

The Importance of Bible Study

2 Timothy 3:16-17

How much time do you spend reading and studying the Bible? I would impress upon all of us today the importance of spending time in this book that we call the Bible. You know, there are a lot of people in the world today. They have the idea of that. The Word of God is somehow intended to hold them back from living, to undermine a life of contentment and satisfaction.

Well, I would say that's not the case at all. No, the Word of God was never meant to hurt us, to hinder us, but rather the Word of God. The intent is to help us, to bless us, to benefit us. Think about what Paul said in Second Timothy chapter three. Paul writes in verse 16, All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness.

The man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped unto every good work. Did you catch what Paul said? That this book is God breathed? Furthermore, he said it is profitable. It will benefit you. It will help you. Now look, this book can't help you if you don't open it. Read it and study it. What you have to do is spend time reading, studying and meditating on the truth of God.

You remember it was said of the Psalmist in Psalm one at verse two. He said, his delight was in the law of the Lord. And he said, in that law he meditated day, and night. Now that's somebody that understood the importance of this book that we call the Bible. In John chapter six, Jesus identified the words of Jesus as being the words of eternal life.

How can I know what the Lord wants from me if I never spend time reading and studying this divine book that we call the Bible? Now you think about the Bible for a minute. This book was compiled over a period of time, some 15 to 1600 years. There were some 40 different writers that had a part in this great book in the production of this book.

Now they were superintendent or supervised by the Holy Spirit. You remember what Peter said? No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. He said that the Word of God did not come from man, but rather holy men of God spoke as they were moved, brought along by the Holy Spirit. Now what Peter was saying is that the Bible is not the product of man.

Mankind didn't just think this book up and put it together. No. This book bears the stamp of God. As a matter of fact, when you begin reading and studying this book and you think about some 1500 years this book was being assembled. And yet there's one great aim throughout the book. One thread that is the thread of redemption.

You see, this book could be summed up as a book of redemption, a book of salvation, showing us that God is intimately concerned about our spiritual well-being. Now that being the case, let's talk for a moment or two about the importance of Bible study. Let's just think for a moment or two about why it is so important for us to spend time reading and studying this book that we call the Bible.

So, number one, I would submit to you that when we study the Bible, we need to do so reverently. And the idea is that again, we're back to this is the book of God. This you know, we wouldn't know the will of God, of the mind of God, separate and apart from this book we call the Bible. Now I can know that there's a God based upon creation.

I don't take an Einstein to realize somebody created this world, that there was a divine designer behind. The world that we live in. You remember the Hebrew writer said many years ago, every house is built by some man, but he that built all things is God. The home you live in, somebody. Somebody created a blueprint. And then you had a builder that put that house on a foundation and now you live in.

It didn't happen by accident. Even so, the world that we live in was not by accident. It didn't evolve over eons of time. No. God spoke this world into existence. Listen to what David said. The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows his handiwork. You mean to tell me that I can look out at the world in which we live?

And I can see that there is a divine designer behind this universe? Yes. Look, I can't know the mind of God without him revealing that to me. And so I read in Ephesians chapter three, where Paul said he received revelation from God, and he took that revelation and wrote it down in a few words. He said, whereby when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

So I need to develop a healthy respect for this book. The psalmist said in Psalm 119, my heart stands in all of your word. Well, who wouldn't? This is the inspired, inerrant Word of God. This is the book of all books. This is the only book that I know of that can lead me safely from earth to heaven.

No wonder the psalmist said in Psalm 119, oh, how I love your law, my meditation all the day. He said, through your precepts I get understanding. Therefore I hate every false way. Now listen to him. Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my pathway. The world that we live in is engulfed in spiritual darkness, and there are a lot of folks that are groping in spiritual darkness.

And yet the seed of the kingdom, the Word of God. The intent of this book is to shine a light, to shine the light of truth, so that you can see what's really important and what's not important in this life, so that you can see clearly to get from heaven, or rather, from earth to heaven. That's what we want.

We want to go to heaven, don't we? So we need to study the Word of God, and we need to do so reverently. Let me suggest a second thing. We need to study the Word of God humbly. Lot of danger in approaching a study of the Word of God with an arrogant, haughty attitude. You know, sometimes we find people going to the scriptures and they have already developed preconceived notions.

They are prejudicial when it comes to certain divine truths. Well, I need to understand. I don't know everything. I don't claim to know everything. So when it comes to matters of faith, you know there's a difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion. Well, how then can I know what the Lord wants me to follow and do?

