be applying ourselves diligently now to be *“ready to tell.”*