

Being Bible Students

Deuteronomy 7:11-16

****Material for this Lesson gleaned from “Bible Study for Joy and Profit” by Charlie Bracket: I suggest you read it for further study on the topic as well as general encouragement.**

Intro:

A. Are embarking on a brief series of studies to encourage better Bible study habits for each of us:

- i.* Our hope is to spend some time discussing some dangerous mindsets prevalent in the both the religious world at large, as well as in the Church that we hope to avoid
- ii.* But we also seek to better equip each of us to engage in serious study of God’s word.
- iii.* Above all, we seek to encourage, not belittle anyone’s efforts or leave any feeling berated.

i. Poor Attitudes Popular with Many

A. “Leave Theology to the Theologians”

- i.* This kind of statement reflects an ever growing attitude towards God’s Word; that it can and should be divided into two distinct parts: Ethics and Theology
 - a.* Ethics, would define the basic principles of how a Christian should live his/her life (things everyone can agree on)
 - b.* Theology, defines the serious and weighty matters: How salvation is attained, how the church should be organized and run, what its work and mission should be, etc.
 - i.* What this “accomplishes” is that as long as everyone shares a common belief in Jesus, we can all hold on to our separate and favorite ways of being saved and worshipping.

B. “Gospel and Doctrine”

- i.* While many in the Church might see through this as an effort to say “I’m okay you’re okay”, those same Christians often want to divide the New Testament teaching into two sections: “Gospel and Doctrine”

- a. Gospel would be defined as the good news of Christ's death, burial and resurrection
- b. Doctrine would be defined as the teaching that follows as a result of that: How we are saved, how we worship, etc.
 - i. Before moving on, scripture does talk about Gospel, and it does talk about Doctrine.
 - ii. Scripture also talks about those things of "first importance" (1 Corinthians 15:3) and the meaty matters that some may not be able to understand yet (1 Corinthians 3:2)
 - a. But that is not scriptural approval to divide the two:
 - b. This accomplishes the same goal as the denominational practice of Theology/Ethics: As long as we all are united in the Gospel, it doesn't matter if we practice and understand N.T. Doctrine differently.
- ii. Gospel and Doctrine cannot be separated. They are a part of each other on a fundamental level:
 - a. Paul, when writing to Timothy uses the terms interchangeably: He warns against a litany of error and caps it off by warning against *"any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine; 11 according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."* - 1 Tim. 1:10-11
 - b. *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! Gal. 1:8*
 - c. In warning the Galatians against accepting a different, or distorted Gospel is he limiting himself to a teaching different about the resurrection?
 - i. Paul was obviously was concerned about them accepting strange teaching about all of his teaching, as the book will give witness to, not just the resurrection
- iii. "An acceptable Faith in Christ is one that propels us towards acceptable actions:"
 - a. Our two terms cannot be separated: they are bound together:

- b. Anyone who tries to shift the responsibility of coming to a complete understanding of Doctrine to someone else will be in for a rude awakening when called into judgment:
- c. No one but me will be there when God calls on me to give a personal answer for my faith: I can't explain that I am where I am because of someone else's teaching
- d. Therefore, the only logical conclusion is that I undertake my own intense and diligent study of God's Word:
- e. You can understand it, and God expects you to!

2. Is it My Personal Responsibility?

- A. What we are encouraging is hard: It involves effort. Daily reading of God's word is a great and wonderful thing to do. We have some here that are encouraging those efforts, and I feel like I can say that for them, that is probably just icing on the cake for the study they do on their own.
 - i. Unfortunately, for many in the religious world, that is the beginning and end of their study:
 - ii. Do you remember what it was like to take high school or college courses? Is someone called a student of a subject because they spend a certain amount of time reading about it each day?
 - iii. If you wanted good grades, How did you study for tests? How did you prepare for home work?
 - iv. What we are advocating, and will be discussing how to do in depth later, is a carefully designed, personally charted, plan of study through God's Word for every Christian.
- B. Nothing is more personal than Salvation!. The knowledge that leads us to it, and an acceptable faith in God cannot be gathered by anyone else.
- C. Any useful understanding of something will only come through using it in a productive way: (*Illus. of moving dirt in construction*)
- D. If God's word is going to propel us towards proper action we have to make it a part of us:
 - i. The facts that it claims have to be studied in order to be known and accepted

- ii. The principles that it espouses must be made our personal convictions
- iii. The attitudes it encourages must be come our own
- iv. The motivations that it provides for obedience and action have to find a home in our hearts: as a man thinks in his heart, so is he: *Proverbs 23:7*

Spend the rest of our time looking at a few basic reasons to study: We have heard that we should study from everyone! but why? Many in the church are not engaged in frequent serious study of God's Word-- and we should not resign ourselves to that fact: Shouldn't be happy that the only learning for many come from a lesson or a teacher in class. We want to be motivated to study, and to motivate others.

3. Reason 101: Study to Know the Truth:

- a. The Lord states in John 8:32, You shall know the truth and it will set you free!
- b.** The opposite that is implied by that statement is that while truth sets us free, ignorance will enslave us!
- c.** John states in 1 John 3:4 that those who practice sin practice lawlessness:
 - i. Those who sin violate God's law, the penalty for which is death: Rom. 6:23
 - ii. Scripture states that knowledge of God's law is truth: and that truth alone has the power to set us free, and remove the penalty of death from our lives
 - iii. There is no greater reason than this: and unless you are studying for yourself, how will you know that we is being taught in sermons and classes is truth?

4. Study to be Pleasing to God:

- a. God has always placed a strong emphasis on knowing His Word. From start to finish it is seen throughout the Bible
 - i. In the Garden of Eden, God was displeased that Adam and Eve had made the choice to give heed to a Word other than His. In Gen. 3:11, 17 He challenges them about who they've listened to, and shows them the error of listening to any besides Him
 - ii. As scripture comes to a close, Revelation 22:18-19 contains a strong warning for anyone who would try to add or take away from God's words, stating they would have their portion in the tree of life removed.

iii. From the moment that God's chosen people became His people, He promised to bless them on the condition that they knew and kept His commands. In Deut. 7:11-16, as well as the previous chapter stressing the importance of instilling the same in their children

iv. The New Testament is no less emphatic about this: Paul would emphasize to the Thessalonians that knowing God's word and walking accordingly is what pleases God:

1. *Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. (1 Thess. 4:1-2)*

5. Study... Because it is Enjoyable!

a. We need to remove the negative stigma of studying: Studying is not a negative!

i. Study brings joy: You are missing out if you've never experienced the rewards of learning something new, having a breakthrough after spending time tackling a difficult issue; It is like unlocking a treasure!

b. This may take time!

i. You may begin by thinking everything about Bible study is tedious and that there is no fun to be had!

ii. Consider the Lord's admonition in Matt. 6:19-21: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also!

a. Use illustration of stock market, or attracting a mate

c. It is because of these principles that the Lord tell us that we should invest in Heaven. Spending time in God's word will bring Joy as we learn more about it, but it has to be paired with a positive attitude.

6. The List Can and Does Go On:

a. Study to Increase your faith: Ro. 10:17

i. So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

b. Study to Teach others; He. 5:12

- i. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.
- c. Study to gain eternal life: James 1:21
 - i. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

Conclusion:

- 1. Will look in our next lesson at practical ways to begin a serious study of God's word.
- 2. We have not said that study isn't work: Proper study of God's Word is hard work, but it is a worthy work;
- 3. It is a work that God expects us to undertake, and to assist others in undertaking.
- 4. Study is not a drudgery, it is a rewarding journey. It is one that if you've not taken, we encourage you to start out on today!