

Profitable Bible Study

Grow In Grace & Knowledge: Shelf 4 — Volume 35

For anyone to be a good Bible student, he or she must consider his or her motives for studying the Bible. If one has the right motives, then Bible study can be a very exciting adventure and very profitable. This may seem like a trivial point, but one's motives determine one's discovery of the great principles that the God of heaven has reveal to us.

One's motives for Bible study often determines the conclusions he or she draws from his or her studies. If our motives are wrong, then surely our interpretations will be questionable. If our motives are pure, and we maintain a sincere heart and open mind, then surely our interpretations of the Bible will be as rewarding as possible according to our ability to study biblical text. Pure motives always direct us into discovering the will of God.

The profitable Bible student is the student who is effective in both understanding and applying the truth of the Bible to his or her life. Productive students reap the most from their studies because they search the Scriptures with the goal of discovering truth from the Bible. As a result of their motives for study, they are able to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus (See 2 Pt 3:18). Their lives are thus greatly enhanced by their studies.

Chapter 1

IDENTITY OF GOOD BIBLE STUDENTS

There are basic characteristics that identify good Bible students. By being a good Bible student we are talking about the type of Bible student God wants us to be in learning and applying His word to one's life.

This is the person who will receive the most from his or her studies. This is also the disciple who will enjoy the greatest opportunity of arriving at the most correct understanding of the Bible. Not only will this Bible student understand the Bible, he or she will be productive with what is learned. The Bible truths this student derives from his or her personal studies

The Most Productive Bible Student Is The One Who Has The Correct Motives For Bible Study.

will not stop with simply knowing truth that is learned from the Bible. This student will be motivated by his or her knowledge of the Bible to teach others. In this way one will be productive for God. This is the student in whose heart the word of God will build up and spill over into teaching and preaching. In other words, **a Bible student is not a good Bible student until he or she is motivated to share with others the biblical information he or she learns.**

Since the theme of the entire Bible is on the gospel, then the more one learns the prophecies concerning the gospel, and their fulfillment in the first century, the more one is stirred to teach the gospel. This should be the objective of every Bible student.

1. **T or F:** Regardless of one's motives, Bible study will always be objective.
2. **T or F:** The most profitable Bible student is the one who studies the Bible with the intention of teaching others.

A. Investigate The Gospel

The profitable and productive Bible student seeks to learn more about the gospel. Paul personified the word "grace" in the context of **Titus 2:11-14**: *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us."* This was the gospel of the incarnation of the Son of God into this world. This is the gospel of God's grace that motivates us to refrain from the ways of the world, so that *"we should live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age."*

We study the Bible, therefore, in order to learn what is taught by the Holy Spirit in the Bible concern-

ing the good news of the Son of God coming into this world. This is learning that motivates to respond to the grace of God. Therefore, when we are learning concerning the grace of God, we study out of gratitude. The motive for living the gospel, is the gospel of God's grace. We study the Bible, therefore, to learn what God requires of us to live in response to the gospel.

**We Study The Bible
To Learn As Much
As Possible
About The Gospel.**

- 3. T or F:** Because God made the gospel difficult to understand, those who study the Bible must be driven to do so in order to understand the gospel.

B. Believe The Bible

The profitable, or productive Bible student, believes the Bible to be the word of God. This student will accept what is referred to as the **verbal plenary inspiration** of the Bible. In other words, **he believes and accepts every word of all the Bible to be there as a result of God's guidance of writers through the Holy Spirit.** He does not believe the Bible has errors or contradictions. He accepts the Bible as God's inspired resource to understand the good news of the Son of God coming into this world.

With this attitude in reference to the Bible, one is driven to diligently seek information about the gospel. He or she is driven to study the Bible with the understanding that it is God talking "directly" to us through the pages of inspired Scripture. This student, therefore, accepts the Bible as God's revelation and explanation of the gospel. Productive students accept the Holy Scriptures as the revelation of Deity to man. This is that about which Paul cautioned the Corinthians: ***"If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord"*** (1 Co 14:37).

