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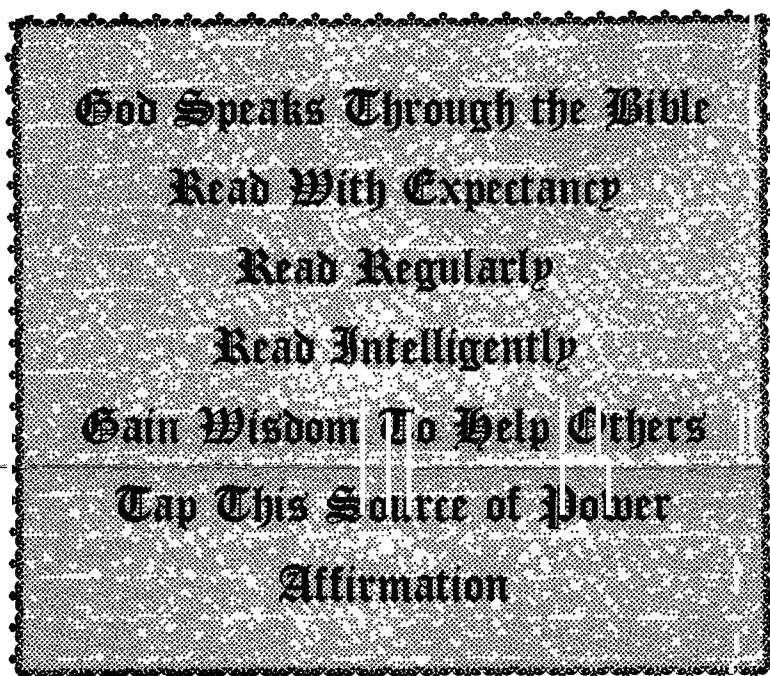
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The Bible: A Source Of Power

Mayan Revelation Number 266



Beloved Perfector:

As a Mayan, you want to walk on the heights and have mountain-top experiences. To do this you need a guide through life; and in the Bible - as you have learned in earlier Lessons in Mayanry - you will find an unparalleled guide. With the Psalmist you can say: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

You have been reading the Bible for many years. Probably you have had high moments when you heard God speaking from the pages of Scripture, and when you found the guidance and strength which you sought. There may be days, however, when your Bible reading becomes a mere form - when you read verse after verse and still feel no change in your heart, no lift to your spirit. This is the experience of many men and women. Often I am asked the question: "How can I get more help from reading the Bible?"

This Lesson will answer that question. Even an advanced Bible student needs to frequently review the principles that make it possible for him to tap the

resources to be found in the Scriptures. In the Bible there are words of wisdom that tell us how to contact Divine Power and to let it flow through our lives. Approach this Lesson with an eagerness to see how you can get more help from the Bible. If the ideas presented seem familiar to you, ask yourself: "Are these Truths that I have heard about, or are they Truths that I am putting into practice day by day?" Endeavor to establish habits of reading and meditation that will help you to live triumphantly. Let us earnestly speak the words of the following Prayer:

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, when I trust in my own strength I feel unequal to my tasks. I long for wisdom and power beyond my own. Speak to me through Thy Holy Word. Give me answers to the questions that haunt me. Grant me peace from turmoil within. Sustain me by Thy Presence and Thy Power. Amen.

God Speaks Through the Bible

Through the ages men and women have heard God speaking through the pages of the Holy Book. ~~The Bible is a record of God's revelation of Himself to mankind, for it tells how He led men and women, how He comforted them and saved them from disaster. It tells how, through His Son, God revealed that He is not only a mighty Creator, but a loving Father. It tells of His Power, but also of His personal concern for each one of us.~~

The Bible is called THE WORD OF GOD because the Lord has spoken through it. Men and women who were perplexed have turned to the Bible for guidance and have found answers to their problems. Those who were downhearted have discovered new courage. Those who were beaten by sorrow have found hope.

