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## The Importance of Bible study

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What does the Bible itself say regarding the importance of Bible study? A lot; but, for this article, we will take a look at two passages, one in the Old Testament, and the other in the New. Both of these passages are the foundation to scores of centuries-old theological works. They convey to us the power and importance of what is important in life—why we do things, how we can do things right, and what we can do to be the best we can be. The basic “meaning of life” stuff.

The first important passage is Deuteronomy 6:4-9, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” (NIV)

This verse starts out what is called the *Shema*; it means to hear what God has to say. This saying was, and still is the Jew’s rallying cry to know their Lord. This verse also points to the imperative of the next two verses that, in a nutshell, are about memorizing and knowing and doing God’s Word. God is commanding us to teach ourselves and our children His Word, so that it penetrates our hearts, minds and will—that is, every aspect of who we are. And, then, we are to write it down and bind it to all our daily aspects of life. That call is still for us today.

The second important passage is 2 Timothy 3:14-17, “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (NIV)

Paul, in this passage, gives us a similar call to heed God’s Word. Here is the call to scrutinize, understand, and then apply Scripture. This is the basic inductive precept. This passage is not an instruction to give the Bible the occasional “once over.” It is the clear, uncompromising call to continue in our studies constantly and passionately.

To make a point, I recently received an e-mail from a young man who believes he is anointed to bring God’s Word to the world. OK, that sounds good, but he went on and on that study is a waste of time, and at 17 years of age, he did not need to go to college or seminary or be disciplined. He says he knows all that he needs to be a great teacher. So, I asked him what he would be teaching. He responded “God’s Word.” I

again asked him what he would be teaching and he replied the same. So, I asked him specifically what some of his lesson outlines and subjects were. He said he was “anointed” and did not “need all of that;” all he needs to do is show up, and be like Paul in Acts.

So, I was curious, and decided to check up on him. Perhaps he is “anointed” (whatever that may mean to him). Would you believe he just proclaims nonsense in incomplete thoughts, jumping from one point to another point without any explanation or conclusion, on to another disjointed thought with no substance, and so forth. His audience was intrigued because of his extreme emotion and gestures. But, when I interviewed some of the attendees on what he said, they could not reply to my question. Why? Because, he did not say anything; his lips were moving, words came out, but nothing made sense. This young man with great energy, enthusiasm, and ability decided to put off the call of Scripture and engage in the call of the stage. He may have had the call to preach, but not the obedience to learn and grow, so he was not able to be his best and truly do his call. His audience was not able to gain any substance from his message, only an emotional tickle. Of course, he was more than capable to deliver a message without formal education, but this young man would not even learn basic Sunday School stuff. He did not believe in what the Bible calls us to in these two passages.

So, I decided to share with him, in a kind and gentle manner, what Scripture calls us to do. I did not want to quench his enthusiasm. But, he just went on and on how Paul was not educated. I tried to explain to him that Paul graduated from the highest academia of his day and was educated as all of the disciples were. But, he would not listen. So, I gave him some books on discipleship; he said he did not need them. I asked him if he read the Bible, he said he does. But, he reads just his favorite passages (out of context) over and over. He will not read through a whole book, because the Holy Spirit told him he was anointed and did not have to! So, I just keep him in prayer.

Now, what if this young man was discipled and was teaching God’s Word? Then his audience would go away with “substance”, “profitable for teaching!” The context of this passage in Timothy is that he was writing to correct false teaching, people misleading others with twisted Scriptures out of context. The Bible clearly states that a person without knowledge is ignorant. And, when we are without wisdom, we are a fool. It does not come to us magically. Paul had a special “anointing” and was preaching before the advent of the New Testament. Paul was also well educated, as all the apostles and early church preachers were—even the fishermen! Peter went to a rabbinic school as all Jewish children did then. They learned the O.T. Scriptures as well as learning to read and write. The Jews believed in a firm education for all of their people. I know a lot of Bible commentators like to pick on Peter as an example of a non-educated person teaching others, but this is not true. Just check up on Jewish history and customs. If he were not educated, how did Peter write? He could not have done so without the training he had. Yes, we have the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit uses the Word, too!

