Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – January 5, 2020

Developing Biblical 2020 Vision

Can I really read through the Bible this year?

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knowing we should read

the Bible, its uniqueness clouds our

vision, as do wrong assumptions and attitudes.

Think of the problems as ten bridges Christians

 in our culture must cross in order to interact

 with this Book of Books. . .

*Because the Bible is God’s revelation, and so different from other books, to read it consistently we must face its realities and forms while correcting the many wrong assumptions often made about it.*

1. It is so. . . old!

 The Bridge of History: Genesis 1; 5; 10, 11; Exodus 1; Daniel 2.

2. It seems obsolete (especially the “Old Covenant”).

 The Bridge of The New Covenant. Jer. 31:31-40; (Heb. 8:13)

3. It is so different.

 The Bridge of Cultural Clash: Ex. 23:19; Deut. 14:21; 15:1, 2.

4. It is so big (vast).

 The Bridge of Narrative: Sorting stories within The Story.

5. It tells such strange and often morally troublesome stories.

 The Bridge of Human Relevance: Gen. 3; 22; 27; 34; 38; Judges 19-21.

6. It is so political (nationalistic and occasionally violent).

 The Bridge of Jewishness: Joshua 6-8; 13; 14; 1 Samuel 12.

7. It is so repetitive.

 The Bridge of Attention: Numbers; Judges; 1 Kings 13-16.

8. It is so full of poetry.

 The Bridge of Imagination: Job; Psalms; Proverbs; Isaiah.

9. It seems to contradict the New Testament.

 The Bridge of Law versus Grace: John 1:17; Galatians 3:15-22.

10. It seems to have so many loose ends.

 The Bridge of Prophecy: Gen. 49:1; Is. 2:2; Dan. 12:4, 8-13.

***Reading Through the Bible. . .***

*We receive God’s Word as it is, with. . .*

Mystery: We confess that all has not been revealed. Deuteronomy 29:29.

Responsibility: We search all of what has been revealed. Acts 17:10-12

Humility: We accept the complexity of some of what has been revealed.

Discipleship: We accept responsibility to use God-given resources.

Faith: We grasp that the Bible’s Words are God’s Words.

Let’s begin at the beginning with. . .

**The ABC’s of Bible Reading**

***“A” is for Accountability.***

 Tell someone what you are doing, preferably someone who is making the same journey, and become accountability partners. It is easy to quit anything difficult when we are discouraged, and accountability is about encouragement, not judgment.

 Ultimately, of course, we are accountable to God to know His Word. There is no magic in this method, but it is a means to that end. It is a way to be diligent to show ourselves approved. Jesus said to “take up your cross,” which means, among other things, that we should expect to encounter difficulties, beginning with our own frailties and sins. 2 Timothy 2:15.

***“B” is for Basics.***

 It’s easy for the more obsessive among us to try to do too much. This results in burnout and discouragement, not success. The key is not which program or Bible to use, but to apply yourself practically to a task.

 “Basics” of Bible reading means. . .

(1) Just read the assignment, and cross it off the list.

(2) READ, don’t study, the text. Write down your questions for later.

(3) Stay on task. Don’t skip around. Do the assignment.

(4) Set aside a specific time. Don’t have time? You are kidding yourself. We do what we deem important. Of course, every day is different, and there are some days in which an unexpected, unplanned event changes our schedule. But by and large, daily Bible reading is a matter of scheduling, just like brushing your teeth or taking your vitamins or having breakfast.

(5) Make it part of your walk with God. Don’t just add a task to your spiritual life. The Bible, in many ways, IS our spiritual life. You need not have a devotional booklet, a Bible study program/plan, and a through-the-Bible plan. Focus yourself with this as the priority, setting aside other things, and resolve to take them up once you have read through the Bible (as in, next year). Read prayerfully with an open heart and mind. Psalm 119:18, 32-36

***“C” is for Consistency.***

Another word for consistency is “discipline,” not a popular idea these days. It’s all about replacing a bad habit with a good one, that’s all. That’s how lives change! One new habit at a time. Don’t judge yourself if you have tried this in the past and failed. Look at a missed assignment as a missed opportunity to hear from God, and don’t miss the next one!

 The same time each day.

 The same chair each day.

 The same translation each day.

 The same pace each day.

 Missed opportunities made up quickly.

***YOU CAN DO THIS,*** if you simply cultivate a little will-power, which is a combination of God’s grace, your choices, and others’ encouragement!