

MAGNOLIA MINDS: Cherish the Word

By Laura Leathers

I don't remember the year, but I do remember the place and the event. I was asked to speak at the women's conference, held in conjunction with the Evangelism Conference at Harrisburg Baptist Church in Tupelo.

My daughter, Emily, and I set up a display table in the main foyer along with the other vendors. A gentleman named Dr. Kevin Meador was located to our immediate right. We had never met him before nor did we know anything about Prayer Closet Ministries.

We had a wonderful visit throughout the two-day event. Several weeks later, through a ministry friend, I received a request that Dr. Meador wanted to know if he could pray for Emily Beth. During the conference, the Holy Spirit impressed upon him with the fact that he needed to pray for her. And because he was a single man, he wanted permission to do so. I welcomed his request and thus began my family's relationship with him and his ministry.

Over the years, I sat under Dr. Meador's teaching at my local church and various events held throughout the state. Even though our contact was limited, our family knew he was praying for us, especially our daughter. Regularly, Emily would send him her prayer requests.

Then came the shocking news: Dr. Kevin Meador passed away on December 27, 2022. I knew I had to make the long drive to attend his memorial service. Emily couldn't attend because she lived out-of-state. Once I arrived, I sat by myself, and for some reason, I felt impressed to pull out my notebook and be prepared to take notes. This is not something I usually do

when I attend a funeral.

But I am glad that I did. I learned much about the son, brother, uncle, and pastor. The following came from his obituary: "Dr. Meador's focus on life was dedicated to memorizing parts of the Bible. He had a deep dedication to his prayer ministry. He was not afraid of any topic and always had a Biblical response. Mentoring many towards ministry and their daily walk with God was a passion from his heart."

But there was a phrase used throughout the service that caught my attention. Dr. Meador "cherished the Word." I walked away that day with a new appreciation for knowing this man and was grateful that my family was on his prayer list. But I also came home with a resolve: "I will cherish the Word."

The word cherish means to "protect and care for something dear or to keep in one's mind." My definition is "to warmly embrace the Word of God, making the Word a part of my daily life." And so, on January 1, 2023, in my daily planner, I no longer wrote "quiet time" on the schedule. Instead, it became "cherish the Word."

More than ever, I believe we need to make cherishing and knowing the Word our top priority. Where do you start? Begin with determining how you can read through the Bible this year.

Last year, I wrote an article about Billie Lang. Following her reading plan, she was well on her way to completing her thirty-first year of reading the Bible through in a year. She made a commitment and challenged others to do the same.

Because the Word of God is living and active (Hebrews 4:12 ESV), there is always something new to learn, a principle applicable to our day, or a verse to memorize.

I learned about the Five Day Bible Reading Plan several years ago and have used it for the past four years. It works well

for me. The download is free; you read an Old Testament and New Testament passage each day. A Psalm and Proverb will be added throughout the week.

Another option is to purchase a one-year reading Bible. In today's market, there are several, including devotions. The Chronological Bible is a popular preference. You might consider joining the Chronological Bible Teaching, based in Olive Branch.

There is also the Mc'Cheyne Chart of Daily Bible Readings. D. A. Carson has a two-volume set called *For the Love of God, A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God's Word*. In addition to the Scripture reading, there is a devotional guide with an edifying exposition of the passage.

There are other plans available through apps and accountability groups. Find what works for you and commit to reading your Bible daily.

"The more you read the Bible, and the more you meditate on it, the more you will be astonished with it," wrote Charles Spurgeon.

Your relationship with God will grow deeper. The knowledge of the Word will give you wisdom, instruction, and guidance. But most of all, we demonstrate our love for God by spending time with Him and being obedient.

What a testimony to Dr. Meador's life. He "Cherished the Word." Can the same be said of you and me?

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