

8 Reasons to Be Committed to God's Word

by Don Allen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being committed to God's Word for spiritual growth and understanding of God.

Duration: 47:42

Scripture: Exodus 20:6, Joshua 1:8, Daniel 9:4, John 14:21-24, 2 Timothy 4:2-4, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 5:2-3

Topics: "Bible Reading"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the fast-paced and distracted nature of the current generation, with the presence of technology like cell phones and personal computers. The speaker emphasizes the importance of slowing down and meditating on God's Word, which is described as living and active. The sermon highlights the character of God as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness, who forgives sin. The speaker emphasizes the significance of the Scriptures in getting to know God and the importance of personally entrusting one's life to Jesus Christ for eternal life.

Transcript

When Emily heard this, there were only seven reasons, but now it's up to eight. It might be growing if you hear it later. Hey, before we get started, I have a few thank-yous that are in order, before we move into the message.

One, I would like to say, you know, some of you might, this might be your first summer training program that you've come to, and I wanted to say, number one, I really appreciate what I would consider the delightful leadership of John Voss in this time. It is just a pleasure to serve under him, so it's just been great. Also, I've known Michael and Velma since Spirit West Coast 2005, and friends here today, this couple has worked so hard to put this program together.

And there are many, many other people I could thank, but instead of going around and spending all my time in a message thanking every one of you, I do have a couple other groups I want to thank, and that is for those of you who have served or are serving our country's military, thank you. The dad in me comes out, and knowing I have a daughter that's just about to go to Turkey to do the same thing. It's really special, what you've done, so thank you.

I have been known to get emotional in messages at times. The last thank-you is for the rest of you who are here. I also want to reiterate, we know that you sacrificed time and money to come here.

Thank you for doing that, and I think you've made a wise choice. Matthew 6.33 says, but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. You've made a choice this summer to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

Wise choice. Okay, my thank-yous are done, which I'm glad to pass those on to you, and I want to get into the message. And a little history, real quickly.

This is the end of my 34th year on the college campus, involved with the Navigators. Started when I was two. No, I didn't start when I was two.

And to me, it is a delight to see what's happening on campus, in ministry today, with many aspects of the kingdom of God, but also with the Navigators. You know, I think of some of the things that characterize this generation. Living in unity and community, as you know, is huge with this generation.

Being a people of grace towards other people. Living in the power of the Holy Spirit. These are tremendous truths that we're seeing in our ministry today.

But what I would like to speak on tonight is a topic that burns in my heart to pass on to this generation. And it was born out of a devotional time in Jeremiah 23. And Drew Vandergrift has already mentioned this passage, so you're going to get it for a second time.

This is Jeremiah 23, verses 28 and 29. While I was minding my own business that day, reading through Jeremiah 23 in my devotional time, I came across this verse, among others, The prophet who has a dream, let him relate his dream. But let him who has my word speak my word in truth.

What does straw have in common with grain, declares the Lord? Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer which shatters a rock? And one of the things that I recognize in this generation is that this is a fast-paced generation with lots of distractions. You have Facebook, you have iPod Shuffles, you have iPod Nanos, you have YouTube. In my generation as a young Christian, believe it or not, Cell phones and personal computers were not even in existence.

It's true. Now, am I on an anti-technology crusade? No, that's not my point. But this is a generation that there are so many things that can grab your attention.

And my question for you tonight is, Is are you, are you, are you going to be one of the ones of this generation to slow down and take time to meditate on God's word? Which is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. It's piercing both soul and marrow, joint and marrow. And it's able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

This morning we got to hear from Paul Drake. Those things that he shared, these are just not idle things. These are things born out of 55 years plus.

60 years in the word of God. Which one of you will be the Paul Drake? The Henrietta Mears of this generation? Friends, it takes time in his word. And what I'd like to speak on tonight is 8 reasons for us to be committed to God's word.

Would you join me as I pray? Father, we do thank you for this opportunity to be here with one another. Lord, thank you for what you're doing already in our midst. And Lord, it is my earnest prayer tonight that your Holy Spirit would take your word and make it come alive in each one of our lives.

And Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. 8 reasons.

You've got a handout. I've switched a few minor things. But reason number 1 to be committed to the word of God is this.

It's God's word. Okay, I know you know 2 Timothy 3.16. So I want one person, loud and proud, quote 2 Timothy 3.16 so we all can hear it. Whatever one you want to use.

