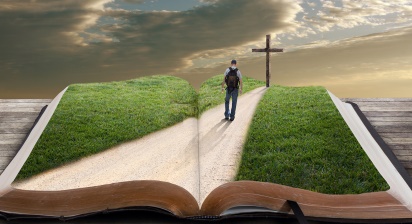
**Seeking God In His Word**

(by Gary Henry)

***“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby”*** (**1 Peter 2:2**).

WE NEED TO GET A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING IN OUR MINDS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS WORD. Though this is not always an easy thing to do, we must work at it. God is a personal Being. He is not His word. But His word is indispensable in obtaining and maintaining fellowship with Him. We can’t properly appreciate God if we don’t properly respect the Scriptures, and yet there is more to loving God than loving Bible study. Perhaps these concepts are hard to keep in balance, but the closer we come to appreciating the role of God’s word in His work of redemption, the better the quality of our spiritual lives will be.

Peter wrote that we ought to ***“desire the pure milk of the word.”*** Just as hungrily as a baby longs for milk, we should desire the nourishment of God’s word. And our exposure to the inspired writings should be more than casual and occasional. A familiar text in Acts indicates that the citizens of Berea ***“were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so”*** (**Acts 17:11**). THEY SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY! If the Scriptures are what they purport to

be, then the word “search” is an appropriate word to describe how we ought to read them. Our approach to God’s word must not be any less diligent than our seeking of God Himself (**Hebrews 11:6**).

Although we’ve thought about it many times and the idea may have become familiar to us, it is still an astonishing thing that God has communicated to us as He has. Our Creator has not merely given us our lives, He has given us the gift of language and then spoken to us! We don’t have to have a technical understanding of biblical inspiration in order to be awed by the concept of having such documents in our possession. These are texts that contain truths that have come from the very mind of God, and they are given to aid us in seeking a right relationship with Him. This is a fact of no slight importance. It is also a fact that calls for a reverent, diligent RESPONSE from us. If we profess to be seekers of God, then we must prepare to be searchers of the Scriptures. *“Be astounded that God should have written to us”* (Anthony of Egypt).

Learning From Judas

(by Jason Longstreth)

Most of us probably have a hard time understanding Judas Iscariot. How could one of the apostles, one of the twelve men whom Jesus chose, betray Him? How could someone who had witnessed everything that Judas had witnessed, had been with Jesus during the three years of His public ministry, had spent so much time with the Lord and with the other apostles, how could such a person betray Jesus? It is unimaginable. It boggles our minds. And yet, I believe the answer is clearly given to us in the Scriptures. Let’s take a few minutes today to consider Judas Iscariot and see if we cannot learn something from him.

In the early accounts of Jesus’ ministry, there does not seem to be much of a difference between Judas and the other apostles.

He is not really singled out (except perhaps for the statement made by Jesus in **John 6:70-71** about one of the twelve being a devil). In fact, I believe that in the early stages of Jesus’ teaching, Judas was not all that different from the other apostles. It is true that Judas would betray Jesus – this had been prophesied, but I don’t think Judas was just a completely evil person. Instead, I believe Judas had a problem. I think he did believe in Jesus. I think that he was probably a good example when Jesus chose him to be an apostle. But something got in his way. What was that thing?

The first real glimpse that we get into the mind of Judas Iscariot comes in **John chapter 12**. In the first three verses of this chapter, we are told that Jesus had come to the house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary for supper. While Jesus was reclining at the table, Mary took a pound of very costly perfume, anointed Jesus’ feet with it, and wiped His feet with her hair. It is at this point that we see into the heart of Judas.

In **verse five**, Judas said, ***“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?”*** At first sight, this may not seem like a bad question. Does it make sense to waste so much money on things like perfume that you are just going to put on someone’s feet when there are poor people starving? Perhaps not. But this is not really why Judas objected to these events.

Read **verse six**, ***“Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.”*** Aha! Now we are getting somewhere. Judas was not concerned about the poor. He did not want to spend money trying to feed the poor. Instead, he was concerned about himself, and more specifically, about money.

We are told that Judas was the treasurer for the group and that he used to steal from the money box. Is it possible that this greed overtook Judas? Could it be that his ‘love of money’ transformed him from an apostle to a traitor? I believe it is not only possible, I think that is exactly what happened to Judas. Look at what is said when Judas went to the chief priests to betray Jesus. ***“Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and said, ‘What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?’ And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver. And from then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Him.”*** (**Matthew 26:14-16**). Once again, it was money.

We need to remember what the New Testament has to say about money. Jesus said you cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve God and riches. (**Matthew 6:24**). Eventually, you will have to choose one over the other, just like Judas had to choose. Paul (by the Holy Spirit) told Timothy that the love of money was a root of all sorts of evil and because of it some had wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through. (**I Timothy 6:10**). In the verse just before this, he said that those who wish to get rich fall into a snare and desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. Judas found out what this was like. What could cause a follower of Christ, an apostle of our Lord, to betray Him? Money. Thirty pieces of silver. The desire to get rich. We need to listen to these warnings. If the ‘love of money’ could cause someone so close to Jesus to betray Him, think what it can do to us. We need to understand this. We need to learn to be content with what we have. We need to learn from Judas.