## **Scripture calls us to be instructed.**

These two Scriptures call us to live our lives as pleasing to our God, as countless other passages do, such as Proverbs 1, "...fear the Lord...", which is the understanding and vigorous reverence of God. It is not the fear a child has of what is under the bed. It is the *wow*, the wonder, awe, and majesty of God. And, this understanding is wisdom to deal with life, to make the most out of what He gives us in our gifts and opportunities.

These passages give us the reason and the opportunity. We can teach ourselves and each other to bring the Word of life in to all that we do. And, we can rest in the assurance that the Word is directly inspired; it is His words to be put into our actions, by His guidance and support. Thus, the opportunity is given to us to seize His Word so we can be wise and live our lives with purpose, direction, and meaning. In this way, we can impact our society with dignity and liberty, giving hope and showing the Way. Or, we can ignore Him, as most people do, and live in a meaningless rut, or, as the Bible says, to be foolish. Or worse, we can be teachers of the Word yet refuse to be disciplined ourselves, exchanging the truth of the Word for our arrogance and wanderlust!

These two Scriptures lay a clear foundation that we need to be educated from the Word. The command from Deut. Chapter 6, to teach and be taught, combines synergistically with Paul's proclamation in 2 Timothy: 3 that the Bible is profitable for teaching. The words *useful* (NIV), and *profitable* (NKJV), imply that we actually profit from God's Word. But, this type of profit is not in the money, as we may see from some TV preachers, but in what is important in life. God the Creator of all things, Who has our best interests in mind, desires that we learn and grow. And, we do this through His Word! Thus, we gain our values, our moral center, which is how we are to be to God and to those around us. We also gain our wisdom and knowledge through the Word, as well as learning for our lives. Without the Word, we may have knowledge from life, but we will not have wisdom! As I pointed out before, a bank teller can identify phony money better by knowing what a real bill is like. The Bible shows us the real One, as well as both who Christ is and how then we are to live. The Bible gives us our instructions on how to live!

The Bible is not just about a list of dos and don'ts, but a love letter that lets us know what is best. The Bible does this by its honesty with its characters, how they failed and how they succeeded. It shows us how we are to view God and each other, how we are to conduct ourselves, and how we are to measure our ideas and activities. It contains all we need to know for salvation and godly living.

## **Now what? Now I know why; what do I do?**

So how do we study the Bible? Countless copies of Scripture are sold and sit on shelves and bookcases unread! Why? Because, people do not know how to engage it or how to read the Word of our Lord. They are too apprehensive with fear of conviction or unsure how to go about it. This is what we do at *Into Thy Word Ministries*. We teach

you how to study the Bible and give you quality discipleship tools so you can *continue* to learn and grow in Him!

God Himself gives us the directions and the ability to proceed.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened (Matt 7:7)”.

“He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me (John 14:24)”.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him (James 1:25).”

We can make the Bible real in our lives; so, let us not be filled with fear or with apprehension, but put our discouragement away and have confidence that we can go before God by the power of His Spirit, through His Word!

So jump in and envelop yourself into the study of God’s Word. You may start off with Genesis or with Matthew or John. You may want to do a little OT and NT each time in which case I recommend the “One Year Bible” by Tyndale. Check out our Bible reading charts and how to information, we are here to help you!

We must be people who remove the objections, and study the Bible. We have to be willing and able to build the bridges to create the right common ground, so people can get more out of what is in the Bible. We also need to look at how we can avoid the counterfeit teachings and self-grandstanding that takes places in a lot of our churches and airwaves. We have to know the real One and avoid the distractions. We have to end the apathy, arrogance, confusion and falsehoods coming out of the church and keep the focus on the message of preaching Christ crucified. And we did this because it is about Him not us! All this is centered on the crucial point why we study the Bible. And that ‘WHY’ is because we need to study the Bible to bring our mindsets in line with His truth. We cannot do that when we refuse to yield ourselves to our Lord. We cannot do that when pride and arrogance are piloting our helm, or apathy running the bridge. And when we do get what we are supposed to do, we are then able to yield ourselves to His precepts. And when we are giving Him glory we are fulfilling our call and dispensing the primary fruit from studying the Bible.

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