

Scripture and Real Presence

There are two studies on the value “Scripture and Real Presence”

Study 1: The personal nature of God’s Word

Study 2: The mystery of God’s real presence in the Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

But to begin with – a little reminder about the point of having VALUES...

- There are some things that are held by all Christians, things that are basic to the Christian world view, CORE THINGS like the Apostles Creed.
- Then there are our BELIEFS, some of these separate Christians into different denominations. We may agree at the CORE, yet have different BELIEFS.
- Then there are our VALUES. Values are shaped by our beliefs. Values help to define our community. Values are not talking about what is right or wrong (you can still be a Christian even though you might be divorced), but what is good-better-best. The more diverse our values are the harder it is to hold our community together. Agreeing on a common value helps to critically define the unity of our community.
- Then there is our BEHAVIOUR. Behaviour is shaped by our values.

This all helps to grow a shared common community culture.

VALUES critically help to define our CULTURE.

The importance of having values is most clearly seen when we are faced with a decision between two things that have equal merit. Having agreed values helps us to behave together.

Study 1: Scripture and Real Presence – the personal nature of God’s Word



1. **The artist** (our own Dennis Schapel) **said this** when he first revealed his art based on this value:

A page from the bible becomes 3 dimensional to wrap its arms around the figure who reciprocates the embrace.

The girl’s face is an enigma and can be interpreted in many ways; pleased, contented, relieved. Maybe hardship was in her life and still exists. Maybe finding the Word of God is the beginning of a transformed life. Maybe it reminds us of our own need to hug and honour the Word of God.

The text which can be partially read is the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew Chapter 5. These are the teachings about blessings.

*God's word becomes real presence when we embrace it.
As with the Inspirational Worship image, the dove is not obvious but is implied in the wrap-around blue colour.*

2. When the Word of God is speaking, GOD is speaking!

In 2 Peter 1:16-21 the Apostle Peter is reassuring his listeners that the very same person that the disciples saw when they saw Jesus transfigured and shown to be the Son of God on the mountain, IS ACTUALLY the One who is speaking in the Bible, the Word of God. God is present just as loudly and clearly in the Word as He was when Jesus spoke and acted on earth!

16 ... we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

19 We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus gets to us in the Word of God.

In fact the Gospel writer John reveals that Jesus IS the WORD!

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The writer of Hebrews says (4:12a)

...the Word of God is living and active...

The Word might want to hug YOU!!! Heal you! Enliven you! Fill you with joy and peace!

How easy is it for you to open the Bible?

Think about, or if in a small group, give examples, discuss...

3. Can you see yourself in the picture?

- relieved?
- relieved but still needy?
- finally secure/safe
- maybe this is a good place to start again!

Think about, or if in a small group, give examples, discuss...

4. Two people who love each other might want to embrace/hug.

How do you hug the Bible?

Think about, or if in a small group, give examples, discuss...

What difference would it make if you always had the attitude that when you open the Bible you knew that you were about to meet God?
What are you going to say to Him?
What would you like to say to Him?
What if His answers differed to what you expected?
What are you prepared to hear?

Think about this: it's not just your desire to read God's Word, it's more like your desire to fall in love with God and what God might want to tell you.

And remember: in an honest relationship, you will need to take a few things on the chin! But you will know it's for your good! *Can you share any examples of this?*

God is your gentle friend, and true, so He intends to burn anything in us that would kill us, and then fill us with His life and joy.

5. A practical activity to help grow a hug!

- Firstly, quieten yourself. Pray for the Holy Spirit, that your heart might be influenced
- Start with Psalm 23. Memorise it (it's only 6 verses).
- Soak in the words at breakfast and before you sleep.

You might only concentrate on one or two phases at first.

Let God write the words on your heart and mind so that you start to feel the effect that the words have on you!

And when others see this in you, they too might want a piece of that connection with God.

You can do this personally, but it is also meant to be a GROUP possibility as well.

*Colossians 3:16 says **Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.***

Personally, focus like this every day for the rest of the year!

- Keep it simple! Let the Word of God hug you! This is an attitude that will help the garden of your relationship with God to grow and mature.
- and **choose** friends and books and music and places to be that will allow the mustard seed of the relationship with God that He has sown in you, to grow into a strong tree.

It is a HIGH VALUE for us at Our Saviour to not only read the Word, but to do so in the full understanding that by so doing we are communicating with God Himself! God is REALLY PRESENT in His Word!