

Cell Notes Nov 29th 2009

Bible 2 Bible Sunday

There is only one way to read the Bible *Can you remember it?*

'With all you've got, and for all it's worth!'

See Mark 12.30 (quoting Deut 6. 4 -5) '*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength*'

WITH ALL YOU'VE GOT!

Heart and soul: Try accepting by faith that the whole of this Book is 'God breathed' (2 Tim 3. 16).^{*} receiving it as a message from God to you personally, who, as we have seen, longs to know you and for you to know him. So a question you can always ask of any passage is What is God saying now?. Meditate=chew over. Memorize.. return again and again. Look at it in different lights and in different moods. Engage with your spirit and your emotions, not just your mind. Scribble some notes. Draw pictures. Imagine!

Mind: Read intelligently. It's OK to ask questions, to press for a clearer understanding and a truer meaning. The other big question you must ask of any passage is What did it mean then? (What actually happened? What did it mean to the participants, the hearers, the speaker? Why was it remembered and recorded? etc) Always look at *context*, the written context and the historical context. Be aware that many Bible words have a history, a weight of meaning. Concordances and dictionaries help us explore the *history* of words, images and phrases. Link OT and NT, the teachings and words of Jesus with OT and with the 'letters'. The Bible is its own best Commentary. But much of this is heart language, not mind language, full of strangeness and paradox. Often the logic is hard to follow. You need to develop the sensibility of a poet.

Strength: Truth is to be lived. How do I (we) live this truth today? If I am holding back, why? Sometimes we don't get it because we don't want to get it.

Choose a passage such as Mark 10. 24 - 31 to practice on. Take several weeks over it!

FOR ALL IT'S WORTH! Sooner or later, we need to begin to get to grips with the message of the whole Bible. Every message is a part of a bigger message. 'My thoughts are not your thoughts' We need to get to grips with the broad sweep, the bigness and strangeness of this Book. This means memorizing a rough chronology and one or two maps, and being able to distinguish between the different kinds of books and locate them in the chronology. 'The Lion Handbook of the Bible' is excellent. Peter's Bible Intro Course!

As our knowledge and understanding grows, so we begin to see that the whole Bible is a sort of map, of the Journey of the human race, and of the Journey that each one of us was created to travel.

* Maybe you have intellectual reservations about this statement. You need to ask whether you will ever resolve your doubts purely intellectually. Maybe the only way finally to *know* is to accept experimentally the proposition that the whole Bible is God breathed, God's Book, his gift to the human race, and to explore its meaning, *and* your questions from that starting point.