

# Truth Matters

*A Publication Discussing Matters Related To Truth Because Truth Matters*



## New Year's Resolution: To Eat Well This Year

'Tis the season for resolutions. Nobody understood the power of resolutions more than Jonathan Edwards. While he was a college student he wrote 70 resolutions and kept most of them throughout his entire life. One of the resolutions he kept was this:

Resolved: To study the Scripture so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive, myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

Growing, advancing, increasing – that is the goal of Scripture daily reading. That means that we resolve to read daily, yes. But we must do more than read (acknowledge black symbols on white paper and pronounce syllables) – we must interact with the text – Read! Slow Down! Ponder! Query! Chew! See how every part fits together. (This gets to methodology. I'll come back to that. First, let me help you

come to the place where you love the truth.)

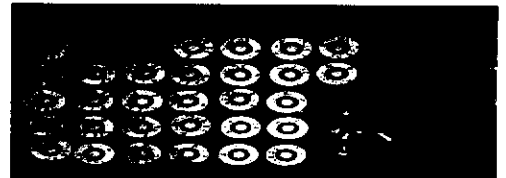
Paul tells the Thessalonians that a chief mark of a Christian is that they have been given a love for truth (cf. 2 Thess. 2:10). That means that Christians, at their best, have saturated themselves in the Bible. They say with Job, "I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread" (Job 23:12). We are told that God led the children of Israel into hunger and fed them with manna to teach them, "that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3) – words quoted by Christ when he himself faced temptation (Matt. 4:4). On the night Jesus was betrayed, he prayed to his Father on behalf of his followers in these terms, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). The means by which God sanctifies men and women, setting them apart as his own special people, is the Word of Truth. Let us be

a people saturated with truth!

There are several dangers lurking for those who do not saturate themselves with truth.

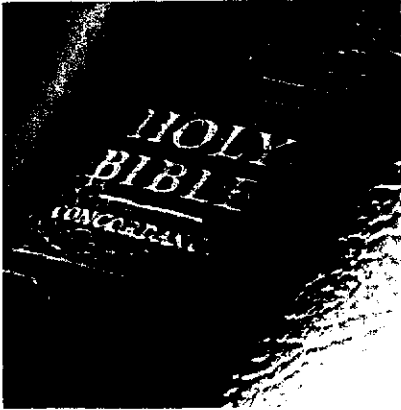
First, there is the danger of falling into a spiritual stupor. I see this fall as a gradual process. It is the product of a people saturated with T.V., sports, news headlines, political inquiries and the latest movies. The sheer pace of life affords us many excuses and justification for sacrificing the important and the excellent on the altar of the urgent. The constant sensory input from all sides is damaging (maybe even damning if it leads to a lack of love for the truth). We go from stereo to radio to television to movie screen. We hate silence. Or, at the very least, we are uncomfortable with silence. We are afraid of our own thoughts

## Stockpiling Arms Spiritual Arsenal Passages



According to Webster's Dictionary, an *arsenal* is "a storehouse or source of supply for arms, ammunition, or other military equipment." The Psalmist sang, "I have stored [lit. "treasured"] up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11, ESV). Thus, one of the key spiritual disciplines that every Christian must undertake is the routine memorization and meditation of Scripture. We read it with eyes toward God's promises of provision as we fight the fight for faith against sin. Not only do we take unto ourselves the whole armor of God for protection (cf. Eph. 6:10-20), but we must take up arms and go on the offensive in order to destroy every root of sin.

If you remain faithful, by the end of 2006, you will have 52 different promise passages – arms and ammunition stockpiled in your arsenal—that can be used in fighting the fight of faith. We will refer to these passages as our "Arsenal Passage."



## Practical Advice for daily Scripture Reading:

### Read with journal and pen.

Write down four kinds of thoughts as you read:

- **Q**—Questions to be further studied
- **O**—Observations of interesting facts or nuggets of truth
- **A**—Applications to be made in your life
- **P**—Promises from God

### Pray Scripture.

Learn to distill what a passage is saying, and pray it back to the Lord — whether in petition, praise, thanksgiving, or uncertainty.

### Keep Current.

For example, use Sunday afternoons to get caught up. Resolve that the TRUTH means more to you than football. Resolve to be current on your reading before you watch a game. Or, resolve that the TRUTH is more precious than sleep — don't go to bed until the day's reading is done. Or, resolve to not eat supper until you have eaten your spiritual food!

## New Year's Resolution: *Eat Well This Year* ...Cont'd

because we do not know how to think. Paul says that we are to “bring every thought into submission unto the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). Are we falling prey to the gently addictive effect of an entertainment driven culture? We justify hours of T.V. watching and have little desire to carve out times of silence necessary for contemplative Bible reading. The result is that we have become a people with dulled senses who have fallen into a passive stupor. I call us as a people to wake up and read the TRUTH!

Second, there is the danger of being a kind of “second-handers”. I took this challenge to heart four years ago after I first met and heard John Piper. He challenged a group of us pastors to guard ourselves against the easy task of coming to the Scriptures solely to find sermons and lessons and answers raised by counseling questions and always relying on the commentaries and works of others. This is the danger of always reading what others think about what the Bible says and never wrestling with its meaning for yourself — “second-handers”. Piper said if you are going to satisfy your people on Sunday mornings your river better run deep. I am afraid that we (Christians in general) are not a people who are saturated with truth. Instead we are a shallow people saturated in the opinions of others who may be saturated with truth. We are a kind of second-hand lovers of truth. This is

highly hypocritical. We give the air of loving truth but we have never really breathed that air for ourselves.

And the simple fact is that most devotional books breed this kind of second-hand living. D.A. Carson has said that most “devotional guides provide personal help for believers with private needs, fears, and hopes. But they do not provide a framework of what the Bible says — the ‘plotline’ or ‘storyline’ — the big picture that makes sense of all the little bits of the Bible. Wrongly used, such devotional guides may ultimately engender a wrong-headed view that God exists to sort out my problems and they may engender wrong interpretations of some passages because they are not required to see them in their ‘big picture’ context.” Only a systematic and repeated reading of the whole Bible can meet those challenges. Therefore, I call us as a people to dig deep and read the TRUTH!

The TRUTH MATTERS! If the Bible is coherent, then understanding the Bible means grasping how different things fit together. The Bible is not a piece-meal. Being a lover of truth means to read and study Scripture so as to see more and more pieces come together to form a glorious mosaic of a divine design. Turn off the television, lay aside the newspaper and read the TRUTH!