This experience, beloved Perfector, can be yours. The messages of the Bible ring true today and the teachings apply to the problems of our century. God speaks through the Bible now as clearly as He did in ancient times. Its words inspired Martin Luther, Wilfred Grenfell, David Livingstone, and countless others. Its words are still the dynamo that can charge men and women with power.

The Bible is a Voice calling you to recognize not only what God has done in the past, but what He can do for you personally today when you seek His Presence and obey His laws. It can teach you how to make contact with Divine Power, and how to let that Power flow through your life.

Of course, many people read the Bible without having this experience; often it is because they read it as if it were a dead book - something belonging to the past. They fail to recognize that the Bible has something to say to them now - something they need to hear, and that they will hear if they listen to its message as attentively as they would listen to the voice of a teacher.

During war time men and women eagerly turned to the Bible for direction and help. In 1942 a Gallup Poll indicated that readers of the Bible increased by

four million in a single year. This was attributed to the fact that in an hour of desperation young and old were turning to the Bible to find power to face the tensions and trials of daily living.

You will recall the records given by survivors who were rescued from a drifting raft. They said that hope was sustained and sanity preserved as the men, day after day, quoted passages of Scripture. In a less dramatic way, the words of the Bible strengthened the wills of others who were under great stress. Colonel Dyess said: "During the entire time I was in military prisons I never saw an idle Bible. In the daylight hours every volume was being circulated, and being read constantly."

The crises which we now face differ in nature from those of the war years, but they are none the less real. Communism, inflation or business recession, and the threat of atomic disaster hover above us like ominous clouds. The number of divorces and broken homes increases year by year. When we ignore or escape all these menaces, we still are haunted by fear of personal failure, or illness, or uselessness. So, if we would live triumphantly - come what may - we must rely upon a Power greater than our own.

We acknowledge the fact that God's Power is limitless. The question we face is: How can we as individuals be strengthened by His Power?

Scripture gives the answer. Bible reading reveals Truths which show us how to plug into the current of Divine Power and to let it flow through our lives. So sincerely strive to master the principles of effective Bible reading, and then put them into practice.

Read With Expectancy

When you pick up the Bible pause a moment before you begin to read. Think of the greatness of God as revealed in its pages. Then think of your own personal need. Pray as you read that you will find new revelations of Divine Truth, or that some teaching that you have only partially comprehended will become clearer to you. Expect that God will speak to you through the passage you have chosen. Look for wisdom that you can apply to today's problem and for strength for today's need.

As you meditate, think of the Bible as the Word of God. Recall how even Jesus found guidance and inspiration from Scripture. Recall how verses that the Master had learned in childhood fortified him in times of stress. Realize that as God has spoken to others through His Holy Word, He can speak to you as you listen.

Approach your time of Bible reading with high hopes, but with true humility. Recognize that you are not self-sufficient. Be eager for Truth and for guidance. Be confident that the wisdom you need, or the comfort you desire, will come to you as you open your mind and heart to receive it.

Be confident, as you read, that you will hear the commands of God. Some

commands will be to promote social justice, but more will pertain to your personal life. The words of the Bible have been the guide for nations, but they have also furnished the touchstone for individual conduct.

The wisdom that has guided men and women in ancient times can be a guide for you. Read with true expectation and you will find the strength you need.

Have faith that as you read the Bible you will not only receive direction for your life, but that you will also come to know the Presence of God. Your religion should not be confined to the acceptance of beliefs that other men have formulated. It should be a vital personal experience.

As you read, hold fast the hope that the Lord whom the men and women of the Bible knew so well will become increasingly real to you. Expect to feel the Presence of God directing and sustaining you. A flash of insight can come as you read and meditate, and then the assurance of support can last throughout the day.

The Bible is a practical book. No attempt should be made to separate it from common tasks. The Voice you hear as you read the Bible will become increasingly clear to you as you follow the instructions which you receive, and as you accept the comfort that is offered. The Presence that can undergird you should be sought not only as you study Scripture, but while you are busy at your daily tasks. When you become more and more sensitive to God's leading in your business or in your family life, your mind and heart will be increasingly receptive to the messages from the Bible. The more frequently you encounter God at school, or work, or play, the more frequently you will encounter Him as you read the Bible. You will be conditioned to receive God's Power.

