

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

140. 3 Ways Studying Scripture Can Impact Your Life

You are listening to episode 140 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, 3 Ways Studying Scripture Can Impact Your Life. Welcome to the podcast! I'm so glad you're here today. Thanks for joining me. Do you read the Bible? Do you ever study it? This is the subject of today's episode. We're looking at how studying scripture can impact your life, and I pray by the time this episode ends we're all a little more motivated to crack open our Bibles to see what God has for us inside. Are you ready to find some help and hope for your real life today? Well, let's get into this episode.

Not long ago I heard a young woman say she had really never studied the Bible before. Her experience was that when she attempted to read her Bible, she couldn't understand it, and that made her feel stupid. She said she reads and comprehends other books, but when it came to the Bible, it was as if it was written in another language and not for her.

I could relate to what she said. In fact, it took me back to the day I enrolled in a Bible study so many years ago. I didn't own a Bible at the time, unless I counted the big white Bible that stayed in a box in my childhood home, tucked away for whatever reason. We weren't ever taught to read it, and I'm not sure we were allowed to open that Bible for fear of us kids ruining it.

I thought I had no business going to a Bible study because I didn't know the first thing about the Bible. It seemed to me like it was filled with words I couldn't comprehend, and inside were rules and regulations I had to follow to be accepted by God. Little did I know how far off my thinking was back then. But because a dear friend prompted me to, I showed up at a church one Wednesday morning with my three year old and newly purchased Bible in tow, ready to see what this Bible study was all about.

That was 27 years ago in February.

That Bible study was Bible Study Fellowship, also known as BSF. It's a global in-depth Bible study that equips people to study God's Word (scripture) and to live it out in their everyday lives. That's my description of BSF. Because that's what it has done for me. Interestingly, I'm still in that Bible study. I've been in some part of it for all these years, and I'm still learning God's Word and how to apply it to my life--27 years after. Both of our children joined me when they were young, they attended with their dad in their elementary and middle school years, and now I get the blessing of taking my two grandsons with me. I feel, in a way, that I've come full circle in BSF.

So, I remember what it was like walking into Bible study that first morning, not knowing anything of the Bible. I assumed everyone else there was fluent in studying scripture. I remember wondering why the Bible was called "God's Word." And I also remember opening that Bible to study it for the first time. Nervous, unsure, and yet hopeful. I had this desire to read it and to do what I could to comprehend it--to

understand what I was reading. So I kept at it, and I prayed God would teach me what He wanted me to learn.

And I still do this today. God helps me understand what I need to understand, and He teaches me what I need to know for the current circumstances I'm in. I'm so grateful for His Word--the words He inspired men to document for us to hold in our hands today.

Yet, I haven't always been motivated to pick up my Bible and read it.

I haven't always been diligent about studying scripture. But one summer, probably 15 years ago, for four weeks, a group of women and I met every Saturday morning to study the Bible and to encourage one another. This group and the act of walking alongside of them as we peered into and pondered the Bible inspired me to make reading my Bible a priority in my life. I saw what it did in my life and what it did when we gathered to freely discuss what God was teaching us. God used that summer to change my life. I don't think I'll ever forget it.

So, what about your experience in reading the Bible? Do you read it? Do you study it? Are you interested in applying it to your life? I wish we were sitting across the table from each other today talking over cups of coffee or tea. But since we're not, I pray you can answer these questions for yourself.

I keep coming back to this: God didn't have His words written down to be shut in a book, never to be opened. He didn't share His words for us to be fearful or nervous of them. And He didn't put them all together for us to not understand them. No. His words are for us. They are a blueprint for an abundant life. Full of hope, encouragement, instruction, and promise.

I think of the Bible as like a road map or a GPS. It helps us know which turns to take and how to avoid the potholes in life. It's to guide us and to equip us for this journey of life. And it shows us the way to reach our final destination--eternal life with the God who loves us more than we can comprehend.

God's Word--the Bible--is a beautiful, loving gift.

It's a gift from our Creator for us to use in our daily lives.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (MSG) says, "Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us."

And it's no wonder our spiritual enemy wants to keep us from using this gift. He's good at convincing us that it's too difficult to read and that we can't understand it. He's also good at distracting us from it. Because if he can distract us from studying scripture, he knows we aren't able to stand against his schemes without the power of God's Word in our daily lives.

