

Advice to My Younger Self

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Recently, I was reading an article about giving advice to one's younger self. If I could go back and give advice to my younger self, one of the most valuable nuggets of advice I would give is, "Dan, turn off the tv, put down the video games, and stop focusing on your car; it will rust away. Prayerfully read, study, put to memory your Bible, and with the Lord's help, apply these precious truths to your life, allowing them to permeate every fiber of your being. They are more precious than gold!"

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward (Psalms 19:10-11).

The Bible: the Book of all books! Why? Because it originates from the mind and Spirit of our Creator (2 Peter 1:20-21). It contains more adventure and action than an Indiana Jones movie. It spans three continents, heaven and earth, the seas, and below. It reveals our origins and purpose, "That they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27; see also Genesis 1 and Isaiah 45:18-19).

It contains the greatest love story ever told by the Author of love. It details the deepest love, the most wonderful Giver, and the costliest gift (see John 3:16-17). We would not know what true love is if it weren't for Love demonstrating His love for us and recording it (see 1 John 4:8, 16).

It is a book of miracles to witness the validity of Jesus and for those with open and willing minds to produce belief, conviction, and life (read John 20:30-31). It is a book of promises from the One Who is Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

It is a spiritual fitness book.

- "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things" (1 Timothy 4:8).
- "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:1-2).
- Please read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 4:7; 1 Timothy 6:12.

The Bible contains wisdom from above (James 3:17) to enrich one to be wise in the ways of the Lord. It gives wisdom deeper than that of Confucius and all the great worldly philosophers and sages that have ever lived. It gives wisdom concerning how to live (2 Peter 1:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). I am firmly convinced that there is in it a principle of wisdom to guide us through any problem, temptation, or difficulty that we may encounter in this life, so that we can overcome and work through bearing our cross to His glory (Luke 9:23).

The word of God never changes because God never changes, but our circumstances and life are always in flux. Therefore, something you may have read in the Scriptures a month or a year ago may not have made an impact then; but now, when you go back and read it, a light bulb turns on! Or, since you have read another Scripture or two you can put those with the one you didn't understand and can see a bigger picture. It is like a jigsaw puzzle with thousands of pieces. The more you study, learn, and apply the various Scriptures—putting them beside other Scriptures—the more of the puzzle of life comes into

view. The Bible describes this as “*precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little there a little*” (**Isaiah 28:13**).

In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus said, “**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth**” (**John 17:17**). God’s word is the source of truth, and when appropriately applied, it has the power to purify and set us apart for the Lord’s service.

For those who do not have a love for the truth, there is the danger of being deceived (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**). God has given us His word, truth, so that we may not be deceived. Jesus said, if His words abide in you (by which He means obedient faithful living), then you are His disciples. You can know the truth, and the truth will set you free (**John 8:31-32**). Free from the bondage of sin! Free from the deception of falsehoods and any other thing that might try to bring God’s people into bondage!

“Dan, you should always begin any Bible study with prayer, an open mind, and willingness to follow wherever the Scriptures lead.” I was reminded of Saul. As a Jew, he had everything going for him (see **Philippians 3**): the right lineage, the right party, etc. He was “*a Hebrew of Hebrews,*” and yet he counted all that “*but dung, that I may win Christ. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death*” (**3:5, 8-10**).

It’s in the book if you’ll just take a look! Read the Bible as if your life depended upon it because it does. Read the words of our Lord.

*And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak (**John 12:47-50**).*