

Sunday, June 4, 2017
Did You Know?

Reading More Deeply

If you're like me you also struggle with reading God's word more deeply. At the beginning of a year we decide to use a reading plan that'll help us stay on track, but then we find ourselves enslaved by that plan, reading just to read and not fall behind. Yet, if we decide not to use a plan, we end up not reading as often or as consistently as we know we should and not using a plan doesn't guarantee that our reading will be deeper either.

As a pastor, there are many times where I have to lead a devotion -- for a prayer meeting or at staff meeting, so I have to sit down and think about what I'm going to share and I realize that I often draw a blank. What that tells me is that I'm just reading the Bible and not really engaging deeply with God through my reading. How is it for you? If you were asked to share a devotion at your Life Group, would there be 'fresh material' from this week's readings? When you meet your friend or your spouse, are you sharing what God spoke to you through the Word that you read this past week? If you're always drawing a blank that can only mean that you are not reading deeply, or you have an awful memory. And, just to be clear, we're not talking about the mere retention of facts, like, "Yeah, I learned that Paul shaved his head in the city of Cenchreae. Pretty cool, I never knew that." (The only reason I know that was because it was on an actual test when I was in seminary).

Here, then, are some tips on how to read more deeply:

1. Pray. Spiritual growth only occurs because of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Thus, if we want to grow through reading, we must ask God for help.
2. Read for understanding. Don't be a lazy reader. We must engage our intellect. That means we have to slow down, re-read if necessary, and ask questions about words, grammar, flow of thought and so on.
3. Always apply the word that you're reading to your life by doing the following:
 - a. something to praise or thank God for;
 - b. something to start believing in (a truth about God or one of his promises);
 - c. some sin to confess or repent of;
 - d. something to start or stop doing;
 - e. something to ask God for, for yourself and others;
4. Related to #3, build the habit of responding to God after each section, story or chapter read.
5. Also related to #3 and #4, determine to never close the Bible without hearing from God.
6. Give yourself enough time. To meet God in the Bible we're going to need at least 15 minutes, if not more. No matter who you are, even if you're the busiest person in our church, we all have 15 minutes to give to God.

"Lord, create in me a greater desire to know you through the reading of your word. Speak Lord, your servant is listening. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. In Jesus name, Amen."

Soli Deo Gloria

Pastor Peter