

A The enemy of the Bible

- ❖ Think about what the **spoken** word of God is capable of doing: creating and giving life (Psalm 33:6), or raising the dead (John 5:28-29).
- ❖ What can the Bible, the **written** word of God, do? It has the power to defend us (Eph. 6:17b) and transform us (Heb. 4:12). Jesus used the Bible to defend himself against temptation (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).
- ❖ Satan knows he is powerless against the power of the Bible. Therefore, he has tried to physically destroy it. He failed, as Bible societies began distributing thousands of copies. Then he tried to discredit it with higher criticism. Now he seeks to prevent us from reading it by occupying our time with other things.
- ❖ Am I going to let him get away with it? Can't I find some time in my schedule to read the Bible? Reading it transforms us and makes us strong against our worst enemy: the devil.

B Correct and incorrect ways to read the Bible

- ❖ Incorrect forms
 - Find something that aligns with our point of view
 - Choosing texts at random, without purpose
 - Choose the parts we like, and reject the parts we dislike.
- ❖ Correct forms
 - Seek to learn God's will
 - Conduct a systematic study
 - Do not reject any text, but analyze them all.
- ❖ Our study of the Bible should be rational, but our reason must submit to the power of the Holy Spirit in order to correctly discern the biblical message.
- ❖ Why? Because our reason is limited and not always reliable. That's why, when studying the Bible, we must seek the wisdom of its Author.

C What is the Bible?

- ❖ In our society, and even among Christian circles, there is a belief that truth is relative, that there is no truth that remains constant and unchanging over time.
- ❖ However, the Bible—as the word of God—claims to possess **absolute truth** (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17; James 1:18). It claims to be **pure** and a **protective shield** against human sophistry (Proverbs 30:5). If we add any of our own “truths” to it, we may be considered liars before God (Proverbs 30:6).
- ❖ Any claim, any truth, must be tested by the Bible. When there is a contradiction between what we consider true and what the Bible states, there are two possibilities: either we are mistaken, or we are misinterpreting the Bible.

D Positive effects of reading the Bible

- ❖ Something that even the most ardent enemies of the Bible cannot deny is its power to transform people. Paul compares it to a sword that possesses great power.
- ❖ It makes us see ourselves as we truly are (Heb. 4:12); it turns us away from sin (Ps. 119:11); it is food for our soul (Jer. 15:16); it makes us grow spiritually (1 Pet. 2:2); it gives us life (John 6:63)
- ❖ No other book can impact us like the Bible. When we are willing to incorporate its teachings into our lives, we change for the better.
- ❖ When we read it with an open heart and ask God for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, our life is transformed.

E Friends of the Bible

- ❖ Friends of the Bible approach it with the awareness that it is the Living Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). But how can I reach that conviction?
- ❖ Paul tells us that, for this, we need spiritual discernment, that is, the ability to understand spiritual things (1 Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, discerning the divine message in the Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit acting within us.
- ❖ When we receive the Bible in this way, it shows us the state of our relationship with God; it tells us how to strengthen that relationship; we experience a gradual transformation; we draw closer to Jesus; it makes us wise for salvation; we grow in the knowledge of the truth; our faith grows and is strengthened; we have hope; we are aware that a better, eternal, wonderful life awaits us.