

Lovers of God, Part One

By

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“Lovers of God!” Such was the greeting that Saint Luke used in his recording of the Gospel of Jesus and the book of Acts—a record of the Acts of the Apostles spreading the Gospel to the then known world. It is in this same love that we address our readers also. We hope that you will find these articles informative and we hope to encourage you to study God’s word, the Bible—the Holy Scriptures, which are God’s love-letters to man. Our Father has so many wonderful things for us and they are ours to claim.

We are Catholics like yourselves but we wanted to “add” more to our faith walk and through much encouragement from loving friends to read the Bible, we joined their Bible-study circle and began to discover for ourselves what God can do for us; but most of all, what He did for us already. Under no circumstances do we write in condemnation of anyone. We simply want to share our “findings” with you. There will be many quotations taken from the Scriptures; we suggest that you will take it upon yourselves to read the chapter or section that it is taken from so that you can understand the context of the thought that is being presented.

The question that we present and will share with you is “Why should we read the Bible?” We will share our answer in three parts:

1. By reading the Bible, God will direct us to the Truth, the Way and the Life.
2. By reading the Bible, God will help us to obtain Faith.
3. By reading the Bible, God will show us that His word is alive.

Part One.

God will direct us to the Truth, the Way and to the Life. These are the Scriptures that helped us to see God’s plan of salvation.

“I will *instruct* you (says the Lord) and *guide* you along the best pathway for your life: I will *advise* and watch your progress” (Psalm 32:8).

It was very hard for us to visualize God caring enough to actually *Guide*, *Advise* and *Watch* us. Much more than that, God spoke to our spirit/heart and we came to know that God had always provided us with not just any road but God saw to it that we have the best and only road to heaven through Jesus Christ. God never intended us to struggle on our own, but he is willing to advise us on the way to his kingdom: if we let him, for the rest of our earthly life.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

“God reveals profound mysteries beyond man’s understanding. He knows all hidden things, for he is light and darkness is no obstacle to him” (Daniel 2:22).

These quotations were and still are a great boost to our prayer life: to know that God will answer our prayers and reveal to us what we need to know to do His will. God really cares for all the details of our lives. (Read 1 Cor. Ch. 2)

“As it is written in the Scriptures. They shall all be taught of God. Those the Father speaks to, who learn the Truth from him, will be attracted to me [Jesus]” (John 6:45).

Note that Jesus often used direct quotations from the Holy Scriptures to answer questions or to illustrate a point. This re-affirms our need to get into God’s word. For if Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, read and used Scriptures to work for him, it would be foolish for us not to also use God’s word. This is how we get to know our Father intimately through Jesus Christ who had first-hand information about our Father. To be ignorant of God’s word pertaining to Christ is to be in ignorance about salvation. (Read Hebrews 1:1–4 and Acts 4:12).

Part Two.

God will help us to obtain our measure of faith.

“God has allotted to each a measure of faith” (Romans 12:3).

“You can never please God without faith, without depending on Him. Anyone who want to come to God must believe that there is a God and that He rewards those who sincerely look for Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

What this said to us was that faith comes from hearing the message of God, and everyone can claim his portion of faith. To obtain this measure we must completely trust in God. We depend upon God to see us through the daily events in our lives and not in trying to do “our own thing.”

“Believe in the Lord you God and you shall have success. Believe his Prophets and everything will be all right” (2 Chronicles 20:20).

“In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery darts aimed at you by Satan” (Ephesians 6:16).

These Scriptures point out again, that in order to succeed and to fight Satan we have to depend upon God and use his word to do the fighting for us. Read Ephesians 6:10–18, for these Scriptures will tell you in detail how to use God’s armor to fight our battles. See how God provides for us. We are also told to listen to certain people and follow their example in matters of faith, because many times God will reveal his will through those Holy people. Read Hebrews 12:1–3 and all of Hebrews 11 for examples of those certain “People of Faith.”

“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

For ourselves, we found that hearing unconnected parts of the Epistles, responsorial Psalms and Gospel readings at Mass were not enough. We took it upon ourselves to read Scriptures out loud to each other. This way God’s word had a better chance to “sink-in.” We found that it is necessary for the mind/heart to work and feed upon God’s word; the believing comes when God’s word “hits” the heart/spirit of man. This spirit of man is the part of man that Saint Paul was talking about when we make that total surrender to Jesus to become “new creatures” or to “come alive.” All the old habits pass away. Paul also referred to man’s spirit nature as the hidden man or the inner man. To put it in other words, when we finally “plug-in” our spirit with Jesus, we are no longer the same being that we were before. With this faith/life added to the emergence of the “new creature,” all things are made possible in Jesus’ name.

Read Romans, Chapter 10, and see how zeal for God is based upon knowledge. Our faith is not a blind faith for it is the result of believing the Good News after hearing it. Read 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 5, verses 1–10 to see the hope in this Good News and verse 11–21 to see the reconciliation Christ ministered to us for this hope.

Part Three.

God’s word is alive.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the life: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psalm 19:7–8).

“This book of the Law must never depart from your lips, study it day and night and do what the word says, for then you will be successful and be able to handle the affairs of life” (Joshua 11:8).

“Every word of God has been proven true: he is a shield to those who take refuge in him: add not to his word; lest he reprove you, and you be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5–6).

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes it” (Romans 1:16).

There are so many Scriptures that we could share at this point, but what we are trying to bring out is that we have the means to know what God wants us to do. We can find God’s Will in reading his word or by having it read out loud as we indicated before. In talking with many people we found out that many people think of God as someone way up there who is too “great” to be bothered by the trivia of our lives, or they think of God as a God of condemnation, wrath and anger. His word does not say this. He is a God of life and slow to anger. God has a special plan for each and everyone of us; but it is up to us to claim his gift of life. In the Old Testament God told us that we must behave and that he would reward us if we obeyed him. In the New Testament, God told us that we must believe in Jesus Christ through faith. John 3:16 points this out to us beautifully:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him.”

It took us a long time to begin to realize what Christ’s dying on the cross and rising from the grave really meant. To put it into another light: as a rule, in our human nature, when someone does us a favor, we want to please him in some way and that person who did us the favor expects some sort of “thanks” from us.

God’s plan of salvation does not work that way. Jesus had to die and shed his blood on the cross for us because his Father’s Law demanded that sin be punished by death. So Jesus being obedient to his Father out of love for us, died, and washed away our sins by his blood. It did not cost us a thing, but it cost God the life of his Son to bring us “right” again.

It was at this point in salvation history that the “good works” (effort by man to “earn heaven”) died, and the sole efforts of Jesus Christ to complete God’s plan of salvation through faith took over.

We are no longer bound by the word of the law. We are not made to be lawyers anymore, but lovers. We are now “one” in love and in faith through Jesus Christ. It was his resurrection that proved victory over sin and Satan. The battle is already done and the victory is won. Rejoice because God loves you. God sent the very best.

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