

1 John 3:11-24 || Ep. 913 – Dwelling in the Word

Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

[lightly edited transcript]

You know, it's one of those things that I feel like, as a Christian, it might be so obvious or self-evident that it could be overlooked. And I know for me, I overlook it, and I'm guilty of this for sure. But this whole podcast is about letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly and us returning the favor by dwelling in the Word—not just doing Bible study, but actually getting into the Word, loving the Word of God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and dwelling in it. Not just, like I said, doing it or just checking it off our list.

So, what we're going to talk about today in terms of what that looks like is one of those steps of dwelling in the Word that kind of goes without saying, and so we don't say it. And so, I'm going to say it today. I'm going to remind us about it. We're going to talk about it. And I want to encourage you to really be intentional and disciplined in this area of your time in God's Word and letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

So, what is that one thing? It's prayer. It's prayer.

Opening the Word of God, opening up your Bible or your Bible app—wherever you're reading the Bible on—shouldn't happen before you open your heart to the Holy Spirit and commit this time to the Lord. Prayer before you dwell. And it's a prayer that invites the Holy Spirit. It's a prayer that's humble. It's a prayer that's hopeful. It's a prayer that just says, "Thank you, Lord, for what you've provided for me in your Word already."

And it's a prayer that is humble because, you know, I know for me, my tendency is to kind of say, "Okay, I've read this before, you know, what have you got for me, God?" Or, "I know that that's part of who I am." And I know my tendency to turn my time in the Word into just a checklist thing where I get it done because I should do it.

And there's something to be said about pausing and being humble and praying. And it's not that it should be something to be said—it is what should be said. It should open that dialogue.

A friend of mine said that when he was over in France traveling, one of the things that he learned about French people, and this was an experience he had—I'm not sure exactly when this happened—but he said that when you approach someone in France, you don't just approach and start talking. You approach and there's a greeting time.

He said that he walked up to someone in France and asked for directions, but he didn't say, "Hello, how are you?" and greet that person. I guess he just moved in on the conversation. I should ask him to get more clarity. But it reminded me of my approach sometimes to the Bible. I just open the Bible and start reading. And even today, getting ready for this podcast, I just opened up our next portion of the passage and started reading it. I realized, "Oh my goodness, I didn't even pray."

And actually, it shifted my intent of what I was planning on talking about this morning on the podcast to, "I should talk about prayer because here I did this exact thing." I opened up, started reading the Word to get ready for the podcast, and I hadn't even prayed.

So, I paused, and I prayed, and I was humble and apologetic to the Lord. And it's like walking up to someone in the middle of your thought process and just starting the conversation rather than saying, "Hi, how are you? I'm really glad we're here together today," or whatever. You know, not that that always seems to happen in every single conversation we have in life.

But this is the most important conversation, in a sense—it's me engaging in the Word and letting the Word engage in me. Me dwelling in the Word and letting the Word dwell in me. It's a relationship. It's a conversation. It's listening to the Father. It's more than a conversation, I guess. It's really just me listening.

1 John 3:11-24 || Ep. 913 – Dwelling in the Word

Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

So, that is what we want to make sure we're doing when we're in the Word. We're prayerful. We approach with prayer. And I want to encourage you today to really think about that before you even let your fingers touch the Bible and open it—physically touching it.

Instead of reaching and letting your fingers reach out to your Bible and touching the pages, bring your fingers back together and fold them like you were in Sunday school, and pause and take a deep breath and say, "Thank you, God, for your Word that I'm about to read. Thank you for everything that's here for me to know you better. Thank you in advance for the work that your Holy Spirit is going to be doing in my heart. God, I want to be humble before you. I want to approach your Word with humility. I want to approach your Word with a sense of expectation. I want to approach your Word with joy. I want to approach your Word with solemnness. And so help me pause my busy life and bring you and me together, Lord, to be in this moment as I read your Word."

