

## Walking in the Light: Bible

This Sunday, Stephen continued our new series called 'Walking in the Light' - a 4 week journey reflecting on 4 important themes for practical christian living.

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However we might define our maturity in the christian life or knowledge of Scripture, there is always an important question underneath these things about the posture of our heart towards the bible. Bible knowledge clearly has a use and a vital function in Christian spirituality. But Stephen suggested that knowledge, even good/sound knowledge, can either be useful or indeed useless depending on what we do with it.

Stephen asked: What is the art of spiritual reading? And what might it look like for us to have the same lively passion for God's Word as the Psalmist does in Psalm 119?

'Alive and active' is how the writer to the Hebrews describes God's Word. His Word is sharper than any double-edged sword. This is a vivid description with a surgical and penetrative quality that claims to open up everyone and everything in the light of God's presence. Stephen pointed to the cultural pressures that the Hebrew Christians were facing. In addition, he highlighted how Israel, in the book of Hebrews, is cited as a case study, through their wilderness wanderings, of what NOT to do. There is much danger when it comes to drifting and developing unresponsive or hard hearts like Israel. With reference to drifting Stephen said:

*"it's more subtle than a full on confrontation or battle,  
but equally perilous for the soul"*

We need the Word of God to prevent us from drifting. It is a primary means of grace to keep us walking in the light. However, the bible is to be read well! Stephen quoted Eugene Peterson who describes 'spiritual reading' as:

*"Reading that enters our souls as food enters our stomachs, spreads through our blood,  
and becomes holiness and love and wisdom"*

(Eat This Book: The Art of Spiritual Reading)

Peterson calls for careful and slow-reading, meditation and obedience. We don't always live on the knife edge of apostasy and falling away completely, however, there are very real barriers today to reading it spiritually. Barriers such as:

- Laziness and this age of distraction
- Doubts and confusion
- Busyness and stress
- Bad experiences and guilt
- Pride and shame

Nevertheless, the good news of this passage is that even if this could sound terrifying - to stand with our hearts exposed to God - it is Christ the High Priest who becomes our meeting place with God. You and I may be on a journey but the invitation is NOT to learn this book because it's really easy and will always give you what you want to hear; rather, the invitation is to discover, through all of the bible's rugged edges, a story about Jesus. Jesus will graciously meet you in these pages and draw you into the very presence of the Triune God who is our Loving Father, Eternal Son, and Life Giving Spirit. The Spirit of God will change our lives as we learn to walk in the light of God's Word.

- What does it mean to read the bible well?
- How did you encounter the Word of God this past week?
- Did it help you become more aware of God's presence and action in your life?
- What things get in your way when it comes to engaging with the Bible as living and active ?