

BIBLE CHALLENGE 2018

WEEK 43

The Bible Challenge 2018 Intro and the reflections and notes for each week may be found at biblechallenge.pendletonchurch.org

Read 4 chapters per day

October 22-28: Philippians 4; Colossians 1-4; 1 Thessalonians 1-4; 2 Thessalonians 1-3; Ecclesiastes 1-12; John 1-4

In my opinion, some of the best advice in the Bible is found in the 4th chapter of Paul's letter to the Philippians. Resisting the human and cultural tendency to be anxious, and instead choosing to trust God, think about the good that is in and around us, and practicing the Christian life, our hearts and minds are guarded, and we are assured the God of peace will be with us. Practicing the discipline of being content in God no matter what our circumstances is a Christian witness that demonstrates to the rest of the world how different it is to have faith in the God who has saved and continues to save us from our sin.

Colossians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians were letters also written by Paul. What does the purpose of each letter appear to be? Notice the prayer Paul describes that he continuously prays for the Colossian church in chapter 1 of that letter; and the way he describes the revelation of God to humanity in and through Jesus Christ. How do these descriptions impact your understanding of the instructions Paul gives concerning the lifestyles and relationships among Christian people? Consider the model of life expressed in 1 and 2 Thessalonians in anticipation of the Lord's return. Notice the number of specific admonitions Paul expresses about the way of life of the Christian. How do these compare to the Law of God we read in the Hebrew Scriptures, which the gospels tell us that Jesus said he came to fulfill not abolish? How do these letters speak to your life and walk with God in the church and as a witness to the world?

Ecclesiastes is attributed to King Solomon and describes his observations of himself and the world around him, as he relates his conclusions about the impact of his life experiences, concerning what he did and did not find meaningful. He observes that "there is nothing new under the sun," comes to the conclusion that all people, regardless of their state of being and their behaviors are subject to a common destiny, and that this in and of itself is evil. As a Christian, do you agree with this? Why or why not? Why do you think Solomon advocates for living a life of righteousness and wisdom, admonishing his readers to, "Fear God and keep his commandments," if he thinks that all people share the same destiny?

Solomon wrote of the meaninglessness of this life. In John's Gospel we find the phrase, "I tell you the truth..." Do these words of Jesus bring meaning to areas of life Solomon saw as meaningless? In what ways do Solomon and Jesus view the world and its people similarly? Differently? Does this impact on your view of the world and the people in it?