If I have a heart, if I have a heart, a arrogant spirit. Solomon wrote many years ago, pride goes before destruction. A haughty Spirit before a fall. When I go to the Bible, I need to say I'm trying to know to the best of my ability what the Lord's saying. Now, when you study the Bible, you would do well to ask the question to whom was the writer addressing?

What was the purpose of writing? And then you could ask the question, well, how does that apply to me? Those are important questions to ask. But I'm going to the Word of God, and I'm doing so humbly. And I am removing any bias. I want to be objective in my study of the Word of God so that I can, like Samuel in the long ago, say, speak, Lord, your servant hears.

I want to know what the Lord has to say, and I want to make sure that whatever he says, I put that into practice, because you remember Jesus said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he to do with the will of my father which is in heaven. Jesus asked this question one time, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

One of the reasons why some people are not willing to honor the Word of God is because they think they know more than what this book says. I was in a discussion with a lady just the other day. She had been watching our program, actually. She had caught one of our short reels and she called in. She was very concerned about her spiritual life and about trying to get right with God.

And so I began to tell her, you know, you can be saved. You don't have to. You don't have to be in a lost condition. I said, you know, if you'll go back and read acts chapter two, and if you'll do what they did and some of those people were guilty of putting Jesus to death on Calvary, Peter indicted them, as did the apostles, and they wanted to know men and brethren, what should we do?

And Peter said, repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. And she said, well, you know, water baptism doesn't save anybody. And I said, look, the water doesn't say, but the blood does, but we can't take the blood through the water. And went on to say, you know, Peter said, baptism doth also now save us.

So the idea that baptism doesn't say, no, I know there are a lot of folks say that, but that's not what the Bible says. But I've got to have the humility, the humility of heart to say, Lord, what? What's the word say? And if what the word says conflicts with what I think, then I've got to have the humility to say I was wrong, and I'm going to do what the Lord said, no matter what.

So, number one, I've got to approach Bible study number one reverently. Number two, I need to do so humbly. And again, the idea I don't know everything. I'm striving to know what God's will is for me and my life. And I want to go to heaven. And the only way that I can do that is to humbly approach a study to the Word of God.

Now there's another thought I need to, I need to I need to be willing to study. I need to do so reverently, humbly, and I would say in the third place, regularly, daily Bible study. Listen to what Paul said in Colossians chapter three. Paul writes, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. The only way that the word of God can be woven into the fabric of my life is by spending time in this book.

Now, you remember just a moment ago, I cited Psalm one verse two, where the psalmist said his delight was in the law of the Lord, and in that law he meditated day and night again in Psalm one 1997, the psalmist said, oh, how I love your law. It's my meditation all the day. Here's somebody that is poring over the Word of God, reading and studying and meditating on this truth and trying to determine, okay, what's the Lord saying?

Well, that's what I want to do. Now, when we talk about regular Bible study, the Word of God will not help us if we never open it. Never spend time reading it, never spend time trying to better understand what the Lord is saying. Now, are there passages of Scripture that are sometimes difficult to understand? Well, of course there are.

There are things that are said in Scripture that, you know, cause us to maybe think more deeply about what the writer say. Peter talks about in Second Peter chapter three. He talks about some of the writings of Paul, how they were hard to be understood. I didn't say they

were impossible to understand. He just said there some things that Paul has written that are hard to understand.

Well, I get that there are some passages of scripture that you're going to have to pore over. It's been a lot of time. You're going to have to devote some time and energy into knowing what that passage had to say. When I was in college, I remember one of my instructors talking about a brother, one of his teachers.

He said, if I recall correctly, he said he spent 200 hours on one Bible verse. Now, I'm not saying we got to spend 200 hours on one Bible verse, but I am saying that we're going to need to spend some quality time in the Word of God. And I would encourage you to identify place work where you can get away from the distractions of this world, and you can sit down in a comfortable place and spend time reading, studying, and meditating on the truth of God, not encourage you to do this.

Take a pen, get your notebook and you make some notations in that notebook. Keep a journal, if you please. But the intent, again, is to know what the Word of God has to say. But you have to do that regularly. I fear sometimes in the Lord's church, but there are members of the body of Christ. The only time they open this book is when they're in worship for Bible study on Sunday.