Amen. Thank you, Jeff. All Scripture is God-breathed.

All Scripture is inspired by God. Friends, this is not just a book. Paul Drake said, this is the most prized possession you can have in your whole life.

And I agree. It's the word of God. Acts 1.16. I've got it in your notes there.

Let me read this. The apostles viewed this as God's word. Look at verse 16.

This is Peter speaking. Notice carefully what he says. Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

Did you see that? Scripture is Holy Spirit told by the mouth of a human agent. That concept might not be a surprise to you. But the reality is this is huge.

If you believe this is the word of God, it changes your life as you're in it. If you don't, it still will change your life as you're in it, but you could look at it as just any other religious work. I want to give you four C's for why I believe this is the word of God.

Number one, it claims to be the word of God. It's claim is. You see two of them right here.

In your appendix, I have some other verses listed. You can look at that at another time. But Josh McDowell records that over 3,800 times, this book claims to be God's word.

Number two, confirmation through prophecy. There's no other work like this. No other work.

A scholar, I believe from Oxford, in a book that I wrote, said that there are 332 prophecies of Christ, of Christ alone, that he fulfills. You don't find that in other works, friends. 332 prophecies.

These are things that have been written about Christ that then are fulfilled. This book is unique. Then this book went on to say the mathematical probability of one man fulfilling those 332 prophecies, he said, was one in 83 billion.

I don't think this is an accident, friends. This is God's word. Third C, continuity.

As I've read this book from cover to cover, by God's grace, numerous times, it flows as one book from Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21. How can this be? Forty different authors, 1,500 years, three continents, flowing as one continuous book from Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21. How can it be? Because really, there is one author behind it.

It's God's word. And then finally, the fourth C is its content. And I think you can agree with me, as you get into the word of God, what you find there is true.

What it says about life, you know is true. It's not just some hocus-pocus fancy ideas. What you see there is truth.

So reason number one that we are committed to God's word is it's the word of God. Therefore, since we're confident this is God's word, we should pay attention to it. This is what God wants us to know.

Second reason for being committed to God's word, Jesus was. Turn quickly from danger, work in progress, to this side. Turn to Matthew 4, 1-311, and go ahead, appoint one person in your group to read it out loud to the rest of you.

And then the other side, all these teams over here, turn to Matthew 22, 34-44. And again, appoint one person in your group to read it out loud, and then answer this one question in your small group. And we're just going to take a few minutes for this.

How did Jesus use the word in this passage? Go ahead and do that. Okay, I hate to break up a good Bible study discussion, but I'm going to do that. And I would like to hear from someone on this side of the room, from Matthew 4, 1-311, how did Jesus use the word in that passage? Just one person, nice and loud.

Yes, Sasha. Yes, yes, thank you. Yeah, you bet.

You bet. Here's Jesus, tempted by the devil. Have any of you ever been tempted? Here He is, tempted by the devil.

He doesn't say, hey, time out! Time out! Let me go back to the temple and get the scroll. I think it says something about this here. Jesus knew the word and used it as authority in dealing with temptation.

Okay, other side. How did He use the word in Matthew 22, that passage? One person, nice and loud. He correct, who was He correcting? The Pharisees.

So here He is in a ministry situation with people and Jesus uses the scriptures to teach them. Fascinating passage. You guys didn't get to look at it yet.

You can look at it at a later time. Now, here's the point. If the Son of God, the Lord of the universe, uses the word of God to deal with temptation and to minister to others, to me, it seems like it's a good idea that we would do the same.

So, second reason. Jesus was committed to God's word. Thirdly, to know God.

Jesus says in John 5, 39, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. It is these that bear witness of me. The scriptures bear witness of me.

Do you have a passage that you really enjoy that tells you about God? If you do, just read it, quote it. Paraphrase it, whatever. But several, if you would.

A passage that tells you about God that you really enjoy. Anything, anyone. Thank you, Matt.

John 3, 17. God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save it. Excellent.

Thanks, Matt. Others. Verses.

Yes, Jason. My grace is sufficient for you, says Jason. Wow.

What a passage. We have a God of grace. Yes, Vic.

Nick. Wow. Psalm 91, 14 through 16.

A God who protects, delivers, saves His people. Others. A couple more.

Yes, right over here. Amen. God is faithful.