Read Regularly

Our grandparents kept the Bible on the front room table. Too often it is now replaced by the Sears Roebuck catalogue, or by some popular book that portrays the lives of ignoble men and women. Although no one would say that owning a Bible - but letting it gather dust - in some mysterious way brings one a blessing, many people act as if this were true. Perhaps they avoid reading the Bible because it exposes their shallowness, or disturbs their complacency. Perhaps they ignore the Bible because they once read it perfunctorily and then were disappointed not to find the help they needed. Perhaps they neglect the Bible because they doubt its relevance to twentieth century living. More likely they think they are too busy in the morning and too tired at night. For one reason or another, millions of people who own a Bible fail to claim the Power that it offers.

Physical dexterity comes with training. A miler who would break records must run every day. A violinist who would become proficient must play the drills before he can master the concert pieces. Spiritual Knowledge and Power are not absorbed by vague longing, but by daily study and practice.

Set aside a definite time to read the Bible. It is helpful to also have a special place, for then you can more quickly be in a frame of mind that is conducive to prayer and to anticipation of spiritual enrichment.

You may select a spot by a sunny window; or you may choose a remote corner of your house, far from the telephone, and disturbing voices. Quietness is desirable, but, if necessary, you can build a mental wall to shut out sounds that distract.

A woman told me that every morning on her bus ride to work she reads her Testament, and prays. She said, "This helps me to work with calmness and efficiency."

A successful business man turns his coffee-break into a study-break. He closes his office door, tells his secretary to let no one disturb him, and for fifteen minutes reads the Scriptures and meditates. Then he copies one verse upon a card and places it on his desk, where he can glance at it frequently. Words like these steady and support him: "Be patient toward all men" (I Thessalonians 5:14), and "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25).

A man who travels widely has the habit of setting his alarm clock so he will have time each morning for ten minutes of Bible study before breakfast. He follows this practice when he is on the road just as faithfully as he does at home. Although he carries a pocket Testament he says that he likes to use a Gideon Bible whenever one is available for he feels this strengthens his bond with other Christians who are traveling.

Members of a family find a common interest when they read the Bible together. Some families read it around the breakfast table. Others find that reading after dinner, or at bedtime, is more desirable. Loyalty is deepened, tensions grow less, and horizons are pushed back when the Bible is read each day in the family circle.

Select the time for Bible reading that is best for your family, or for you personally. Although there may be occasional interruptions, make a resolute effort to keep this time sacred.

Dinner at six o'clock may be a rule in your household. Sometimes you may move it forward to five-thirty, or you may put it off until six-fifteen, but only a real emergency would cause you to miss it completely. Recognize that spiritual food is as essential as food for the body. Read the Bible regularly to gain wisdom and power to meet the demands of each day.

Read Intelligently

Reading the Bible from beginning to end can fill us with awe at the marvelous way in which, from generation to generation, God has revealed His nature and His purposes. There is value in sometimes reading a whole chapter, or a whole book, at one time so we can see verses in their context.

To read with a commentary increases our understanding. It helps us to picture the situation that prompted Isaiah to prophesy, or Paul to write to the Corinthians. We gain new insights when a Bible scholar interprets for us the meaning of an obscure passage, or of a word that has been weakened by translation.

Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, is simple, with only one word for every twenty in the Greek language. There are almost no expressions for philosophy or abstract thought. It is a language in which the words, carefully chosen, command attention. Sentences frequently begin with the verb, the word of action. "Send." "Hearken!" "Lift up your eyes." "Wait upon the Lord." Intensive study makes us keenly aware of this dynamic feeling, and should stimulate our desire to translate our beliefs into action.

The Koine, the language in which the New Testament was first written, was not the Greek of the scholars, but the speech of the common people. The simple words used at home and at work had an extraordinary vitality. When the Master said: "ASK; ... SEEK; ... KNOCK" the words He used meant: "KEEP ON ASKING; ... KEEP ON SEEKING; ... KEEP ON KNOCKING." When we know this, does not the command take on added poignancy?

