

Q & A with Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe, contributor to *The Transformation Study Bible*

Q: What made you decide to become a part of *The Transformation Study Bible* project? Were you humbled by the thought of lending your name to the Bible?

A: *I've studied the Bible for a long time now, and have been blessed to record many of my thoughts on Scripture in the "Be" commentaries. I wrote these observations as a companion to the Bible in hopes that they might help people better understand and apply God's Word. It's good to know that they have been helpful.*

It is extremely humbling to have my name associated with Scripture in this unique way. If my thoughts on the Bible can prove helpful to others, I can think of no greater honor. The important thing is that people realize that the words of the Bible are inspired, and my words are the limited efforts of a man. God's Word is life for the soul. That's what's important.

Q: What would you say to pastors, students, and disciples who are seeking to make the message of the Bible clearer and more understandable in an age of skepticism and Biblical hostility?

A: *First, we should appreciate the Word, because it is God's Word and not "mere human ideas." We should read the Bible with reverence and respect, not carelessly the way we sometimes scan a newspaper or speed-read a book. When you open your Bible and your heart, God will open His mouth and speak to you.*

Second, we should appropriate the Word, because merely having the Bible before our eyes is no guarantee we have its truths in our inner person. The Bible is like bread (Matt. 4:4), milk and solid food (1 Peter 2:2; Heb. 11—14), and even honey (Ps. 19:10; 119:103), and food does us no good unless we eat it and digest it. What digestion is to the body, meditation is to the inner person. We should welcome God's Word into our hearts and cultivate a growing appetite for spiritual truth.

Third, we should apply the Word. God's Word is "alive and powerful" (Heb. 4:12), and therefore it can work in our lives as we exercise faith and obey what God says to us. The Holy Spirit, the author of the Scriptures, lives within each Christian believer and will teach us if we are willing to learn and obey (John 16:7—15; 7:16—17). "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves." (James 1:22). Reading the Bible but not obeying it is like reading the menu but not eating the meal. The Word of God can be applied to every area of our lives, and because it has divine energy, it can work deep within us and change us (Eph. 3:20—21; Phil. 2:12—13).

Q: You've seen and been a part of so much change in culture. Is the Bible still relevant to today's society, and what should Christ followers be doing to help make it so?

A: The beauty of the Bible is that it has stood the test of time, and it remains relevant, regardless of culture. It was relevant to the ancients, remained relevant through the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment, and continues to be relevant in Postmodernity and beyond. There will always be criticism of the Bible, but the Bible is God's living Word. It is the greatest transformational power in the universe. When something is truly transformational, it is truly relevant.

Q: For years your "Be" series of commentaries have encouraged believers and been a great aid to pastors. Did you envision that this series would impact so many people, and eventually become part of a study Bible?

A: No. I could never have imagined the impact of this series. It's very gratifying and humbling to know that you can contribute to an understanding an application of God's Word. We could compile a book of letters from all over the world telling what God has done in the lives of people who have studied the "Be" series. To God be the glory!

I never would have thought that my writings would one day be associated with a study Bible, and it's extremely humbling and very exciting for me to be a part of this project.

Q: Explain the importance of the word "Be," and tell us why this little word has become the staple of your ministry.

A: In 1972 my commentary on 1 John was published under the title, Be Real. Nobody remembers who named the book, but the "Be" stuck with me. For the next three decades I wrote books with "Be" in the title.

The real significance of "Be" is that it is an action word. It communicates that it's not enough to simply go through the motions. If a person is truly transformed by God's Word, they will go from passive spectator to active participant. They won't just "do" the things Christ calls them to do, or think about great philosophical and spiritual themes. Instead, they will "be" the person Christ has called them to become. Christianity is more than just thoughts and deeds; it is a state of being.

Q: The Moody name carries such interest and influence in the Christian community. What was it like to pastor at The Moody Church, and what does it mean to carry on the Moody legacy?

A: D.L. Moody started The Moody Church in 1958 by teaching a Sunday school class in a saloon in Chicago. His passion and desire to reach people with the message of Christ is still challenging people who hear his story. I was greatly challenged by the history of the church and the great honor that comes with being its pastor. Carrying the Moody legacy means that you lead with the same passion and desire to reach out that was characteristic of D.L. Moody.

In my time as pastor of The Moody Church, we had the unique opportunity of reaching out through radio. The Back to the Bible radio program grew in influence and was able to reach a number of people for Jesus. It was our way of teaching a Sunday school class in a saloon.