1 Corinthians 10, 13. Final one, right here. Amen.

Is that 1 Thessalonians? 1 Corinthians 1a. Wow, thank you. All these tremendous truths about God.

Here's one I like. Remember when Moses said to God, God, show me Thy glory. And God says, I will make my goodness pass in front of you.

And then God passed by, and this is what God had to say about Himself. Then the Lord God proclaimed. No, that's not how it starts.

We'll get it exact here. Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, The Lord. The Lord God.

Compassionate. Gracious. Slow to anger.

And abounding in loving kindness. Who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin. Yet will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.

Do you know any people that need to know a God like that? Who is gracious. Compassionate. Slow to anger.

Abounding in loving kindness and truth. Who forgives. Who forgives.

Friends, that's who God is. That's the God the world needs to know. And that's the God who's revealed to us in this book.

You take away this book, you don't have any of those truths that you know about God. Yes, Nick. That was Exodus 34, 6-8.

So, point number three is through the scriptures we get to know God. The greatest pursuit we'll have in life. None greater.

Number four, I need five people who like to read the scriptures out loud. And I need hands. One right here, Peter.

One right here, Lenny. And Bryce, okay. And Michael.

I had you on number one, I think. Okay, and then number five. Okay, so number one, Exodus 26.

That's you right here. Then, Lenny, it's Deuteronomy 7-9. Daniel 9-4.

Bryce, Michael, you get the long one. John 14, 21-24. And the last one, 1 John 5, 2 and 3. Okay, listen for a theme in these verses.

Let's start with Exodus 20, verse 6. And then we'll just read through all of them. Okay, the next one. Great, thank you.

Daniel 9-4. Okay, John 14, 21-24. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.

He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. Then Judas, now Judas Iscariot said, but Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us but not to the world? Jesus replied, if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

He who does not love will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own. They belong to the Father.

Great, thanks. 1 John 5, 2 and 3. Anyone catch a theme in those? Yes. Yes, absolutely.

Absolutely, Tyler. Very clear in scriptures. To love God, we must have his word and obey it.

It's what the word of God says. Number five, number five reason to be committed to God's word is it's our spiritual food. This group over here read Matthew 4, 1 through 11.

In verse four, Jesus' response when the temptation come to turn the stones into bread, his response was, but he answered and said, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. 1 Peter 2, 2. We'll just look at 2, 2, the rest of that passage that I have there for you. Sweet passage, but we're going to just look at 2, 2. It says this, like newborn babes long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to your salvation.

The scriptures is our spiritual food. Now I'm going to ask a couple of silly questions, but there's a purpose in these silly questions. Question number one, can anyone tell me what they had for dinner January 12, 1997? A phone, okay, thank you man.

Silly question. Of course you can't remember what you had for dinner 11 years and 4 months ago. Can you remember what you had for dinner the last time you went out to a place that you really enjoyed? Can anyone tell me that? Go ahead, Moses.

All right, good, I like Red Rock. You have those unlimited fries that are really good too, that's pretty good. Others? What's that? In-N-Out Burger.

In-N-Out Burger. This guy's been to California. Schnitzel.

What's schnitzel? I've never heard of it. Cool, yes. Coconut shrimp, okay.

Sushi. One more. All right, German food.

See, now why do I talk about food and the silly question of do you know what you had 11 years, 4 months and 8 days ago for dinner? I want to make a point. Sometimes I think people get hung up about being in the scriptures because they read it one day and they don't have this amazing revelation. And they think, oh man, what's the point? Well, my experience of being in the scriptures for the last almost 34 years, some days you have those, bam.

And other days, you just have a time where you've read the word. And to think that every time you read the word you have to have this startling new revelation and then get discouraged if you don't have it, I think avoids the truth. We need God's word for spiritual nourishment.

And if we don't have a consistent diet of the word, we're going to be malnourished. It's our food for spiritual growth. Just what it is.

Number six, to protect from error. We're going to look at just 2 Timothy 4. You might want to turn there with me if you'd like. Friends, you've got to realize that there are some crazy things out there in the guise of religiosity or however you say that word.

There are just some crazy things out there that lead people astray. And God's word can protect us from error. Listen to 2 Timothy 1-4.

This is Paul's final words to his apostle, to his son in the faith, Timothy. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing in his kingdom, preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. In 2 Timothy 2-15 he says to Timothy, Be diligent to present yourselves approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. Knowing the scriptures can protect us from spiritual error.

