

Dust on The Bible

When I was a teenager and was attending church and my parents began attending the Pastor at that time gave a sermon on "Is There Dust on Your Bible?" He said that he had gone into some homes and discovered that people had dust on their bibles. He knew when he saw this that they were not studying the word of God. Whenever the current Pastor was coming over my Mother would make sure that she dusted off the bible that sat on the coffee table. I tried to tell her that the sermon was about reading the bible, not dusting it so that others would think you were reading it. My Mother had had to quit school at the age of 10 to help out at home. She was the eldest girl in a family of 11 children. She had difficulty reading. I would sometimes have to read the instructions for crocheting to her but once she did the stitches, she was okay. The bible we had was large and was always out. A door-to-door salesman had sold a set of encyclopedias to my Mother, and we had received the bible and a bookstand as a gift with the purchase. When the books were repossessed for nonpayment, we were able to keep the bible and bookstand. When I did not have a book to read, I would often sit and just open up the encyclopedias and read. This drove my Mother crazy and added to her favorite description of me, "She's always got her nose in a book." I do not know if my Mother ever was in the habit of reading the bible, but I know she lived some of it. She never turned away anyone in need. We often had people staying in our already crowded house. I remember one family of 4 that were suddenly homeless, and my Mother took them in. Then there was the Canadian soldier during World War II who came looking for relatives with the same name. We were not related but he stayed and would come back on his furloughs during the war. Then there was the troubled young man who escaped from the Police Station where he had been arrested for a minor offense and came to her for shelter. She cleaned him up, let him call someone for a ride, and lied to the Chief of Police the next day when he asked her if she had seen him. That young man cleaned up his life and went on to help troubled youth from dysfunctional families. She started a Rummage Sale at church on Saturdays to feed the hungry. She helped start a clothing closet for those who needed clothing, she gathered baked goods from others and herself and sold them at the Farmer's Market and it went to the WSCS (Women's Society of Christian Service) now the UMW. to help those who needed help. She worked in the kitchen and cleaned the communion cups. I recall her standing in the driveway holding a weeping woman that had just had a stillborn. They sympathized with each other as my brother had recently died. She visited my cousin who was born without the ability to walk or talk and was placed in a State home at the age of 7 or 8 until her death at the age of 30. She was often the only visitor she had received, alone and forgotten but my Mother continued to visit her. She may not have read the bible, but she lived it in so many ways.

Matthew 25:35-40 "For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison, and you came to visit me. Then the righteous shall answer him, 'Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Lord, forgive us for all the times we have failed you. Help us Lord to answer your call, to help each other, to aid those less fortunate than ourselves, to help those that have gone from your path, to feed the hungry both those that need food and those that hunger for your word. May we not be blind to the needs of those around us. To walk humbly, to forgive others, to accept all your children, to share what we have and to give to others love, acceptance, trust, and your word. Forgive us for our shortcomings, for our sin of being blinded by our own needs and unable to see the needs of our neighbors. We ask Lord that you be with those who grieve in our midst, those who have lost parents, children and loved ones. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and his family. Forgive us our shortcomings. Be with those who are ill, may we minister to them. Help us to be better at following your word, to love our neighbor and to forgive others. Help us as a church to reach out to those who seek you. May they find you in our midst. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

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