

ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" Volume XI Number 2

"Essential Equipment - #1: The Bible"

Jeff Strite

Editor's Note: This "MM" is an email sermon, the 2nd of 2012 --122nd overall-- in a series we are sending as an encouragement to Christians around the world. This is the first message in our current series. [It is my prayer that this message by Jeff Strite will encourage you and honor God.](#) Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it! May God bless your labors!

-- Rod Farthing, Development Director

ARM QUICK FACTS:

News from Mexico

From ARM's Alfredo Jose Aparicio

*Editor's note: This is a summary of 2011 from our associate in Mexico.
ARM also has effective chaplains in Russia, S. Korea, Cambodia, and the Philippines.*

Dear partners in the work of the Lord,

With great joy I present a brief summary of what we did in the ministry in 2011.

1. New students registered: 24,178.
2. Distributed and handed out 78,500 Bible tracts.
3. Broadcasted 118 hours of God's Word on radio.
4. Sent 7,616 Bibles to people who did not have one yet.
5. Reached 9 universities with our Bible courses.
6. Students graduated: 1,629.
7. 814 students were baptized.
8. We served 134 prisons.
9. We enrolled 1,848 new prison inmates.
10. We serve to 2,087 students in rehabilitation centers (Alcoholics Anonymous and Neurotics Anonymous).
11. We gave biblical and psychological counseling to 1,432 people.
12. We planted 13 new churches.
13. We shipped 22,956 packages of courses to students from 46 countries.
14. We shipped 620 CDs recorded with Bible study.

If you can donate toward this worthy cause, please send your gift of any size to:

ARM Branch Ministries
3127 Hwy K
Salem, MO 65560

Thanks! And may the Lord bless you for caring and sharing!

"Essential Equipment - #1: The Bible"
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OPEN: In Washington D.C. there is a building called the "National Institute of Standards and Technology." This facility is responsible for storing perfect samples of weights and measurements. They have what are called "prototypes" of pound weights and kilograms. Measuring rods for feet, yards and metric measurements like meters.

For example, they have a "Meter Standard" a reinforced bar of platinum alloyed with exactly 10% iridium. When they want to know the exact measurement of a "meter" they cool this bar down to 0 degrees Celsius at a sea level of 45 degrees latitude then they know they will have the exact tip to tip measurement of a meter. That bar is known as "prototype #27, because the original is kept in a suburb of Paris at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures.

We Christians also have a measuring rod that never changes. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

This measuring rod from God, the Bible does four important things, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

- Teaches me: it gives me correct information
- Rebukes me: repairs my wrong ways of thinking
- Corrects me: Corrects my character flaws
- Trains me in righteousness: Trains me to be ready to make the right choices & decisions

I. But why do I need the Bible? I make fairly decent decisions without it. I have a fairly good idea of what is right and wrong

ILLUS: Just out of high school I hired on at a trailer factory in a nearby town. I didn't know much. I had never really "built anything." I was an inexperienced laborer. My job was to install insulation (batting and blown in) in the walls and ceilings of the trailers as they moved down the assembly line. One day, blowing in insulation on roof of trailer I missed my step on the beams and my foot broke through a ceiling tile (about an 8 foot long ceiling strip).

I had created the problem and it was decided that I and my partner had to fix it. The assembly line was shut down for over a ½ hour for us to make repairs. My partner got up on the roof and used measuring tape to find length of ceiling tile to be replaced. I was down on the floor ready to cut the replacement and he called down the measurement. It just so happened that I had, in my pocket, a cloth measuring tape my mom used in making clothing from patterns. I used this cloth tape to make the measurement on the ceiling strip. I then cut the material and we made ready to put it into position.

But the ceiling strip wasn't long enough. Why was that? Because the measuring tape I had used – the cloth one – wasn't accurate for the type of work we were doing. It was only good for working with clothing and apparently didn't need to be as precise. Because of my ignorance, the assembly line was shut down even longer while we recut another ceiling strip and scrapped my mistake.

When I went to work at that factory I could work hard. I could make reasonably good decisions. BUT I was inexperienced and untrained. I lacked a surefootedness on the ceiling beams and I didn't understand the importance of using the proper measuring tools.