And Emily, this is the one I added that I didn't do last time. Because last time I was reading, I was probably reading through the New Testament and I got to 1 Peter 1-23. It came at a time that, boy, it just really stood out to me.

For you were born again. For you were born again. Not of seed, which is perishable.

But imperishable. That is through the living and abiding word of God. When I was a sophomore in high school at a church retreat, a guy who's now my brother-in-law asked me if I wanted to put Christ first in my life.

My answer was the worst decision I ever made in my life. And that is no. And he asked me why.

And the why was I wanted to become a professional golfer. I wanted my name to be great. I wanted to drive around in my silver saddle, Rolls Royce.

And so I said no. So for two and a half years, that's what I pursued in my life. Real nice guy, I know.

Pretty other-centered. But I went off to college. I went to Washington State University.

Full-on pursuing that is my dream in life. But God had a different plan for me. And on my dormitory floor were some of the most committed followers of Christ that I've met to this day.

And they happened to be involved with the Navigator ministry on campus. One of them began to reach out to me and develop that friendship. And God began to work in my heart.

There's got to be more to life than the party on Friday or Saturday night. Then the Holy Spirit brought conviction of sin. I didn't know to call it that.

But that's what happened in my life. I wanted to change, but I didn't know how. At 2.15 in the morning, picture this situation.

You know, if you've ever lived in a barracks or in a dormitory. 2.15 in the morning on a Friday or Saturday morning, I can't remember which it was. Bunch of men in the room in varying stages of drunkenness.

Two of these guys on my floor who were believers had been at a prayer meeting. And at that prayer meeting they sensed they needed to talk with me. So Gene Brasher and Raleigh Snyder came to that room and looked in and said, Does anybody in here want to talk about Christ or Christianity? I can assure you, not your typical 2.15 in the morning party question.

I wanted to talk. We went into the floor study room. On the blackboard, they drew out an illustration using Bible verses that explained how man and God are separated because of sin.

And how that sin leads to death and judgment. But how God offers eternal life and new life in Jesus Christ because He died on the cross and was raised from the dead. But only those who personally entrust their lives to Him have eternal life and the new life that He promises.

Friends, that morning I committed my life back in my dorm room alone. I yielded to Jesus Christ. Romans 10.17 says this, So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

For people on this planet, there is nothing that is as important as where they spend eternity. My dad, whom I love, died May 30th last year. He accomplished a lot in his life.

Which is great. He left my mom very well off. But the reality is, the most important thing, the thing that matters as he was laying in that situation in his life is what he had done with Jesus Christ.

Nothing else compares. And friends, we have the privilege of learning the scriptures, of learning the truth that we can tell to others. Reason number seven.

And finally, reason number eight. Let's turn to Matthew 7, 24-27. Would someone else like to read that? That likes to read the scriptures? Yes.

Moses, go ahead. Write it out loud, please. Good work.

Everyone who hears these words of mine, and knows them in Christ, is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, and the streets rose, and the wind blew, and beat against the house. And it did not fall until the light of salvation was on the house.

Another one who hears these words of mine, and does not know them in Christ, is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain came down, and the streets rose, and the wind blew, and beat against the house. Thank you.

You know, Jesus was not necessarily teaching us, you know, how to build a house. You know, this wasn't a construction management course that he was giving. He was making a very, very specific point.

This was right after the Sermon on the Mount. One of, obviously, his longest and greatest messages that he gave. So, right after he says the Sermon on the Mount, he talks about two types of people.

Both hear the Word. Both heard it. One responded to it.

The other didn't respond to it. And the difference in their lives was severe, based on their response to God's Word. So, I have a bold statement here.

And that is, as you can read, our destiny depends on our response to God's Word. Now, in saying that, I've given this message before, and sometimes people can confuse what I'm trying to get at. So, I'll make it real clear.

I'll even read my notes. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ. Period.

But from this passage, it seems clear, at least to me, that what Jesus is saying is the course of our life is determined by our response to God's Word. And I need a quick volunteer to come. And I'm going to do a little illustration before I close.

So, Jeff, if you would come on up. I've chosen you as my volunteer. How many of you know the hand illustration, five ways to get into the Word of God? Raise your hand if you know the hand illustration.

Okay, a lot of you do. That's great. Well, the rest of you are going to hear it.