We should remember, too, that our English language undergoes change with the passage of time. When the King James translation of the Bible was first printed, "conversation" meant CONDUCT and "to suffer" meant TO ALLOW. Obviously we must know what the writer of the Bible intended to say if we are to rightly interpret any verse.

The BIBLE will have increased meaning for you when you know something about the history of each book, the original manuscripts, the interpretation of the texts. No scholarship has ever weakened the profound Truths of God's Word. On the other hand, the more dedicated our study, the greater the power we receive from our reading of the Bible.

While from time to time you will want to increase your knowledge of the Bible, frequently you will desire to turn to the passage that speaks to your immediate need. For example:

When tempted read - Romans 12:2

When lonely read - Hebrews 13:5

When frightened read - Psalm 27:1

When weak read - Isaiah 40:31

Make your own list of passages that speak to your heart; then turn to them again and again. This will strengthen you far more than reading at random.

Live with the words of the Bible. Learn the passages that have most meaning for you. Carry them with you and, as you meditate upon them, you will discover that for you, as for millions of others, the Bible is a source of Power.

Gain Wisdom To Help Others

You will want to study the Bible not only for your own sake, but to acquire knowledge that will make it possible for you to be of greater help to your

family, co-workers, and friends. When you become so familiar with the Bible that all you say and do is affected by its teachings, others benefit from your courage, patience, and strength. Much of the good you do is spontaneous - a light shining through you - a warmth felt from every contact with your personality.

Continued study also gives you a familiarity with the Truths of the Bible so you are able to share the very teaching that will be most helpful, or to recommend the passage that will guide someone who is perplexed or discouraged. You can help others to see that the Bible is a practical book, with a message to satisfy each need.

When a friend is worried because his son is having difficulties in school you might suggest: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain Thee" (Psalm 55:22). When a young person is terrified for fear that he will fail his examination - after encouraging him to prepare carefully - suggest that he hold fast the thought: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

The Bible has a verse to guide men and women in every hour of trial. Fortunate indeed is the person who knows where to turn to find the comfort or assurance he needs. You can render a service by showing others where to seek direction and support for daily living.

It is a high privilege to give instruction in the use of the Bible. When you teach a class on Sunday, or direct the reading of your own children, or impart knowledge to friends and associates, you find that the messages of the Bible become increasingly clear to you. So study not only to gain wisdom for yourself, but to enable you to help others to live triumphantly.

Tap This Source of Power

When you faithfully read the Bible not only to learn history but to know God and to understand His purpose for your life, an amazing thing happens! If you were confused, you see which path to take. If you were blue, you find joy and hope. If you were bereaved, you find comfort. If you were lonely, you find companionship. If you were weak, you find ever-increasing strength.

The Bible is the world's "best seller", yet many Bibles are like art objects, bought to give prestige to a home. We have an ironical situation in which millions of Bibles are purchased but will seldom be read.

If your Bible has been gathering dust, take it off the shelf and put it by your favorite chair, or at your bedside, or on your breakfast table. If you have been reading the Scriptures spasmodically, decide now that you will study at least one passage every day. Think of Bible reading not as a chore, or as a ritual, but as a doorway to a more triumphant life.

The testimony of the ages points to the Truth that the Bible is a source of dynamic Power. This is available to you. When you plug into an electric circuit you can receive light for your lamp, warmth for your heater, and power for

your motor; when you plug into the Divine Current you tap immeasurable spiritual power. Make this contact daily by reading the Bible.

At first this new power may come unevenly. Do not become discouraged if you have a day when your mind has difficulty responding to the challenge, for as you continue your study of the Bible, more knowledge and strength will be given to you. Accept it; and with each passing year you will have a growing awareness of the Power of God undergirding your life.

"Be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of
His might" (Ephesians 6:12).

Affirmation

Today I will seek renewed power through Bible
reading and study.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.