When you and I came to Jesus – we were capable of making reasonably good decisions and had a good idea of what was right and wrong. BUT when push came to shove, we realized we were sinners. We fell short, we needed God in our lives. We realized...

1. We were inexperienced in what he wanted - His will, His desires
2. We were untrained in His type of righteousness
3. We lacked a surefootedness of character because of sin in our lives & in the world around us.
4. And, we didn't understand the importance of God's measure tool for our lives. We may have read it... but we hadn't used it to its full effect.

In order for God to use us to our full potential these things needed to change.

II. Part of the reason God gave us His word - was to change us

John 17:17 "Sanctify them by your word..."

In other words: change them, mold them, remake them by the Scriptures.

ILLUS: Years ago, the State of Kentucky had a law that every classroom in its in public schools had to post the 10 Commandments. The Supreme Court ruled against the state of Kentucky ordering it to take down all copies of the Ten Commandments from the walls of its schools saying: "Having the commandments on the wall may induce a student to read, meditate upon, and actually obey what is therein written."

IN OTHER WORDS, the Supreme Court of the United States of America recognized that the Word of God had the ability to transform the character of people who read it.

Turn to Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Commenting on this passage, one scholar observed that the student doesn't so much study the Bible, as the Bible itself studies him or her. That is, the bible is living thing, serving as a tool for the Holy Spirit.

David commented that he had hidden God's word in his heart so that he might not sin against God. (Ps. 119:11)

James wrote that "the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-- he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:25)

BUT you know, there's a book in most everyone's home that even some Christians read more than the Bible?

ILLUS: On the table side by side;

A Holy Bible and the TV Guide,
One is well worn but cherished with pride,
(Not the Bible, but the TV Guide).
One is used daily to help folks decide,
No! It isn't the Bible; it's the TV Guide.
As pages are turned, what shall they see?
Oh, what does matter, turn on the TV.
So they open the book in which they confide
(No, not the Bible, it's the TV Guide).

I'm not suggesting that you throw away the TV Guide(although that might not be such a bad idea). BUT we need to ask ourselves: do we refer to your Bible as much as you do TV Guide? Over this past week, did you refer to your Bible as much as to TV Guide?

The poem goes on to say:
The Word of God is seldom read,
Maybe a verse ere they fall into bed.
Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be,
Not from reading the Bible, but watching TV.
So, then back to the table, side by side,
Is the Holy Bible and the TV Guide.

No time for prayer, no time for the Word;
The plan for salvation is seldom heard.
Forgiveness of sin so full and free
Is found in the Bible, not on TV!!

Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

That's tragic. But the question is: how do we correct that?
If we know that the Word of God has the power to change us...
If we know that the Bible has the potential to protect us against sin...
If we know that the Scripture have the ability to help us receive the abundant blessings of God...
Then we rob ourselves? Why do we cheat ourselves every day we deprive ourselves of its influence?

III. How then do we get the Bible into our lives?

One person once said: "A bible in the hand is worth 2 on the shelf."

First we need to decide is that its is important to read the Bible. If I'm not convinced of the Bible's importance, this reading habit is not gonna happen.

Second, we need to find every avenue we can to pour God's word into our souls. Read it in the morning at breakfast. Read it at night before you go to bed. At lunch when you're at work. Read it in different versions. Listen to them on tape in the car. Read books and listen to tapes that teach about the Bible.

To help in your discipline, study with others (just as it's easier to exercise with others, it is easier to study together).

- * Bible studies (have those in midweek Bible studies stand)
- * Sunday School (have those engaged in Sunday School stand)
- * By going to Evening Church (have those who attend this worship stand)

AND don't stop there, memorize it, meditate on it, hide it in your heart. Because it is God's gift to you, and through it you can receive of God's other gifts.

CLOSE: I'll tell you something else – it affects someone else even more than you. It affects God... can you imagine

how proud and pleased & impressed He is. Every time you pick up His book & read it that tells Him that what He has

said to you is important to you and that you desire the best He can give you.

"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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Check out our web sites: www.arm.org www.abarc.org

In 2010, 71 ABA Bible courses were mailed from ARM every day!