

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 460

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about the Bible. The psalmist said: **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalms 119:105)** I hope and pray that you will read the Bible every day!

The Hebrew word for "lamp" is "ner". It occurs 48 times in the Bible and refers to an oil lamp such as the one in the tabernacle. As you recall, this was a seven branched lamp stand made of pure gold. It was located in the Holy Place of the tabernacle (Ex. 25:31-40). The seven lights in this lamp were never to go out (Ex. 27:20-23). Since there were no windows in the tabernacle, these small flickering lights, like candles, provided light. This light, of course, was not very bright but was the only source of light in the Holy Place.

The Hebrew word translated as "light" is "owr". It is found 122 times in the Bible. It is first used in Genesis 1:3 when God said **"Let there be light."** It is also used in Genesis 1:5 when we are told: **"God called the light 'day.'"** This light is as bright as day. C. S. Lewis said: *"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."* Saul of Tarsus was sent to the Gentiles **"To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."** (Acts 26:18) Light, in the Bible, is associated with good, and darkness with evil.

Generally speaking there are 12 hours of daylight, and 12 hours of darkness (John 11:9). So God designed the Bible so that it could give us guidance 24 hours per day. There are some things in the Bible that are "plain as day," and there are other things that are obscure and require more careful examination and scrutiny. Therefore the Word of God is both a "lamp" and a "light." The Bible therefore provides guidance in every circumstance.

Roger Bruner offers these words of wisdom about the Word of God. *"In AD 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian issued an edict to destroy Christians and their Bibles. The persecution that followed was brutal. Over a burned and extinguished Bible, Diocletian built a monument on which he wrote these triumphant words: "Extincto nomine Christianorum" ("The name Christian is extinguished"). Diocletian fashioned a medal with the engraving: 'The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored.' Diocletian's boast was premature, to say the least. Twenty-five years later, Diocletian was dead, and the new Emperor, Constantine, dedicated himself to put the New Testament in all of the churches of his Empire. In fact, Constantine offered a sizable reward to anyone who would deliver a copy of the Scriptures to him. The next day, Constantine was offered fifty copies of the word of God. He then commissioned fifty copies of the Bible to be prepared at government expense. Can you imagine Diocletian's stunned countenance if he returned to the earth today to discover that more had been written about the Bible than about any other thousand volumes combined? The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other volume, and it has been sent into more regions of the earth than any other book. French philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778) declared in 1776: "One hundred years from my day, there will not be a Bible in the earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity seeker." One hundred years later, Voltaire was dead, and his own house and press were being used to print and store Bibles by the Geneva Bible Society. In 1778, Voltaire bragged, "It took twelve men to start Christianity. One will destroy it." He called Christ "the cursed wretch." Geisler and Nix observe that "only fifty years after his death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and house to produce stacks of Bibles." Moreover, approximately two hundred years after Voltaire's*

*prediction that the Bible would be eliminated from the earth, a first edition of Voltaire's work sold in Paris for eleven cents. On that very same day, December 24, 1933, the British government purchased an ancient New Testament manuscript, Codex Sinaiticus, for the Czar of Russia for \$500,000. This ancient manuscript, dating about AD 350, is still highly prized and is on display in The British Museum."*

Many years ago I was with a church group touring the Bluff Dweller's cave in Missouri. Deep into the cave our guide asked us to stop and then all lights were extinguished. The total darkness was oppressive. Even a small candle would have been welcomed. In an emergency that candle would have made it possible to retrace our steps and find the light of the sun. Peter used this analogy with reference to Bible study: **"We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."** (2 Peter 1:19-21)

**"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."** (1 John 1:5-7).

Please read the Bible every day for it is a lamp to your feet and a light to your path!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce