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(Continuation from 10/02/13)

## THE RADICAL EXPERIMENT ONE YEAR TO A LIFE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

(2 Timothy 3:10-17)

The second challenge in the Radical Experiment is to read through the entire Word. And I mean just that. Systematically read through the entire Bible— [Genesis 1:1](#) to [Revelation 22:21](#) and all **31,101** verses in between— over the course of a year.

Our brothers and sisters around the world often gather at the risk of their lives to hear and know God's Word. If you and I are going to join them in radical obedience to Christ, we need to start with our Bibles open and our minds engaged. We have settled far too long for "Bible lite," both as individual Christians and in the community of faith. We have adopted a Christianity consumed with little devotional thoughts from God for the day, supplemented by teaching in the church filled with entertaining stories and trite opinions on how to be a better person and live a better life in the twenty-first century.

Meanwhile, we hold the matchless Word of God in our hands, and it demands a superior position in our lives, our families, our small groups, and our churches. Do we realize the battle that is waging around us? There is a true God over this world who wants all people to bow at the feet of a loving Savior, and there is a false god in this world who wants all people to burn in hell. The battle is intense, and it cannot be fought with little thoughts in a daily devotional or petty ideas from a preacher on Sunday. It certainly can't be fought with minds numbed by the constant drivel of entertainment on television, DVDs, video games, and the Internet. If you and I are going to penetrate our culture and the cultures of the world with the gospel, we desperately need minds saturated with God's Word.

Now, there are many options for how this might look. A quick search on the Internet shows that Bible-reading plans abound. Some go through the Bible straight from cover to cover. Others are organized according to biblical chronology. Still others include readings from different parts of the Bible each day, and some of these are arranged thematically. Some plans involve readings every day, while other plans leave room for "catch-up days" in case you miss here or there. A plan that appeals to other people might not appeal to you. The point is simply to read the Bible. However you choose to do it— read it.

I want to put a particularly strong emphasis on this step of the Radical Experiment. The Christian marketplace is filled with books today—some of them healthy, and some of them not so healthy. To be honest, I have been very hesitant to write this book, because I look at our bookstores and think, Do we really need another one? I suppose only time will tell if it was worth it, but time has already spoken on one Book.

God has chosen by his matchless grace to give us revelation of himself in his Word. It is the only Book that he has promised to bless by his Spirit to transform you and me into the image of Jesus Christ. It is the only Book that he has promised to use to bring our hearts, our minds, and our lives in alignment with him. I'm not saying that God has not used or blessed other books throughout Christian history, but there is only one Book that he has perfectly inspired by his Spirit for the accomplishment of his purpose. When you or I open the Bible, we are beholding the very words of God— words that have supernatural power to redeem, renew, refresh, and restore our lives to what he created them to be.

That is why I believe it is more important for you and me to read Leviticus than it is for us to read the best Christian book ever published, because Leviticus has a quality and produces an effect that no book in the Christian marketplace can compete with. If we want to know the glory of God, if we want to experience the beauty of God, and if we want to be used by the hand of God, then we must live in the Word of God.

I realize that these first two steps in the Radical Experiment may sound anticlimactic, even disappointing, to you. What's so radical about praying and reading the Bible? My first thought is that, judging from the lack of spiritual fervency and biblical literacy in our churches today, these are extremely radical steps. But on a deeper level, think for a moment what would happen over a year as you intentionally pray for the entire world while you simultaneously read through the entire Word. After a year of such intentional praying and studying, your life cannot help but look radically different. I know this because it is the very promise of God to conform our hearts to be like his through prayer and to transform our minds to be like his through his Word. In our quest for the extraordinary, we often overlook the importance of the ordinary, and I'm proposing that a radical lifestyle actually begins with an extraordinary commitment to ordinary practices that have marked Christians who have affected the world throughout history.

**How will it transform your life, radicalize you, to let your mind and spirit be saturated by the Word of God day after day? This is the second component of the experiment: read the entire Bible in a year.**

The word *Bible* comes from the Greek word *biblos*, meaning a book. The Bible is also called...

1. "The Holy Scriptures"
2. "The Scriptures"
3. "The Word of God"

1) "The Holy Scriptures" ([Romans 1:2](#); [2 Timothy 3:15](#))

[Romans 1:2 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> "Which He promised beforehand through His prophets **in the holy Scriptures,**

[2 Timothy 3:15 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> "And that from childhood you have known **the sacred writings** which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2) "The Scriptures" ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#); [Matthew 21:42](#); [Matthew 22:29](#); [Luke 24:32](#); [John 5:39](#); [Acts 8:32](#); [Acts 18:24](#); [Galatians 3:22](#))

[1 Corinthians 15:3-4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to **the Scriptures.**"

<sup>4</sup> "and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to **the Scriptures.**"

[Matthew 21:42 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>42</sup> "Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in **the Scriptures,** 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES?'"

[Matthew 22:29 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> "But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding **the Scriptures** nor the power of God."

[Luke 24:32 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> "They said to one another, " "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining **the Scriptures** to us?"

[John 5:39 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>39</sup> "You search **the Scriptures** because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me."

[Acts 8:32 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> "Now the passage **of Scripture** which he was reading was this: 'HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH.'"

[Acts 18:24 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>24</sup> "Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in **the Scriptures.**"

**Galatians 3:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup>“But **the Scripture** has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

3) “The Word of God” (**Hebrews 4:12**)

**Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“For **the word of God** is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The Bible—“**the Word of God**”—did not originate in the mind of man, but in the mind of God. However, God used men as instruments and authors to communicate His message to the world. Over a period of some 1500 years, God chose people from all kinds of backgrounds—kings, soldiers, peasants, farmers, scholars, priests, statesmen, approximately forty authors from different nations, professions, and classes of society—to write the Holy Bible. The original manuscripts were written in three different languages: **Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.**