

Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Preach the Word: Because It Promotes Personal Bible Study

Scripture: Acts 17:10–11

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Prior to the Reformation, *personal Bible study* would have been a foreign concept to all but the religious elite. Churchgoers didn't have individual access to God's Word, much less a Bible in their own language. Only the Roman Catholic clergy were able to view Scripture, and even then it could only be read in Latin.

The Reformers were instrumental in translating God's Word into the language of the common man. In doing so, they reintroduced the centrality of biblical exposition and encouraged personal Bible study. Today we enjoy the fruit of their labor and sacrifice without much regular thought. But with the abundant blessings of easy access to Scripture also comes the responsibility we have to faithfully study it.

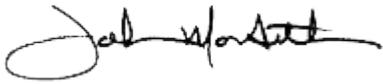
Last time we discussed the ways expository Bible teaching benefits the pastor. But his diligent study and faithful teaching also benefit his congregation, as he demonstrates the value and blessing of personal Bible study before them. People are dramatically impacted by the power of the Word through him. And when they see that the Word impacts them through their pastor, they are motivated to follow that model.

For more than four decades, God has given me the privilege of studying His Word and preaching it multiple times each week. Over those decades, my enthusiasm for the truth has only increased, as I become more and more aware of the glory of the God of Scripture and His awesome works. God's people recognize that enthusiasm in their leaders because it inevitably spills over into the preaching each Lord's Day. It prompts and encourages their personal study throughout the week and stimulates their spiritual growth.

Expositional preaching also teaches people how to interpret the Scripture in their own study. As a biblical preacher, you are a living demonstration of hermeneutics. When you preach effectively, you take people through the process of unpacking the text that yields the true interpretation. You are teaching your people a method of careful examination of the text so that they can be like the Bereans, who tested everything by a true understanding of the Word (Acts 17:10-11).

Show me a church where there is strong Bible teaching over an enduring period of time, and I will show you a congregation who are studying the Word of God on their own, applying the very principles of interpretation that have been modeled for them by their pastor. On the other hand, show me a church where the Word of God is not taught in the pulpit, and I'll show you a congregation in which biblical illiteracy, doctrinal confusion, and spiritual apathy at the personal level are rampant.

The people will not rise to a level higher than that of their teacher. They will follow the example of their leadership. So if we love God's Word, our people will too. If not, neither will they.



(Adapted from [The Master's Plan for the Church](#).)

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