

## **Sermon Title: Learning to Love the Story**

by: Pastor Alan Hannah

**Scripture: Psalm 1:1-3** - *Oh, the joy of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or stand around with sinners or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.*

There is a difference between knowing about something and actually loving it. When we learn to love God's Word we learn to live God's way.

The problem is we read God's word like its medicine. We read the Bible like we're taking vitamins; because we're supposed to, we feel guilty if we don't, we are checking off a spiritual to do list, or we think God will be mad if we skip it.

*"The Bible is not a book that we master; it's a book that masters us. The moment that we think we've got it figured out we've stopped reading it properly."* - Eugene Peterson

Love isn't built through obligation; it's built through relationship. We learn to love it by discovering that it's where we meet God Himself. Jesus is the Word made flesh. We're spending time with Jesus Himself.

Today's text says, "they delight in the law of the Lord", not endure, not obligated or forced. It is God's wisdom for how to live well. For Jesus, God's story wasn't about information; it was nourishment.

Four Practical steps to delighting in God's Word...

1. Read- small steps lead to big changes
2. Reflect-don't rush, ask questions, meditate on His Word
3. Respond-this isn't about reading, it's about a conversation with Jesus
4. Rest-sit quietly and let God speak to your heart.

**When we learn to love God's Word, we learn to live God's story.**

## Life Group Discussion Questions

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#### WARM-UPS

1. Labor Day weekend usually signals the end of summer. How was your summer? Are you relieved the temperatures have changed? Do you have any plans for Fall?
2. Changes are coming. How do you feel about changes? What's a good change you've made? What's been a bad change?

#### DISCUSSION

1. Early in his message Pastor asked what if you could change how you approach God's Word? What if reading the Bible could be something you looked forward to? What if, instead of feeling like a spiritual chore, consuming God's Word was as nourishing and comforting as that cup of morning coffee? Are these questions you need to ask yourself?
2. Dietrich Bonehoeffer "Just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept that as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. That is all. That is meditation." How true is this? How can we put meditation into our daily practice?
3. Peter Greig "The Bible is God's first language. Everything else is a whisper. So, if you want to hear God clearly, we need to learn His primary language." Is this a challenge for you? How do you approach God's Word?

#### IN THE WORD

References used in the message...

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|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| • John 1:1     | • James 1:22       | • Hebrews 6:5   |
| • Psalm 1:1-3  | • Philippians 4:8  | • Proverbs 30:5 |
| • Isaiah 65:19 | • Luke 1:37        | • Hebrews 4:12  |
| • Joshua 1:8   | • Ephesians 6:17   |                 |
| • Psalm 119:15 | • Revelation 19:13 |                 |

Psalm 119, yes, the longest chapter in the Bible, is all about God's Word.

#### PRACTICE

- For the next week, don't just read the Bible learn to love the story of God. It's God's on-going invitation to find our place in His work of making everything new.
- Explore different versions and translations of the Bible. Check out the Bible Project.