If they come back on Wednesday night, once again, they open it. But what about Monday? Tuesday? Thursday? Friday? Saturday? What about those days? Those are important days too, aren't they? You'll never know the word of God like you ought to know it. If you just open it two times a week, it's just not going to happen. Somebody said on one occasion, talking about a preacher, those.

He stood at the back welcoming people and talking to them. Somebody came up to him, said, I'd give my life to know the Bible like you do. And he said, that's exactly what I've done. Well, it just takes time and effort, and there's no shortcut to knowing the Word of God. But I can tell you this. You dig in.

You start studying and meditating on the truth of God, and you will be amazed at how much you know in just a short period of time. In the book of Hebrews in chapter five, the writer speaks of people that had reached a point in their spiritual life when they should have been able to teach other people. But he said, here's the problem.

You need someone to teach you once again the first principles of the oracles of God. He said, you have need of milk and not meat. The problem was they had been in Christ, but they weren't developing in Christ. They were not maturing as faithful children of God. And so what the writer saying basically is, look, you need to go back and learn your ABCs again.

You need to go back and study what we call the fundamentals of the faith. Those cardinal doctrines of the New Testament. Well, you're not going to be able to you're not going to be able to advance in your maturity without spending time in this book. That's what I'm trying to say to you. In first Peter chapter two, in verse two, Peter said, as a newborn baby desire the sincere milk of the word, that you might grow thereby.

Listen to that. Just like a baby feeds on milk. That milk provides nutrition. The nutrition will ultimately help in the development of that child physically, mentally, and so on. By the same token, if we feed on the Word of God, what's it going to do for us? It's going to develop us spiritually. Remember, Paul talked about exercising ourselves unto godliness.

He said, bodily exercise profits a little. No, no doubt there's value in bodily exercise.

But if you want to know what's really important, it's exercising ourselves under godliness. Spending time in this book, meditating on the truth of Almighty God and trying to the best of our ability to ascertain his will in our daily life. Now, I want to go back very quickly and look at verse 16, Colossians chapter three.

When Paul said, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Really what he was saying is, I want you to allow the Word of God to find a home in your heart. That is, you allow the Word of God to dictate how you live. Well, how are we going to do that if we never spend time reading and studying the Bible?

We can't. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, don't you find it of interest that three times Jesus rebuked the devil's overtures by saying, it is written well, I can read in Psalm 119 verse 11, where the psalmist said, Your word have laid upon my heart that I might not sin against you. Well, when I'm regularly studying the Word of God, what's that going to do for me?

It's going to equip me for the various spiritual battles that I face in this life, and to understand the devil is relentless. Peter said, be sober. Be vigilant. Your adversary, the devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he made of our. He will always say, whom will stand steadfast in the faith. Well, what was it the devil was trying to do to Jesus?

Undermine his work. He wanted Jesus to succumb to temptation. The Lord Jesus Christ said, I'm not having any of that. Well, by the same token, we need to arm ourselves with a knowledge of the Word of God. No wonder Paul said, give no place to the devil. In other words, don't give him any more real estate in what he already has in your life.

Root him out in Ephesians chapter six. Paul writes, be strong in the Lord and the strength of his mind. Put on the whole armor of God, that you might be able to stand against the wiles or the schemes of the devil. Those who are in the military might be that you're in the military now. Maybe you served in the military.

If you spent time in a hostile country, was it not the case that your superior officers spent time teaching you the tactics of the enemy? What's the old saying? To be for warned us to be forearmed. How am I going to know how the devil is operating if I don't spend time regularly studying the pages of the Bible?

So I want to encourage you spend time in this book every single day. Now there's another thought in connection with our study, we talked about the importance of Bible study. Could I say to you that we need to be studying the Word of God, and we need to do so prayerfully? Now, prayer's an important part of the Christian life.

And again, Paul said that we're to take the Word of God and store it up in our heart. Wouldn't it stand to reason that when I sit down to study the Bible, that I would pray to God, that I would ask him to bless me in my study of His Word, that I might have an open and receptive heart.

You remember, it was said of the audience of old. They heard the gospel. Paul and Paul and Silas were in Berea. They had been literally run out of Philippi. And the Bible says that those who were in Berea receive the word of God with all readiness of heart. And they searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so.

Would it not? Would it not behoove me to strive to the best of my ability to look at what the Word of God says in light of what I hear others preaching and teaching? Sure. And that I pray to the Lord that I will have the wisdom to be able to discern between what's right and

wrong, truth and error, that which is good or evil.

