



Running Rabid

Balancing the *passion to pursue* with the *pressure to produce*.

The Power of Truth

*Learning to **trust** in God's Word and His plans for our lives*

I was recently in San Francisco on business and ran into a friend of mine who works for one of the major oil companies. John is a seasoned traveler and flies hundreds of thousands of miles around the world every year. He is also a Brit and has a flair for the dramatic, especially when it comes to story-telling. I always get him to regale me with one of his many adventures when we are together. His story this time was quite a tale that started his flying on one of United's small Embraer ERJ 145 planes. He was seated on the front row and was being served by the flight attendant. She noticed that next to his name on the passenger roster was a special character. She asked him if there was anything special about him. I am sure he had some smart-aleck answer, but to his knowledge he was not sure why he was designated as special other than the fact that he was a Global Services Member, indicating he traveled way more than anyone should have to do. The gentleman seated behind John worked for United and asked the flight attendant to see the paper. He proceeded to inform the flight attendant that John was the kind of passenger who could get you fired if you did anything that bothered him. Knowing John, I am sure he relished the moment and thought.

Of course, I had to ask John how in the world he had received such distinction. About 6 months before the Embraer 145 flight he had been at Chicago O'Hare where the plane had been delayed several hours. After standing in line for an extended period of time the gate agent told everyone that the flight was imminent and requested that they be patient. The pilots were standing next to John and commented that there was no way the plane was going to leave that night and that she was lying to everyone. John decided to film the whole episode on his cell phone; I am sure with the noblest of intentions! He decided to get a room at a nice hotel near the airport and expense the night to United. While in his hotel room and after consuming a few adult beverages, he decided to e-mail the CEO of United Airlines, Jeff Smisek. In the e-mail he told of the evening's events and attached the iPhone video for good measure. The next morning John boarded a plane headed home, glad to put everything behind him. When he landed in Houston he received a phone call on his cell phone from a number he had not seen before. He decided to answer it and come to find out it was Jeff Smisek calling using his personal cell phone; he apologized profusely for the previous evening's events. During the conversation Mr. Smisek requested that John not post his video on the Internet and John being the fine gentleman he is, obliged. In wrapping up the conversation, John said the following, "Jeff, I guess you know that since you called me on your personal cell phone I now have your number and might feel compelled to call you from time to time." Mr. Smisek acknowledged that he was fine with that and looked forward to hearing from him (I'm sure!).

A couple of months later John was in London and United cancelled all of the returning flights back to Houston, but were not doing much to help travelers get back on other airlines. John found out that British Airways had some returning flights, but the folks at United were unwilling to make the necessary arrangements as British Airways was not a "partner" airline. One gate agent in particular got a little snooty with John. The circumstances being what they were, John decided to call his old friend, Jeff, who was more than happy to help John in his time of need. He asked John to put the gate agent on the phone and John looked at her and said, "There is someone who would like to talk to you." John said after she turned ghost white and about fell out of her chair, she did everything in her power to get John in First Class on the next British Airways flight out. Needless to say, John was more than happy to enjoy her going "above and beyond the call of duty"!

Why do I tell you that story (other than the fact that it is incredibly amusing)? The reason that I tell you this story is that John had, and felt like he had, great power when traveling. Anytime he got in a tough spot he knew he was only a call away from making everything better. As great as it would be to have the personal cell phone of a major airline's CEO, I can think of something far, far greater – the power you and I have as Believers to call on the name of God! The problem for most of us is we are anemic and live spiritually weak lives, much to the dismay of Christ who came that we might have an abundant life.

There are at least three reasons why as Christians are weak spiritually. First, we don't pray because either we think we can do it on our own or that God doesn't really care. As my good friend, Dave Gibson, said, "A weak prayer life is a Declaration of Independence from God." The second reason is lack of fellowship with Believers. I am not talking about going to church; I am talking about being "meaningfully" involved with brothers in Christ who will hold you accountable and challenge you to be all you can be for Jesus. The last reason, and the subject of this lesson, is our inattention to studying Scripture. Men who are truly walking with the Lord spend time every day in His Word. As Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB), "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

There are literally hundreds of reasons why we should study the Bible, but I would like for us to consider the four areas listed below.

1. **View of God.** Apart from Scripture it is not possible to fully understand God. Even a careful study of the names of God helps us better understand the depth of His love, grace, mercy, and justice. The more we understand God and His love for us, the better we are able to understand His gift of Jesus and salvation. He loves us enough that He would do anything to have a relationship with us (i.e., He did everything).
2. **Develop an understanding of the world around us.** To say we live in a confused world is a massive understatement. As followers of Jesus, we have the unique privilege and unparalleled access to the God of the universe. A careful and diligent study of Scripture allows us to better understand and cope with the dysfunctions of the world at large. Similarly, I believe when we study Scripture we will find that God gives us wisdom beyond anything humanly possible. As James 1:5 tell us, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."
3. **Confidence in God's plan.** To me this is one of the greatest treasures associated with the Bible. When I read in Genesis about God orchestrating the founding of Israel, the fulfilled prophecies of Jesus, the formation of the Church, and End Time prophecies I am blown away. If God can do everything as outlined in Scripture, I have no doubt he can handle every facet of my life. **There is a tremendous need for Christian men today to understand God's plan, trust in God's plan, and live in God's plan.**
4. **Mind of God.** Think for a moment, if you will, about having the mind of God. Personally, it scares me to death, but there is a small part of me that wonders what it would be like to know everything. I am blown away by a God who is not bound by anything – time, power, space, knowledge, energy (the list goes on, and on, and on, ...), We are warned in Isaiah 55:8 that God's ways and thoughts are not ours. The only way for us to know the mind of God is through a careful study of Scripture.

Questions for the Week

1. How confident are you in "handling" the Word of God? If you were to sit down and explain to someone how the Bible is organized and God's overall plan for mankind, could you do it? If so, write down a few highlights.
2. Read Isaiah 9:6 (NASB) below that foretold the coming of Jesus. Which of the four names ascribed to Jesus means the most to you? Why?

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

3. Why don't we spend more time studying the Bible? Do you think it could relate to the fact that we are "easily satisfied" with life? Read Matthew 13:45-46, the parable of the pearl of great price about the Kingdom of God. What difference would it make in your life if you saw studying Scripture as an essential ingredient in your quest to seek the Kingdom?

4. Food for Further Thought

Consider what is going on in your life right now. Read and meditate on Proverbs 3:5-6. What does this passage communicate to you on trust? Are there specific areas in your life where you need to place greater trust in the Lord?