**If One Does Not
Believe The Gospel,
Then He Or She Will
Never Fully
Understand The Bible.**

4. **T or F:** Because the Bible is difficult to understand, God speaks to us in other ways in order that we understand the Bible.
5. **T or F:** In order to understand the Bible, one must believe that it is the actual word of God.

C. Eager To Learn

The profitable, or productive Bible student, is eager to learn more of the Bible. He or she has an open and spiritual mind that eagerly seeks and accepts truth. This Bible student is one who is always open to the learning of truth.

He or she approaches the Bible with an attitude to learn. Because of his or her spiritual attitude, he or she does not let any sin in his life distort his understanding and teaching of the truth. He or she does not distort the truth by religious traditions that he or she may be practicing that contradict Bible teachings. Neither does he or she allow acceptable religious tradition to determine one's understanding or application of truth.

Good Bible students approach the Bible with an eagerness to learn something by which they can better their lives and more effectively teach the gospel to others. These

are students who are eager to learn new things about the nature of God and eternity. They thirst after knowledge of how

Productive Bible
Students Thirst
After Truth From
The Word Of God.

God has worked in history in the lives of people throughout history. David said in Psalm 119:97, *“Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all the day long.”* This is the student who *“hungers and thirsts after righteousness”* (Mt 5:6). *“His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night”* (Ps 1:2). Surely the Bereans were this type of Bible students for they *“received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so”* (At 17:11).

6. **T or F:** Meditating on the word of God throughout the day means that one is conscience of how to live according to the word of God.
7. **T or F:** If one is eager to learn more from the Bible, then he will be a daily Bible student.

D. Broaden Your Mind

The effective Bible student seeks to broaden his or her education in spiritual matters. This student will seek every opportunity to receive education from the Bible. He or she will study the grammar of the language in which the Bible was written. He or she will study history and social sciences that affect our interpretation of the Scriptures. This student will study particularly any field of education that will help to better understand the Bible and how to apply its principles to one's life, and then teach it to others.

The Study Of Language Enhances One's Study Of The Bible.

Other fields of education will not only help one to be a productive citizen in his or her community, but such studies will also help one to better understand what the Bible says and how to apply its truths to one's life. Such studies will also help one to reason with other people concerning the truth of the Scriptures in his or her efforts to communicate the word of God to others.

If one has the opportunity to take courses of study at a nearby school, college or university, it would certainly be advantageous to his or her total education as a Bible student. Even if one does not have the opportunity to attend resident schools, one should seek to read good books that will help one to be a more educated person. Good books on Christian topics should always be sought and read.

The apostle Paul is a good example of this practiced. While in prison in Rome he told Timothy to bring to him the *"books and parchments"* (2 Tm 4:13). Evidently, Paul was a continual student, not only of the Bible, but also of other studies that would make him a better servant of God. Though we do not know the exact contents of these books and parchments he wanted Timothy to bring, we do know that Paul studied other materials than the Old Testament Scriptures.

However, one must not assume that he has to know many other fields of study in order to under-

stand the Bible message of the gospel. God had the Bible written in a manner that it could be understood by the anyone who is seeking to know the gospel. All fundamental truths that affect one's salvation can be easily understood in the Bible. On the other hand, studies in other fields of knowledge will help one to better understand the Bible, as well as, to apply it to our lives and teach others.

8. **T or F:** While Luke was traveling, he asked Titus to bring him his study books and parchments.

E. Study With Prayer & Fasting

An effective and profitable Bible student studies with prayer and fasting. The productive student simply approaches the Christian life and the Bible with much prayer and fasting. Good Bible students are people who spend much time in prayer. They realize that they need God's wisdom in all things, but especially in their study and application of the word of God. James wrote, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God"* (Js 1:5; see 5:16,17). One can gain much knowledge from the Bible. However, **it takes wisdom to apply knowledge**. In applying and practicing knowledge, spiritual growth occurs. The more we grow, the better we will understand the Scriptures. Therefore, our biblical studies should be coupled with much prayer and fasting.