You remember in Hebrews chapter five again, when the Hebrew writer talked about those that had failed to grow spiritually. He said, one of the byproducts of knowing the Word of God, of developing spiritually, is that we might be able to discern between good and evil. No wonder Peter said, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There's something to be said for growing, for progressing in our Bible study, in our Bible knowledge. That's what we're trying to do. Let me give you another thing that we ought to consider when it comes to our study of the Word of God, and why it's so important. Could I suggest to you that when we study the scriptures, that we do so submissively?

Now, I understand there's some overlap with these points, but when you look at them as they stand alone, the importance of me as an individual submitting to what the Lord has said or recorded in this book. Now again, Jesus asked on one occasion, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say, look, if the Lord said it.

That settles it. Bottom line sometimes you hear people say, well, you know, the Lord said it. I believe that that settles it. Whether we believe it or not, the issues settle, because when God speaks, that's it. That trumps everything. So I've got to be willing to submit my life to the teaching of the Lord. Now go back again and look at what Jesus said in that great sermon on the Mount.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Could I say to you that there are folks today?

They are willing to contradict the scriptures, because, sadly, they've yet to submit to his teaching. I mentioned sometimes what the Lord has to say about being saved, and there are a whole lot of folks in our world today. They will fight you tooth and nail over baptism. Well, look, the Lord's already spoken on the subject. That ought to settle the subject.

And yet there are people saying you don't have to be baptized to be saved. Well, that sure is of interest to me, because Jesus said, and by the way, Jesus has all authority. Matthew 28:18 And God the Father said, we're to hear him. Matthew 17:5 Jesus said, he that believeth and is baptized. Now what does he say next shall be saved.

So who's to say that baptism is not necessary for salvation? And by the way, Jesus put believe and baptism before salvation. He didn't say believe. Then be baptized. And then you say, I rather believe you're saved and then be baptized. No, he didn't say that. He said, you believe you submit to being baptized and then you're saved. That's exactly what Peter said on Pentecost day.

You repent, and when you're baptized, what then? Do you enjoy the remission, the remitted, the forgiveness of sins? When the Apostle Paul recounted his conversion to the Lord. Do you remember what Paul said? That Ananias instructed him? And now what? Arise, thou. Arise and be baptized, and wash away their sins. You see, that's what the Bible teaches. So I've got to be willing to submit my life to the teaching of Scripture.

Now, James said that we are to be doers of the word and not hearers only. Again, that gets back to submission, doesn't it? To realize that I am subjugating my life to the King of Kings, to the Lord of Lords? And by the way, if Jesus has all authority and he does, and we want to make him the King of our life, then wouldn't it stand to reason that whatever King Jesus says that we're going to do, we're not going to quibble about it.

We're not going to argue about it? No, we're just going to do it because that's exactly what the Lord said. Well, if the Lord said it, that settles it. Period. In the story. Now there's another thought. Again, the the emphasis on submitting to the teaching of the Bible. But I want to suggest that when we read and study the Bible, that we do so carefully and contextually.

I had a friend of mine say one time who's a great Bible student. He said, in order to keep things in their context, when you read a passage of Scripture, he said, if you want to really kind of see what that writer is saying, he said, read the verses before it. Go back and read about the first eight verses before the passage you're looking at, and then examine eight passages after the passage you're looking at.

He said, that'll give you some idea of the context. What context is important. Now, sometimes we need to look at passages in their immediate context, but then there are times when we need to look at remote context. That is, what did the other sacred writers have to say about the matter? And there are times you remember the psalmist said the psalm, if your word is truth.

So what I do is I go to the scriptures, and I began assembling various passages that all tie together. And then after assembling those passages of Scripture, I began forming my conclusion. I can say, oh, I see what he's saying there. I understand what he's teaching about. For example, in acts five verse 14. You remember the Bible says, and the believers were increasingly added to the Lord.

Okay. Question. What did those believers do to be added to the Lord? How did that happen? I'll go back in acts chapter two. They heard the gospel. Their faith was in Christ. They were instructed to repent of sin. They were baptized into Christ. And verse 47 says, and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Verse 41 tells us, some 3000 people accepted the terms of admission into the kingdom of God. They received the Word of God with all readiness of mind. They were baptized into Christ. 3000 souls added to them on that day. I want to encourage you, as we close today, please spend time reading this book. After all, this is the book that's going to be opened on the Day of Judgment.

So since the Lord is going to judge us by His word, wouldn't it stand to reason that we want to know what he has to say? See you back here next week. Until then, God bless.