So, that's what I want to encourage you to do today—be intentional about going into the Word. So, let's go ahead and do that. Get into the Word. I pray that you've already prayed. I prayed before this podcast today.

Right now, we're going to continue on in our reading through 1 John. We're in chapter 3. We're going to read verses 11 to 24. I'll be in the ESV again today. And let me read this passage to you, and I want you to listen. Let the Word of God wash over you and let it invest in you.

As I read, I'm going to go ahead and point out some connection points. And if you haven't listened to the previous episode, it was outside of this series. It was part of the sermon series that we're going through in the book of John, the Gospel of John, in our church, and I preached earlier this week on that. I want to encourage you to listen to that message because it'll connect to today's passage. Isn't it amazing how it just ties together? It was not even planned by me but by the Holy Spirit—thank you to God for that.

Let me go ahead and read, and then we'll talk about it briefly, and then we'll close our time.

From 1 John 3, verse 11: "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us." —1 John 3:11-24

So, I want to pause and go back to the first verse of this. And let me encourage you again with the idea of praying before. Praying before you read is a posture of invitation to the Holy Spirit. And I promise you, as you grow in your faith, as I grow in my faith, when I'm walking with the Holy Spirit in partnership, in cooperation, and submission to the Holy Spirit, there's that invitation that the Holy Spirit will teach me more as I read.

When I'm reading, and I'm stumped and confused and not understanding things, or I feel like there's a block in how I'm reading and understanding, it's a shift if I have already opened up and said, "Lord, I want to hear from the Holy Spirit,"

1 John 3:11-24 || Ep. 913 – Dwelling in the Word

Dwelling Richly Podcast – Summer 2024

and I'm submissive in prayer to that. And when I adopt that posture of prayer, I know that the Holy Spirit is teaching me. I can hear from him. I receive that better.

So, let's take a look at this first verse, the first couple of verses, and think about that. Because as I was going through this on my own, I know the Holy Spirit was reminding me, and I was so grateful for the Holy Spirit teaching me as I read.

Back to verse 11: "This is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." I love this verse because John is saying in this opening passage, this is nothing new—this has been going on since the beginning of time. And immediately, when I saw the phrase "from the beginning," I went back to Genesis. If that's the beginning, then that's the beginning of evil—the world's works are evil, and I am not of this world if I am in Christ. What

a beautiful reminder.

So, my invitation for you today: Reread the Bible, this passage from today—1 John 3:11-24. Be prayerful as you begin your study. And then, as you move forward in your study this summer, as you're going through the Word, I want to encourage you—make prayer that priority. Don't dismiss it. Don't forget about it. Pray as you open, pray as you close.

And let me go ahead and pray as we close our time together.

Father, we thank you for your Word. Your Word is life. Thank you for helping me understand it better. Thank you for giving me spiritual eyes that are open to see and understand. Lord, I ask that you would help me to live out this word today in my quiet life at home, in my public life outside in the regular world, in my spiritual life and relationships with my friends and my brothers and sisters in Christ, my church, and also with my actual brothers and sisters in my family as well.

So, thank you again for your Word. Thank you that it teaches me. And I pray, God, that you would give me that wisdom to continue to understand your Word and give you full credit for everything, Lord, that I learn and do in my life because you are worthy of that praise and you deserve all the credit and all the glory. Thank you, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you for joining me today in this podcast. I love it when you share. I love it when you leave a comment. Let me know that you're listening, and let me know where you're listening from as well. I'm going to be starting a new aspect of this series in the next couple of weeks, taking your questions. So, if you've got questions for me, if you want to know an idea, think about things with me, I would love to hear your questions.

You can email me, jennifer@jennifergrichman.com, or you could just leave a comment or question right here in the podcast if you are on YouTube listening, or if you are on Podbean—I'll see those when you listen to one of those two platforms.

All right, God bless you guys. I will look forward to being with you again next time. And for now, know that you are loved and prayed for, and I look forward to seeing you again or hearing from you real soon. Bye-bye for now.