Prayer & Fasting
Prepare One's Mind
For More Effective Study.

9. **T or F:** James exhorted that if anyone lacks knowledge, he or she must pray and God will bless one with knowledge.

F. Persistent Bible Study

The productive Bible study will be persistent in his or her studies. Good students do not become discouraged or frustrated in their studies. They persistently search their Bibles in order to find and understand God's will for them. As teachers, they feel the responsibility to know God's word so that they can accurately instruct others.

This is a quality of spirit that one must develop as a student of the Bible. We must not become discouraged with those things we do not understand. We must always keep in mind the statement that God made to Israel: *“The secret things belong to the LORD our God. But those things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, so that we may do all the words of this law”* (Dt 29:29).

Under no circumstances must one discontinue his or her Bible studies. We must never forget that we can understand the Bible in an organized manner that will qualify us to be effective teachers. We must remember, however, that **the Bible was written to be studied**. One will never understand it properly by occasionally reading it. In order for it to be understood properly, one must spend many hours in concentrated study.

10. T or F: We must study the Bible with the confidence that we will understand everything that is written in the Bible.

Chapter 2 ADJUSTING OUR MOTIVES

In order to understand the Bible, particularly the more difficult sections of the Bible, we must approach a study of the Scriptures with gospel motives in our hearts. One usually cannot correctly interpret God’s word if he or she approaches their studies with a prejudiced mind. Concerning correct attitudes, Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

**The Way We Conduct
Our Lives, Determines
Our Understanding
Of The Bible.**

*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but **as to carnal**, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal* (1 Co 3:1-3).

Because the Corinthians were not behaving according to the gospel, but with a carnal mind, they could not understand the greater spiritual teachings

of what Paul wrote to them. They could not understand the love of God because they were acting in an unloving manner toward one another. They could not understand the mercy of God because they were unmerciful with one another. They could not understand the oneness of God because they had sectarian attitudes. Therefore, Paul could not write to them as to spiritually minded Christians.

There is a very important principle here that every Bible student must recognize. A worldly (carnal) person cannot understand spiritual or difficult teachings in the Bible. This is why it is so important for one to *“grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pt 3:18). A similar criticism was made of the Hebrew Christians in Hebrews 5:12: *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”*

Every member of the body of Christ must have a knowledge of the Scriptures that would motivate one with the desire to teach others. There are gifted members to whom we refer as teachers simply because of their ability to effectively communicate the word of God to others in a public environment (See Ep 4:11,12). However, every member of the body has the responsibility to study his or her Bible as the teacher who prepares for a Bible class. Therefore, God expects us to be of a mind that is conducive to effective Bible study that is characteristic of one who is a public teacher of the Bible.

**Our Behavior
Will Determine
How We Understand
The Bible.**

In view of this, we must make every effort to grow spiritually. For example, we must grow in love in order to better understand and teach the love of God. We must learn to forgive in order that we may understand the depth of God's forgiveness of our sins. The more we live that which we study, the better we will understand the word of God.

- 11. T or F:** One can live a carnal life, and yet fully understand God's message to him or her through the Bible..
- 12. T or F:** Some Christians live in a manner that enables them to understand only the milk of the word of God.

A. Love The Truth

Bible students must love God's word in order to correctly understand it. If one loves the Bible, he or she will want to spend time with it. David wrote, "*Oh, how I love Your law*" (Ps 119:97). This is what will keep us studying when others will simply discontinue their studies. We must love God's word and meditate upon its principles. In fact, one of the greatest reasons why people do not study their Bibles is because they do not love the word of God. Because they do not love the truth, God will allow them to believe lies. **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12** should be a frightening passage to those who do not study the Bible:

The presence of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all deceiving power and signs and wonders, and with all deception of wickedness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion so that they should believe a lie, that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

God Will Allow One
To Believe A Lie If
He Does Not Love
The Truth Of The Bible.

