

## **John 5: The Danger of Missing the Point** *(this transcript has been lightly edited for readability)*

It's really important to understand that you never come to the Word of God empty. You'll always bring attitudes, and thoughts, and perspectives, and life experience, and ways of thinking about yourself, and ways of thinking about God, and ways of thinking about the meaning and purpose of life--all those things shape the way that you come to Scripture. And it's really important, as we think about walking our way through the entire Bible, to understand there is a huge danger in Bible study, and the danger is that you can be a student of the Word of God and entirely miss the point.

There's this moment in the life of Christ when He's being followed around by Jewish leaders and these are biblical scholars; they're scholars of the Old Testament, and they're trying to trap Him. And there's one moment where they're sort of quoting Scripture to Jesus, and Jesus says this, I think this is so powerful, this is John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you will have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me."

He's saying, don't you understand it? In all of your Bible study and all of your pride of Old Testament literacy and Old Testament theology, you have missed the point of the entire story. These are people who spent hours unpacking the Old Testament, who taught it to their children; it was in their common way of thinking about life. These are people that studied the Messiah who would come; yet when He came, they didn't recognize Him.

Think about that! They missed the entire point of the Word of God; everything they studied was about Jesus; everything they studied was to prepare them for the coming of this one that they had longed for. This was the fulfillment of all that they were taught. This was the fulfillment of all the sacrifices that were made. He was the fulfillment of the law that they prided themselves in knowing and understanding.

You see, if you don't come to Scripture with a desire to know Jesus, to surrender your life to Jesus, it's possible that it just becomes abstract, impersonal theology and you pride yourself in your biblical literacy. But there's no evidence that that biblical literacy has transformed the deepest love of your heart.

Study of the Bible ought to alter more than the way you think; it ought to alter the deepest desires of your heart, the fundamental ways you think about who you are and what you need. The Bible should produce in you a fear of idolatry and a growing worship of the One who alone has offered you forgiveness, transformation, rescue, deliverance, life eternal. It's not enough to learn the content. It's not enough to become theologically literate. It's not enough to memorize large portions of Scripture--those are all wonderful things, but those have direction, those have purpose!

Jesus says to the Pharisees and the scribes, "How could you study Scripture and not love me?" What a question for me today? Do I walk away from my study of the Word of God, not just with more knowledge, but a deeper love for Jesus, a deeper sense of need for His grace?

Or do I walk away with a little bit of pride of how knowledgeable I've become, and what a good theologian I am, and looking for the next person to correct because I get what the Bible is about? May that not be for us! May humility and neediness and dependence and rest in Jesus, powered by a love for Him, be what the Bible does for us?

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