

Sword or Sawdust?

Vitalizing devotional Bible study

“But it’s so dry!”



It's not a novel

- Bible doesn't include unnecessary details
- It is designed to be studied, not just read
 - Built around themes
 - Designed for personal application to the heart
- It is the story of redemption

What is redemption?

Redemption is the process of transforming sinful people into the image of God.

What does the Bible have to do with redeeming us?

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

“The Word is alive”

Most Christians fail to grasp the true power of the Word
of God.

“Many Christians simply don’t understand what the Bible is. Many think of it as a spiritual encyclopedia: God’s complete catalog of human problems, coupled with a complete list of divine answers. If you turn to the right page, you can find answers for any struggle.”
Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands, p. 24

“A more sophisticated variant views the Bible as a systematic theology textbook, an outline of essential topics you must master to think and live God’s way.”
Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands, p. 24

“In either case, we tend to offer each other isolated pieces of Scripture (a command, a principle, a promise) that seem to fit the need of the moment. What we think of as ministering the Word is little more than a spiritual cut-and-paste system.”
Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands, p. 24

“In this kind of ministry, self is still at the center, personal need is the focus, and personal happiness remains the goal. But a truly effective ministry of the Word must confront our self-focus and self-absorption at its roots, opening us up to the vastness of a God-defined, God-centered world.” *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, p. 24

Scripture explains humanity

- Creation
- Fall
- Redemption

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- Giving me confidence in “checking off” something on my list of things I must do in order to be spiritual

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- Being changed into the image of God!

Transforming Bible study is not:

- People trying to save themselves by deep Bible study
- People trying to be saved without deep Bible study

The Parable of the Sower

“A sower went out to sow. As he was sowing, some seeds fell along the path, and birds came and ate them up.” Mark 4:3, 4

“And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ” Mark 4:5

“And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.” Mark 4:7

Suggestions for devotional study

- Meditation on a verse or short passage
- Meditation on a story
- Prayerful contemplation of my thirst, and how God wants to satisfy it