- 13. T or F:** It is not necessary to love the truth of the word of God in order to understand the Bible correctly.

B. Have faith

The Bible is the foundation for our faith. Paul said this in **Romans 10:17**: "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Our faith, therefore, will increase when we study. We must always remember what Hebrews 11:6 says, "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a re-*

Those Who Have Little
Bible Knowledge
Have Little Faith.

warder of those who diligently seek Him.”

There are many things God has chosen not to reveal to man. Deuteronomy 29:29 states: *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”* We must remember, therefore, that those things that have been revealed are revealed in order that we know them. We study the Bible in order to know what God wants us to know, and thus establish our faith on what He has revealed.

There are certainly subjects in the Bible that are difficult to understand. The Holy Spirit often inspired men to give only a glimpse of some truths that are beyond our understanding. Therefore, we must not frustrate ourselves when we do not understand those portions of the Bible that are only a small indication of God who is beyond this material world. One must exercise his or her faith in these areas of study. We must simply trust in God that *“all things work together for good to those who love God”* (Rm 8:28).

We would also add that words are the means of communication among people. Words are based on ideas, relationships, events and things **of this world**. Therefore, when God communicated to humanity, He was limited to the use of our words of communication. The point to remember is that **it was impossible for God to communicate some things of the spiritual world by use of words that are of the physical world.**

14. T or F: If one is ignorant of the Bible, then his or her faith is based on religion, as opposed to being based on the word of God.

C. Use Common Sense

We need to approach a study of the Bible with good reasoning. We need to exercise some good common sense. We must remember that the people in the Bible, and the people to whom the Bible was first written, were everyday people just like we are today. Therefore, the Bible was written in a way that it could

be understood by people of common understanding. For this reason, we must not make the Bible difficult to understand. Admittedly, some portions are difficult. But the fundamental teachings that refers to our salvation are easy to understand. We must read the Bible as if God were writing it directly to us. The more personal we make the Bible, the more we will take seriously the content of its message. The Bible is God talking to each one of us. It is as Paul wrote to common people in the city of Ephesus: *“... how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words. Therefore, when you read you can understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ”* (Ep 3:3,4).

15. T or F: We must assume that God communicated to humanity principles of salvation that were difficult to determine.

D. Be Diligent

We will not be good Bible students if we are lazy in our studies. Paul said that the man of God must be diligent, not slothful (See Rm 12:11). In 2 Timothy 2:15 he wrote, *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* Anyone who would be a productive Bible student must be diligent in his studies. Paul wrote of diligent disciples in his letter to the Romans: *“And we have sent*

Diligence In reference
To Bible Study Means
That One Will Not
Cease To Study.

with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent because of the great confidence that we have in you” (2 Co 8:22). But then he might write to us personally, the following words: *“Therefore, He says, ‘Awake you who sleep and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light”* (Ep 5:14).

16. T or F: If one is a diligent disciple of Jesus, then it assume that he or she will be a diligent student of the Bible.

17. T or F: If a Christian is diligent in his or her studies of books in the secular world, then he or she must also be diligent in the study of the Bible in reference to the spiritual world.

E. Respect the Bible

If we do not consider the Bible to be the actual word of God, then we will have a hard time understanding some scriptures. A good Bible student will

Bible Study Is Spiritually Empty If We Do Not Believe It Came To Us From God.

firmly believe that the Bible is God's inspired word. He or she will thus study the Bible with respect and seriousness, **for he or she will want to know what God has to say about everything.** Therefore, we must always have an attitude of respect for the Bible.

The Bible student must consider the Bible as if it had dropped from heaven into his hands alone. It would be good to quote again the following words of Paul: *"If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord"* (1 Co 14:37).

18. T or F: If one does not believe that the Bible has come to us through the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, then we will never understand the true purpose of the gospel.

