Elder's Corner

And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"
(Luke 11:27-28)

Once more our **Lord** and Savior **Jesus Christ** had to correct someone's mistaken words. **A woman from the crowd** expressed her opinion about how **blessed** it must have been to be the mother of the Savior and to have **nursed** Him in His infancy. William MacDonald has these remarks about the two verses above:

> The reply of our Lord was most significant. He did not deny that Mary His mother was blessed. But He went beyond that and said it was even more important to hear the word of God and keep it. In other words, even the Virgin Mary was more blessed in believing on Christ and following Him than she was in being His mother. Natural relationship is not as important as spiritual.[1]

Indeed, how much better it is to be **children of God (Rom. 8:16)** than mere physical **children**!

Having said that, I want to focus on verse 28 above, to show the importance of **the word of God** in the lives of God's **children** and emphasize our responsibilities to it as well. **Psalm 119:105,** in simple terms, expresses the importance of God's **word** in our walk, **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."** That **lamp** only burns when we **read and hear** God's **word** taught. First, it is important for believers to **hear it,** for as our Lord said above, He blesses **those who hear the word of God.** It is important for the unsaved **to hear the word of God** (the gospel) as well as believers. Why? **"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).** That is why! On Paul's first missionary journey, in the **city** of Antioch, on a **Sabbath, the whole city came together to hear the word of God (Acts 13:44),** and a church was born there. Second, it is important to **read the word of God. The Lord God** told Moses that when He granted Israel a king, their king should have **a copy of the law and, "read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes (Deut. 17:18, 19).** No matter how busy you are, it makes good sense for each of us to develop some kind of daily reading plan. Third, having done the above, grow in your knowledge of Scripture by studying it. On his second missionary journey Paul commended the Bereans for doing that very thing:

> **These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. (Acts 17:11).**

A fourth, and important practice to consider in regard to God's **word** is your memorization of it and meditation upon it**.** Circumstances may prevent you from having the Bible in front of you, but if you have memorized important verses, you can bring them up from your memory bank, even to the point of meditating on them, training your mind to reflect or ponder those verses, focusing on their importance for you. When Joshua was commissioned to replace Moses that is what he was advised to do:

> **This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Josh. 1:8).**

And finally, your fifth responsibility to God's **word** comes with a warning—if you fail regarding this one—**examine yourself whether** you really are a born-again believer **(2 Cor. 13:5).** You will find this fifth responsibility at the end of **Luke 11:28** above. In a different place our **Lord** emphasized that point again, **"If you know these things, blessed are you if you keep them" (John 13:17).** James gives a thought-provoking warning about this matter:

> **But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves (James 1:22).**

Through keeping these five responsibilities, may each of us daily be, **"nourished in the words of faith and the good doctrine which you have carefully followed" (1 Tim. 4:6).** Maranatha!

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[1] William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: New Testament,* rev. ed., (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 230.