

## **I have really enjoyed the Christian Living messages we've had so far**

- One word: passion. Passion to inspire you to take the right path!

I thank Mr. Monson for this chance to speak to you today

- Even though this is my first opportunity to speak at teen camp, I have had teen talks at Feast sites before
- For most of those, I've conducted question & answer Bible studies
  - Usually with another minister such as with Mr. Wally Smith

A couple Feasts ago in Northern Kentucky, Mr. Mark Sandor and I held a teen Q&A Bible study

- We had a number of good questions, but the one I remember the most was simply "How do you study the Bible?"
- It's a great question, but at first it puzzled me
  - I first thought, "Doesn't everyone know how to study the Bible?"
  - Then I remembered myself as a teen in the church—I didn't know how

That question of how do you study the Bible actually inspired this talk

- Because when given this opportunity to speak to you today, I asked myself, "If this is the only chance I get to talk to teens in the Church, what would help them the most?"
- I believe assisting you to connect to the Bible is the best help I can give

Perhaps you've heard the saying, "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime."

- So I could give you a talk that you may remember for a day
- But I want to teach you to fish
  - Because this will help you more throughout the rest of your life

## **Today I would like to help you to get more out of God's word**

- By sharing some principles of reading the Bible that have helped me along my life's journey
- My goal is to show you how simple this can be, and that anyone can do it
  - So what I'm going to show you is not going to be complicated
  - We're not going to get into all sorts of Bible aids such as dictionaries, commentaries or Hebrew or Greek lexicons
  - All you're going to need is your Bible and perhaps another translation

For centuries, all most people did was simply *read* the Bible—and that’s all

- So that’s primarily what we’re going to do today
- **1Pet. 2:2** The most important aspect you bring to the process is to “desire the pure milk of the word”

I want to make the Bible approachable for you because I hope to inspire you to go to this book often

- As you’ve been hearing through many messages here, you’re going to need this book as you live life
  - As most of us older people have found
  - This book truly has been the lamp for our feet
- That’s why the title of this talk is “Using the Word of God to Light Your Path”

**Before we go into reading the Bible, here are four reasons *why* you should read it**

The first reason you should read the Bible is because it contains the words of life

- **John 6:63** The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

You will encounter every possible philosophy as you grow up

- Some of these might sound enticing, and will even contradict the Bible
- But as Jesus says here, everything from man that is of the flesh—of the human imagination—has no lasting profit and will ultimately fail
  - **Proverbs 14:12** “There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death.”
- In contrast, God’s words are life
  - They enhance life, give life and are the way to eternal life
  - They truly are the light to your path for the rest of your life
  - Put another way, these are not ordinary words

The second reason why you should read the Bible is because it is God talking to *you*

- As Mr. Armstrong used to say, “the Bible is the mind of God in print”
  - Think about how incredible that concept is
  - The most powerful Being in the universe shares His mind with you through His word
- What’s amazing is how personal the Bible is
  - Yes, it has prophecies and other information that needs interpretation
  - But it also gets to the core of who we are as individuals
- **Hebrews 4:12** It doesn’t get more personal than this
  - We all have our public personas that we reveal to everyone
    - In what we say, how we dress, the attitudes we take on

- These are like uniforms we put on to try to fit in, to be accepted, to proclaim a certain image that we want to portray
- **Jeremiah 17:9** We are masters of self-deception
- But when we're alone reading the Bible, it's just us and God :**10**
  - Because these words *are* spirit, they cut through the façade we like to present to others to get down to our motives of our hearts
    - In other words, God's word reveals our heart to ourselves
  - It's still up to us what we do when God reveals us to ourselves, but God's Word is the mirror that shows us where we're personally off
- You should think of the Bible as God's instruction book for *you*
  - That He wrote it for *you*
  - And He did, because He wants you to be successful in this life and to ultimately be into His family
  - **2 Timothy 3:16–17** These words apply to your life now and in the future and these are the most important words for your life's journey

The third reason why you should read the Bible is because it has the answers you need

- This book answers the big questions of life
  - Questions such as how did the universe begin, where did we come from, is there any purpose to life, what happens after death, and on and on
- But it also answers the important personal questions
  - How can I be happy, how can I be a good friend, what should I do when I'm sad, or angry, or confused, and so on?
- In addition, it also reveals what to expect in the future
  - This is what prophecy is all about
- Do you realize how valuable that information is?
  - Many people are concerned with end-time events
  - Even Jesus Christ's disciples wanted to know about them **Matt 24:3**
    - In fact, they had the golden opportunity to ask Him the two questions many people want to know
  - They wanted to know *when* and *what* to expect about the end times
  - From :4–31, Jesus answered the *what* question by describing various signs that will precede His coming
    - He covered a lot of territory in a few words
      - ◆ From world unrest to natural disasters
      - ◆ From persecution to warning about false prophets
      - ◆ From the Great Tribulation to doing the Work — and more