F. Expect to understand

If one does not expect to understand the Bible, then he or she will probably have some difficulty in understanding its content. Therefore, when we study the Bible, we must expect to understand what God wants us to know and teach others. Jesus' promise is still for every Bible student:

The Holy Spirit Inspired The Bible To Be Understood By Sincere People.

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). The truth of the gospel was revealed to man through inspired words. These words were written in order that we might understand the mystery of the gospel of God. This is what Paul meant in Ephesians 3:3-5. God *"made known the mystery (as I wrote before in few words.)"*

Many people have been led to believe a misunderstanding of what Peter said in **2 Peter 1:20,21.**

Peter wrote, *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.”* Some have erroneously taught that Peter here was saying that God’s word cannot be interpreted by individuals on an individual basis. But this is not what Peter was saying. Peter’s point is that **God’s word did not come to us as a result of man’s working or invention.** He explained this in verse 21 when he said that *“prophecy never came by the will of man.”* Holy men were directed by God through the Holy Spirit to write the Scriptures.

In **2 Peter 1:20,21** Peter is discussing the inspired men who wrote the Scriptures, **not the readers who interpret the Scriptures.** We must clearly understand this commonly misunderstood passage. What Peter was trying to do here was to reassure his readers that the Scriptures came to us as a result of God’s working, not man’s. In recognizing this, the individual student grows in confidence of his ability to understand the Bible because he or she realizes that the Bible is God’s work of communicating the gospel to all men.

19. T or F: Truth sets us free from the bondage of religious error.

20. T or F: The Bible came to us from those who were the prominent religious leaders of communities.

Chapter 3

CHALLENGE OF WRONG ATTITUDES

The competent Bible student will be careful about his or her attitudes when it comes to studying the Bible. He will examine himself, and then determine his or her true motives for studying the Bible. Here are some attitudes about which each Bible student must be cautioned:

A. Study With Humility

We do not study the Bible for personal attention. We must not be guilty of studying the Bible, or memorizing scriptures, in order to draw attention to ourselves as great Bible students. In **1 Timothy 1:7**

Paul discussed some teachers who had a problem with their pride. He wrote of them that they desired *“to be teachers of the law.”* However, they understood *“neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”* There are some

**Humility Is Necessary
In Bible Study In Order
That The Student
Apply What Is Learned.**

who seek to be in the position of publicly teaching the word of God, but they do not know the Bible. It may have been these that were in the mind of James when he wrote, *“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we will receive the stricter judgment”* (Jas 3:1).

One must study to show himself approved unto God, not unto men (See 2 Tm 2:15). Bible students must guard against an arrogant show of knowledge for the purpose of drawing attention to themselves. Paul said, *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God”* (1 Co 2:1). This would be a good example for us today. Though Paul was specifically discussing his communication of the word of God, we must follow the humility by which he communicated the word of God. His purpose for preaching and teaching was to communicate the word of God to others, not to draw attention to himself.

21. T or F: Paul was effective in his teaching because he was an eloquent speaker.

B. Study To Know Truth

This is not only a problem many have in studying the Bible, but also in life itself. We must not be people who enjoy argument for the sake of winning theological debates. Paul told Timothy that the servant of God *“must not quarrel”* (2 Tm 2:24). One must be careful not to argue over the Bible. If one does argue over what the Bible may or may not teach, then he or she will find themselves going to the Bible to prove an argument and not to find

**Little Truth
Is Learned
Through
Arguments.**

God's instructions for living the gospel. Remember, arguments may win fights, but they rarely win friends for Jesus or ourselves. If we run to the Bible to prove our point, we will often come away with wrong conclusions. We will have a tendency to take scriptures out of their contexts in which they were originally written. We will do this because we are seeking to win an argument. Therefore, we need to be very careful in discussions with others concerning the Bible.

