

30.2 Warm Fuzzies

In the cold winter months we dream of the sitting by the fire and being, “warm and fuzzy.” This is especially true when winter storms hit and we lose power. Here in Oklahoma I have spent DAYS in the cold and dark when the ice knocked out our electricity. The cold sometimes seems unbearable and we long for that special warmth.

I heard a story several years ago about “warm fuzzies.” It seems that Teardrop, Ron and Bonnie Probst’s 8’ Boa Constrictor, swallowed a heating pad, cord, heating unit and all. The vet who removed it during the two and a half hour surgery said that the snake apparently mistook it for food. “It was warm and fuzzy and had some hard objects inside it that must have felt like bones,” said Dr. Gansberg. A lesson for us is that not every “warm fuzzy” is filling or good for you.

Too often we are satisfied with a Spiritual diet of warm Fuzzies. We can downplay the need to **study** the Bible as a result. We may want someone to spoon feed us with “comfort food” of scripture, and there is comfort there. Yet, studying the Bible for ourselves is essential to our spiritual growth and development.

One of the most challenging verses in the Bible to me is **Ezra 7:10** (AMP). It reads:

¹⁰ For Ezra had set his heart (resolved) to study *and* interpret the Law of the LORD, and to practice it and teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Someone once observed:

“Until Ezra returned, the Jews had built a House for God, but not a heart for Him.”

Loving God is more than a warm fuzzy in a sermon or a worship service. Sometimes it is demanding to love Him. The storms of life can be hard and challenging and sometimes we ask, as Jesus did, **“Why have you forsaken me?”**

The truth is, He hasn’t forsaken us. His promise is to never abandon us as He said in **Hebrews 13:5** (NKJV):

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

That is why it is so important to know and believe the promises of God over our emotions.

You see, our emotions can be deceptive. The prophet asks **Jeremiah 17:9** (NKJV):

“The heart is deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

The heart can be the seat of our intellect and our emotion. We can deceive ourselves with either of those. But God is always true. We need to know what HE says over what we may think or feel.

The promises of God are sure, even when our emotions seem to get the better of us and mislead. That is why it is so important for us to feed on the richness of the word of God and not rely on the warm fuzzy, feel good message.

There is a time for the easy, warm, comfort food. This is especially true for the new and young believers. Peter told us in **1 Peter 2:1-2** (NKJV):

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

But, we can't stay there. The word **grow** in the text means also to **increase**. That kind of soft, easy food is how an infant matures. As we grow and increase in maturity we get a different, more solid food. Notice **Hebrews 5:12-14** (NKJV).

¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Sometimes believers get satisfied with their level of maturity. Instead of pursuing a deeper faith we can be happy right where we are. After all, if we grow in faith, we are going to get out of our "comfort zone." As we grow we will hunger for more and more from God. That requires effort, not ease in our faith. When we eat meat we need teeth to chew. Applesauce and milk will just slide down. But look at how much more enjoyable a good steak is than other, easier foods.

It is important that we don't fall into a trap with study. It can be enjoyable for us to study the Bible and learn of Jesus. We must put it into practice as Ezra did. In fact, Ezra learned the Torah and practiced it. **John Maxwell** has said, "**We are educated above our level of obedience.**"

It IS easy just to learn and not do what it says. However, God wants us to be a conduit of His word and His blessings. The word of God is not to be kept for ourselves, it was meant to be shared. Consider David's contrite attitude in **Psalms 51:12-14** (NKJV):

**¹²Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.
¹³Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.
¹⁴Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.**

Did you catch that David wanted to teach transgressors of God's ways? He was a transgressor, too. His relationship with God took him out of warm and fuzzy ease and brought him to the depths of salvation. It is a life of effort and satisfaction in God.

America needs maturing believers today. That takes the disciplines of study and also incorporating the word of God into our everyday life lessons. As we do, we gain a biblical worldview where Jesus becomes Lord over all areas of life, including this nation under God.

James Madison, the architect of the U.S. Constitution, co-author of the Federalist Papers and President of the US, once emphasized the primacy of learning scripture for our lives. He said:

"Cursed be all that learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ."

Let's Keep The Light of Intentional Spiritual Growth Burning!