And that's what studying scripture does. It strengthens us, it equips us, and it draws us near to God, Himself!

But that's not all. Studying scripture impacts our lives in numerous, powerful ways. I'll share three ways today.

Here are 3 ways studying scripture can impact your life and mine.

1 - It equips us for life.

The Word of God is a weapon of truth to use against the lies of our spiritual enemy. It encourages your soul and mine in ways others' words cannot. It guides us on God's perfect path for our individual lives. And it gives us examples of others who, like you and me, are real people who desire to live abundant, joy-filled lives. Studying scripture not only inspires us, but it affects those around us. Because we are changed when we study scripture. This leads us to the second way.

2 - It aligns our thoughts with God's.

God's thoughts aren't like the thoughts of those in this world. Scripture says His thoughts and ways are higher than ours. Studying scripture shows us God's thoughts (yes, HIS thoughts!) and helps you and me see things from His perspective. God is all-knowing and all-wise, so His thoughts are always spot on. He knows what's best. If you're anything like me, sometimes the biggest battles in life take place in my thoughts. And when we immerse ourselves in His thoughts, our thoughts become less consumed with the world and more consumed with what really matters in this life. This leads us to the third way.

3 - It answers life questions with ultimate truth.

Do you ever ask such questions like, "Why am I here?" "What's my purpose?" "What decision is best for me?" "Is there more to life than this?" I have, and for years I asked other people for the answers. But now I know better. Studying scripture helps us to take those questions to God and to seek Him for the answers. It's amazing how applicable the Bible is to our current circumstances and real-life questions, even though it was written so long ago. That's what it means when we hear that scripture is "alive and active." God's Word is God's truth. There's nothing false in it. And when we align our lives with His truth, our lives are impacted in ways we are in awe of.

There are many more ways than this of how studying scripture impacts our lives.

Not to mention the peace it gives us, the joy we receive from it, the hope it infuses us with, and the promise of eternal life we are given through it. Also, the salvation plan for our lives and the immense love of God we learn from studying it. We could talk about this all day long! But these three are a good start. How in your life do you see the benefit of studying scripture? We're talking about this in our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Come over there this week and join in the conversation. The link to this group is in the show notes.

In next week's episode we're continuing with this theme of studying scripture, but I'm sharing some ways to do this. Because sometimes we don't know. How do we study scripture? Do we just read it? What do we do with the words we read? Do we apply them to our lives, and if so, how do we go about doing that?

We'll discuss this next week, in episode 141, and I'll share some ways I've studied scripture throughout the years. As well as others that I haven't tried yet. So be sure to come back next week and together we'll trust God to enlighten our minds to His truth.

Speaking of ways to study scripture, next week our next online session of the *Right Now Matters Bible Study* begins. I released this 28-Day guided adventure to living as a Right-Now Woman in December. It's the coordinating Bible Study for my book, *Right Now Matters* that released in October. But this study isn't just some little pamphlet. It's a full-sized book, written to equip us to go deeper with God to learn how to live the abundant lives Jesus came to give us, leaving our everyday distractions behind.

For 28 days we will journey together to dig into God's Word and to apply His truth to our lives. We'll gather online on five Tuesday evenings, beginning April 16, and ending on May 14, for one hour from 6-7 p.m., central time. I'd love to study the Bible with you! The link for registration and details are in the show notes.

If you found encouragement in this episode, would you please consider rating and/or reviewing this from wherever you're listening today? Someone may find this podcast because of your input. Be sure to subscribe so you never miss a new episode.

We'll end this episode in the most fitting way today... with scripture. It's Proverbs 2:1-5 NCV:

"My child, listen to what I say
and remember what I command you.
Listen carefully to wisdom;
set your mind on understanding.
Cry out for wisdom,
and beg for understanding.
Search for it like silver,
and hunt for it like hidden treasure.
Then you will understand respect for the Lord,
and you will find that you know God."

These are the benefits of studying scripture. I pray God encourages your heart with this today. Thanks for tuning in. God bless you!

Links in this episode:

[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) MSG

[Encouragement for Real Life Community](#)

[Right Now Matters Bible Study registration and details](#)

[Proverbs 2:1-5](#) NCV

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Julie Lefebvre