22. T or F: Arguing about the teachings of the Bible will guarantee that the Bible is correctly understood and applied.

C. Study To Crush Mysticism

We do not study the Bible to uphold false mysticism. Mysticism is the teaching concerning things of the spirit world. Those who concentrate on such teaching generally rely on traditions or human inventions of the mind to conceive of wonders in their supposed spirit world. They believe in voodoo, witches, evil spells, astrology, and other false imaginations of those who have given up a knowledge of God.

The More Mystic
One Is In Belief
The Less He Will
Understand The Bible.

Many times, these very imaginative people go to the Bible to find evidence of their mystified beliefs. They look for answers in the stars, planets, as well as the Bible. The Bible to these dreamers is simply another source of information concerning revelations that they have supposedly received from the terrestrial or celestial worlds.

In reference to our approach to the Bible, we need to be careful in two areas: **(1)** We must not be carried away with the fanciful beliefs of those who claim to have knowledge of the spirit world that is actually the imagination of their own minds. **(2)** We must not approach the Bible in order to make it a book of mysticism. The Bible is not a collection of myths and fables about the imaginations of men. It is a book of serious truths for the serious student. We must not forget the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:3,4:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

23. T or F: Those who understand the mysticism of the spiritual world can better understand the Bible.

D. Study With Pure Motives

We must not study the Bible with worldly motives. One who is not honest will usually not accept what the Bible says if he or she learns something that conflicts with what he or she believes or is practising in life. Think about this for a moment. No one likes to discover that he is wrong. The Bible was written to correct our lives, and our thinking. It was written as a guide to life. Therefore, when we read it, we will often discover that we are either believing something wrong or doing something wrong.

In **James 1:22-24** James wrote of those who look into the mirror of God's word.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

Those Who Are Doers
Of What They Learn
In The Bible, Will Not
Be Deceived.

The word of God reflects on our true character. However, people generally do not like what they see about themselves in the mirror of God's word. Therefore, they turn away. The honest person, on the other hand, will not turn away from what the Bible says about his or her life. He will strive to correct his or her life in order that he may live a better life according to the gospel.

The dishonest student will often ignore a passage that conflicts with previous beliefs or behavior. He will soon forget those truths that condemn as sin something that one is doing wrong in life. One needs to be careful not to have this wrong attitude

when studying the Bible. Such an attitude keeps too many people in error and sin (See 2 Th 2:10-12). If we understand a new truth that we have discovered in our personal Bible study, we must accept it and live by it. We must not let our pride distort our honest study of God's word.

- 24. T or F:** If one does those things that he or she learns in the Bible, he or she will better understand the Bible.
- 25. T or F:** Those who are looking for principles by which to live will better understand the Bible than those who do not seek to change their lives.

E. Study With Maturity

One must not study the Bible with an immature attitude. We must approach the Bible with great sobriety. We must approach Bible study in this manner for the following reasons:

1. Our salvation depends on our study.

Our eternal destiny depends on our knowledge of and obedience to the gospel. James wrote, *“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls”* (Js 1:21). Christians have purified their *“souls in obeying the truth [of the gospel]”* (1 Pt 1:22). They were *“born again [in obedience to the gospel], not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever”* (1 Pt 1:23).

Our knowledge of the Bible is very important when it comes to understanding what is necessary for our salvation. We must worship God in spirit and truth (See Jn 4:24). Therefore, our knowledge of the Bible is important in reference to how we worship God. We must approach our studies of the Bible with great seriousness because our salvation depends on how we understand and apply what is revealed in the word of God.

Those Who Do Not Love
The Word of God, Will
Create In their Minds
A god That Approves
Of Their Behavior.

2. Teachers will receive greater judgment.

The eternal destiny of those we teach will greatly depend upon how and what they teach. For this reason, James wrote, *“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers [leaders], knowing that we will receive stricter judgment”* (Js 3:1). James emphasized the seriousness with which we must approach our Bible studies as leaders. Paul warned Timothy, *“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine [teaching]. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you”* (1 Tm 4:16).