- And why did Jesus tell His disciples all this—and all us through these words Matthew recorded?
  - **:25** "See, I have told you beforehand"—before it happens
  - He wanted His people to know the signs to look for before the end of the age
    - ◆ Without the Bible, we would be clueless to these signs
  - And we would have as much anxiety about the future as society does
  - Not understanding why there is so much chaos and turmoil
- These are just a few of the answers you need that only the Bible provides

The fourth reason why you should read the Bible is because it gives us a vision of God's plan

- I remember when I first started reading the Bible
  - My family wasn't religious, nor did we go to church
  - Then God called my mother when I was about 12 years old
- At first I resisted what my Mom would say the Bible said
  - I especially hated the thought that the world would end
  - As a 12-year-old boy, that was the last thing I wanted to hear
- But I still remember the very day and where I was standing in our house when my mother showed me a scripture that convinced me that this world was going to end, probably **Matthew 24:35**
  - I remember looking out the picture window of our house at the trees, our neighbor's homes, our front yard thinking "All this is going to be gone someday!"
- I remember it so vividly because it changed the path of my life
  - One reason my life changed at that picture window is because my perspective changed
  - Instead of my vision being only set on my town, my friends, my bike, my house, my world, my vision had shifted to eternity **Hebrews 2:6–8**
  - Through the understanding that came from the Bible, I became aware of the plan of God
- This book is like no other—that's why *you* need to read it

Now the question is *how* do you read it?

- I'm going to use my computer to project onto the screen
  - And give you a few tips as I do

- Then I'm going to ask a couple campers to do the same
  - Don't worry, they have been preselected so the rest of you can relax!
- Like I said before, all we're going to use is the Bible itself
  - Because this is where we all start
  - Later on you can geek out with Bible aids to study with
  - It's important to know that when it comes down to it, this is all you need

Since the theme for all Christian Living messages come from Psalm 119, I'd like to use this chapter as an example of how to use God's word to light your path

- As Mr. Jonathan McNair brought out during his talk, Psalm 119 is unique
  - It is the longest chapter in the Bible
  - All but two verses include a reference to different aspects of God's law
    - Words such as ordinances, precepts, statutes and commandments
- Also, there are 22 sections of eight lines each
  - And each of those eight lines in begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet
  - If you want to impress your friends, tell them Psalm 119 is an acrostic
- In short, Psalm 119 is an amazing chapter

I'll first tell you the points I use to read the Bible, then I'll show you an example

- Pray (if even just a quick prayer)
  - You need God to guide and inspire you
- Read a section (to get an overview and context)
- Now here's the key—slow it down
  - Start at the beginning of the section and *slowly* read verse-by-verse
  - The key word is *slowly*
    - Don't rush this, don't time it, take as much time as you need
    - If you only read one verse during this session, great!
- As you read each verse take note of interesting words
- Here's the next key: Stop and think about those words
  - Think: what do those words *really* mean?
  - Why is it phrased that way?
  - If a word or phrase is unclear, read the verse in another translation
    - Using the NKJV as your base text
- After analyzing the words, ask: What does God want me to know?
  - Consider: What does this say about God?
  - What is His point or points in this sentence or verse?

Now go to the next level and make it personal

- Ask: How does this verse relate to me and my life?
  - Does it relate to my attitude, my behavior, my relationships?
  - Is it informational? Instructional? Inspirational?
  - What are the long-term implications?
- Don't forget that God is talking to you through His Word
  - There's a message through this scripture

Ok, now I'll show you how I do this

- **Psalm 119:69**
- (After analyzing the words and comparing it to the ESV) ask "How does this verse relate to me and my life?"

I asked two dorms to pick a scripture from Psalm 119 and follow this method

- The first is Miss Jenitza Pirela's dorm, 4G: Faith Ellertson
- The second dorm is Mr. Christopher Pringle's dorm, 1B: Ryan Thompson

**Let's finish by turning to the theme verse of Psalm 119:105**

- This verse implies one is on a journey
  - Not a short hike, but a life journey
- The picture is God's word illuminating the way to go—like a flashlight in the dark

But just like a flashlight, God's word is of little value if it isn't used

- I sincerely hope and pray that what I've shared with you today helps you along your journey
- The book you have on your lap contains the words of life you will need
- Read this book intentionally and purposefully, and use it to light your path