Five intakes for the Word of God. One of them is hearing. One of the ways that you can get into the Word of God is to hear it.

You know, you're hearing it tonight, or great messages that you can hear in church or on the radio. And one of the things I like about hearing the Word is it's great for instruction and inspiration. But does hearing only give you a firm grasp on the Word of God? Jeff, I want to see if you can grab my Bible out of my hands.

No, you get to use your whole hand. You know, I don't have the firm enough grasp yet. Second aspect of getting into the Word is reading it.

One of the things I like about reading the Word, just reading it broadly, is you get a broad perspective. You get to see what God has done through history and the truths of the whole Word. Okay, let's see if I've got it firm enough.

Grab it as hard as you want. Better, but don't have the firm grasp yet. Third is studying it.

Studying it. One of the things I like about studying the Scriptures is through studying it, you handle it accurately. You see a verse.

You think, well, how does that compare to these other verses? You put them together. You think about it. Oh, yeah, this is the truth.

You handle it accurately. So you're just not led astray. Okay, it's going to be a little tougher, but go ahead and rip on this thing.

Okay, still have a better grip, but not all the way. Fourth is memorizing what you're doing here. Good job.

Good job. You know what I like about memorizing the Scripture? You remember it. You remember it.

A quick little aside for you young'uns here. I started memorizing the Scriptures probably about 20. The Scriptures I know now, mostly I learned in my 20s.

I still work at it. I don't know if something's happened to my gray matter. It's harder for me.

Do I get an amen over here? See? Sorry, folks. We're on the downward slide. That's just true for me.

It's true. I still work at memorizing some, but it's harder to really remember them. So the ones that have just been ingrained are the ones I learned when I was your age.

So you remember it. Okay. It can be tougher, but go ahead.

Oh! Oh, man, you snuck it out of there. Finally, the last is meditation. And the reality with meditation, you can do this with everyone, every one of the aspects.

You can meditate on what you hear. You can meditate on what you read. You can meditate on what you study.

You can meditate on what you memorize. And the reality is, some of the great promises of Scripture are given to ones who meditate. And a quick, funny little story.

I know I'm probably over time now, but a quick, funny little story. And that is this. When I got around the navs back in 1974, 1975, it was kind of a foregone conclusion.

If you were involved with the Navigator ministry, you memorized Scripture. That was just the way it was. Now, being a little bit of a hard head, I mean, I love the Scriptures.

But when they talked to me about memorizing Scripture, I thought, I don't want to jump through this guy's hoop. So I didn't. For a year.

Which caused much consternation with the guy who was discipling me. Then he made a very wise decision. He asked me, at Christmas time of my sophomore year, if I gave you a Bible study on this, would you do it? Sure.

I like Bible study. So I took those verses home. I think his title might have been something like, Why I Memorize Scripture.

And so the first verse was this. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Friends, the Bible study ended after the first verse. Do you see the promise to the one who meditates on the word and obeys it? It's just huge. Now, let's see if I have a firm grasp on the word.

Yep, I do. Thank you. One thing I would encourage to apply, even as you leave here, think of one of those five areas and make a specific application, measurable, that you can keep to grow as a man or woman of God's word.

And finally, I'd like to just share a few thoughts. Some of those at Arizona State and U of A might have already heard this, but that's okay. You get to hear it again.

And that is, when we think of the word, I think both desire and discipline is important. Both are important. Desire without discipline is disappointment.

Because you desire something, you don't have the discipline to do it, so you're disappointed. Discipline without desire is drudgery. But desire with discipline is delight.

And if you have both, great. If you don't have one of them, you know what? Paul Drake talked with us about praying. Pray.

God, give me that discipline. God, give me that desire. I love Psalm 119.97 where we see both of these in action.

The psalmist says, Oh, how I love thy law. Desire. It is my meditation all the day.

Discipline. Let's pray. And I trust that question I asked at the very beginning.

At the very beginning. Will you be one who slows down and takes time to meditate on God's word? And be one of this generation that just rises up and continues to grow and rises up as a man or woman of the word of this generation. Let's pray.

Father, we bless you. Lord, you are great and awesome. Father, we thank you for your word.

Lord, we thank you for your living word. And Father, we thank you for this time that we can have to consider your word. Lord, I pray that you would be at work in each one of our lives.

Lord, helping us to know you, love you, minister to others, walk with you. And Father, we thank you and praise you in Christ's name. Amen.

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