What James and Paul were trying to convey to us is that leaders must be very serious about their study and teaching. Leaders will receive strict judgment because they are involved in leading men and women into eternity by their teaching. Therefore, with great seriousness leaders must study their Bibles.

26. T or F: The word of God is able to save our souls because it is the instruction of God as to how to obey the gospel and live according to His will.

27. T or F: One is born again by the seed of God’s word because it is the word of God that explains what one must do to identify and obey the gospel.

Chapter 4 **BIBLE STUDY HABITS**

Study habits make one a more profitable student of the Bible. Study habits encourage one to continually study in a disciplined manner. The following are suggested Bible study habits that will lead one to be a good Bible student:

A. Establish Regular Bible Reading

We must read the Bible on a regular basis. It is best to establish a regular schedule for reading the Bible every day. A good practice would be to read the Old Testament through once a year. It would be good for every Christian to read the New Testament through once every two months. Or, one might set a schedule of reading the Bible one hour every day. These are only suggestions that encourage regular Bible reading. What is important in Bible reading is

to meditate on what is read. Meaningful metaphors, personifications and similes need much thought before they are fully appreciated.

One might also want to choose a book of the Bible to read through several times. For example, choose one of the records of the gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). After choosing a particular book, read it through several times.

Reading the Bible regularly will increase one's knowledge of the Bible as a whole. It will help to acquire a complete view of the entire Bible. It will also continually refresh one's memory over material that has already been studied. Every good Bible student should have a regular time when he or she reads the Scriptures in a solitary place.

28. T or F: Being diligent in one's Bible study means that one disciplines his or her life to establish a regular time for Bible study.

B. Establish Regular Study Time

Many people have a desire to study the Bible, but have never disciplined themselves to set aside time to get the job done. In fact, most Christians feel guilty when they do not study their Bible on any regular basis. Effective Bible students have always disciplined themselves to set aside regular time for Bible reading and study. Some set aside a period of time early in the morning. Others have chosen to study in the evening. What is important is that we determine when we want to study during the day, and then keep that schedule. Regular reading is the key to keeping our minds focused on the word of God.

A Regular Time For Bible Study Helps One to Be Disciplines To Study.

C. Establish A Location For Study

One needs a place where he or she can study without being disturbed. This would be a place where children, radios, animals and other distractions will not interrupt concentration. Generally, the efficiency of one's study time will depend on the number of dis-

tractions that are present. In other words, we will get more out of our study periods if we are in a location where we will not be distracted. Whatever location one may determine for study, therefore, he or she should make sure it is away from all distractions.

D. Establish Prayer & Meditation Time

Bible study without prayer, meditation and fasting is not as productive as study that is coupled with these three things. We study God's word in order to grow spiritually. We want to increase our faith. We want to be spiritually minded people. We want to better communicate the word of God to others. We must never make the mistake of studying the Bible simply to acquire knowledge or to have a lesson ready for a Bible class or sermon. We must pray about our studies. We must meditate over our studies. It is best to begin study periods with a prayer and end with a prayer. It is good to fast and pray in order to concentrate on particular points of study.

When reading the Bible, it is best to read for a period of time and then stop. Think about what has been read, then proceed to read more. It has been proven that those students who periodically stop during their reading, and meditate over a small portion of material they have just read before advancing to more material, will retain more than the student who reads without stopping and meditating.

- 29. T or F:** Having different places for Bible study should be established in order to guard one from distractions.
- 30. T or F:** Prayer and meditation aid one to focus on specific Bible teachings.

E. Memorize The Scriptures

Good Bible students will regularly memorize the Scriptures. This accomplishes several things in molding our lives after the will of God.

1. Memorization of the Scriptures forces us to meditate on the word of God.
2. Memorization of the Scriptures makes us a more capable Bible teacher or preacher.

3. Memorization of the Scriptures makes us stop and consider principal teachings of the Bible.
4. Memorization of the Scriptures gives us the ability to rapidly find numerous key scriptures in the Bible.
5. Memorization of the Scriptures makes us spend time with the Bible.
6. Memorization of the Scriptures produces the foundation upon which the principles of God's word begin to change our lives.

