

## PRAISE:

- A number of gifts that have come into the work recently for specific overseas projects. This funding enables us to continue developing and growing the paper in the nominated countries
- For the Australian churches, groups and individuals who use the Challenge month by month. It is encouraging to hear feedback from churches that have been blessed by the response to the distribution of the paper
- For a successful trip to India in February. Carl Carmody and John Palandri spent time with the staff looking at future vision and direction for the Divya Destiny (Challenge) paper
- For all our partner organisations who wonderfully assist us to get out the good news

There are some fantastic chapters in the Old Testament that I think speak directly to the basic spiritual need of God's Word in our lives. One chapter that is a classic in this area is **2 CHRONICLES 34**. After two kings who did evil in the sight of the Lord, Josiah looms on the horizon like the sunrise, as a bright light for spiritual change. Josiah was crowned as king of Judah at the tender age of eight. In verse 3 it says, *For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images and the moulded images.*

This then led to the repair of the temple, and in the process Hilkiah, the high priest, made a very important discovery – the book of the law. Five things can be highlighted from this discovery.

**There is a great need in many Christian homes to find or rediscover the Bible.** When Hilkiah was involved in the process of getting rid of the idols and substitutes that Judah had acquired, little did he realise that in amongst them the Word of God lay dormant. Ironically in the place where Judah should have felt closest to God – the temple, the Word of God had been neglected, and ultimately lost under a pile of idols and junk. Oh how easily the Word of God gets lost amongst all the rubbish and substitutes in our lives.

In verses 18-19 the scribe Shaphan brings home the importance of **reading the Word of God**. One writer has expressed it well, "God's Word is not some sort of relic from a bygone era, to be admired in a religious museum." The encouraging point to observe here is that once the Word of God was found, they read it. They didn't just slip it back in its appropriate spot on the temple shelf to be read in times of crisis or when time permits.

What needs to happen on a daily basis in Australian homes is for the Word of God to be taken off the shelf and read, so it can enter our hearts and minds to refresh, renew and revive us. Look up *Hebrews 4:12*.

In verses 20-28 Josiah brings home to us the importance of **obeying the Word**. We have memorised verses; are doctrinally correct, and yet despite these qualities have forgotten the vital need to obey the Word of God.

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## PRAYER:

- The upcoming trip to the USA for Carl Carmody. Pray for open doors and opportunities as we continue to establish the work there
- The commencement (possibly April/May) of the distribution of Challenge into prisons around Australia
- For an increase in the distribution, effectiveness and impact of the paper in Australian
- Full time Editor to free Carl up to concentrate on promotion and development of the work in Australia and overseas

Josiah in verse 19 heard the Word of God. He was immediately convicted of his own and Judah's spiritual condition. How do we respond to God's Word? The word for hear and obey in the Hebrew language is the same: we have not truly heard until we have obeyed God's Word.

Josiah was then keen to **share the Word of God**. The king gathered all the elders, all the men of Judah and all the people to hear the reading of God's Word. Josiah was very aware that what Shaphan had read to him had individual as well as national implications.

We need to understand that reading, obeying and understanding the Word of God has clear implications for individual Christians, the church and for our nation. There is no doubt in my mind that the demise of the world spiritually, morally and ethically, is happening at an increasing rate because we have stopped being the church God intended us to be. We must see that our responsibility as a Christian is that we receive and transmit God's Word.

A final step in this vital process of returning to God and His Word is to **make a stand for the Word**. This means that we are going to order and live our lives according to the Word of God. This obviously impacts how we live as individuals, in our marriages and families, in our communities and our workplaces.

Josiah took a personal stand to live and lead according to the Word of God. Verse 31: *Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book.*

CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE

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