We need to make it a habit to memorize many passages of the Bible. Some students have memorized entire books of the Bible. If we set ourselves forward as preachers and teachers of the Bible, even the world expects us to be able to quote Bible verses from memory. We should expect no less of ourselves.

31. T or F: Memorization of the Scriptures is a form of meditation on the thoughts of the Scriptures.

F. Regularly Teach Or Preach

One of the best ways to learn the Bible is to be putting into practice that which we are studying. The statement is true that the teacher always learns more than the student. This is true because the teacher must thoroughly prepare to teach. In teaching what one has studied, his or her studies are impressed upon the mind. As a preacher/teacher, we study in order to grow spiritually. We grow spiritually in order that we might be better communicators of the word of God.

In order to effectively learn, we must be teaching others what we are learning. If we do not, then we will reach a spiritual plateau above which it is difficult to rise. Generally, if we are not teaching others while we study, our spiritual growth will be slow. One may not feel confident about his or her knowledge of the Bible at a particular time in life. However, we must strive to talk to others about what we do know. This is what Jesus wanted the apostles

**Teaching The Word
Entrenches The Word
In One' Life
And Mind.**

and others to do when He stated, “... *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*” (Mt 28:20). Paul said the same to Timothy when he commanded him to commit his teaching “*to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*” (2 Tm 2:2). In these two verses, Jesus and Paul are saying the same thing.

Teach The Gospel
Is A Part Of Living
The Gospel.

What we learn must be taught to others. We must not only teach others what we learn, we must teach them to teach others also. In this way, we will be teaching many people by teaching a few. Jesus expects us to be making disciples who will also be making disciples. If we do not accept this responsibility, thousands will not have a chance to hear and learn the word of God. Think of the thousands in a hundred years who will not have an opportunity to hear because they will not have been taught by the others we have failed to teach.

Christians stop growing when they stop studying the Bible. In fact, when people stop teaching the lost, they are not encouraged to study their Bibles. The sign of a weak or dying disciple is manifested by the lack of eagerness to study and teach the Bible. If a disciple of Jesus is not growing, we can almost be certain that there is little or no individual study of the Bible on the part of that disciple.

When people stop studying the Bible, they often start searching for other sources of communications from God. Some religious people state that “God spoke to them” in a particular manner. This is usually a statement that is made in the context of one’s claim that God has spoken to them in a dream or some feeling they have experienced. The problem is that when people stop listening to God speak to them through His word, they seek out all sorts of imaginary ways by which they feel that God communicates to them. The central problem is that these people who feel that “God has spoken” to them have given up serious Bible study.

But as disciples of Jesus who have obeyed the

gospel, it is our desire to know all that we can know about how God, throughout history, brought His only begotten Son to the cross, and then to the throne in heaven. We seek to know all that is revealed in the Bible about this gospel message in order that we can live by the gospel.

32. T or F: When we teach what we have learned from Jesus, then we are completing the great commission to go into all the world as teachers.

33. T or F: God's messengers today to go into all the world are the disciples of Jesus who assume their responsibility to be teachers of the word of God.



CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

1. Why must one believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God in order to study it properly?
2. Why does having an open mind affect one's interpretation of the Bible?
3. Why does prayer and fasting open one's heart for understanding and applying the word of God?
4. In what ways do our motives affect our study of the Bible?
5. How does common sense affect our understanding and application of the word of God?
6. What affect does having a humble spirit influence our learning from the Bible?
7. Why does Bible study dispel mysticism?
8. Why does teaching the gospel complete the great commission of Jesus?
9. How does the Bible affect our salvation?
10. Why does regular scheduled Bible reading and study enhance our study of the Bible?
11. Why does teaching or preaching the Bible enhance our understanding of the Bible?

ABBREVIATIONS

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**