

Being Better Bible Students: Lesson 3

“What Keeps you from Studying?”

Intro

I. We are going to go through our third lesson on Sunday mornings on the topic of “Becoming Better Bible Students”

A. So far, we’ve dealt with Reasons to engage in serious study, and starting points to begin some personal study, and we may have some more technical lessons of that nature in the future:

B. Today we are going to be dealing with a more simple and basic question: Asking, What are the things that keep us from studying like we should? What holds us back?

II. We need to ask ourselves this question because, while it may seem like an obvious statement, The Devil doesn’t want us to read God’s word in any meaningful way:

A. Without retreading to much ground from our first lesson, consider all of the things that we have to lose and the Devil has to gain from throwing up distractions that hinder us from solid personal study:

1. In **Matthew 13:4** Jesus tells of the sower who went out to sow: and in v 19 He explains that the seed is the Word of God, one that is capable of producing knowledge:

a) As a seed that produces knowledge he wants to snatch it away and leave us ignorant

2. Paul describes the Word as the sword of truth in **Eph. 6:17**, Satan wants us unarmed:

3. **Psalms 119:105** describes it as what lights up our path: The Devil wants you in the dark

a) Not as prevalent anymore, but commercials for starving children: show what real starvation looks like:

b) That is what Satan wants your soul to resemble: He doesn’t want to just see you a little be hungry, malnourished, He wants you starving:

(i) And if Christians don’t take the time to single out what distractions keep them from serious study of God’s word, he will get his wish:

III. So what stops me? What stops you? There are no doubt, many many reasons, but for our time I want us to deal with three of the most common excuses that I hear:

I. “Just Too Busy” (*Improper Budgeting of Time*) Psalm 19:7-11

A. When we make statements like this, I really don't think we understand the magnitude of what we are saying:

i. And yet, it is something that we may have been guilty of saying ourselves, or at least have heard others say at some point:

ii. Maybe we let a day go by without reading, maybe it was forgetting to prepare for our bible lesson, but it is an easy, comfortable reason to fall back on:

1. But it is a poor excuse, one that should ring false, and doesn't stand up to scrutiny:

b. **We mentioned** that we don't really understand how much we are condemning ourselves when we offer God this excuse: but in reading Psalm 19 there is at least one thing that should stand out that we've obviously forgotten: *Just How Valuable God's Word Truly Is*:

i. As a side note: Do we treat God's word like a treasure beyond compare? Do you often leave your gold and jewels on the bench at the building? On the dash of the car between services? Collecting an impressive amount of dust on the coffee table?

ii. But what about those activities that eat up our time: are they more valuable?

1. **Work:** It is a necessity: If you want to work, you've got to eat: But for many the drive to work more, to make more, can be what keeps them from the Word:

a. No matter how much we make: God's word is still more desirable than much fine gold v10

2. **School:** One thing that always baffled me was people skipping services to study for a test: It is beside the fact that those folks generally had plenty of time to do other things to let off steam before they made the decision they needed to stay home and study:

a. Grades are important: learning and improving ourselves is valuable: and yet no matter what secular subject you are engaged in studying, and no matter

how much percentage of our grade the test is worth: it isn't the source of true wisdom: v 7

3. **Leisure:** I love to relax: I love to relax doing boring things: I could find a great amount of contentment to pass hours sitting on a rocking chair on the back porch reading a book, and sipping a cup of french pressed coffee.
 - a. Most of us enjoy taking a break, catching a breather: And while it is a growing trend for many people to organize a refreshing weekend of study, the normal choice of down time for the average person is not meditating on God's word:
 - b. There are a host of good wholesome activities that we can engage in to relax, but they can easily be what keeps us from study:
 - i. No matter how relaxing it is, it can't revive the soul, or make the heart rejoice-- not truly: v 7-8

c. Something else that we've forgotten when we make this excuse: *Just how Powerful God's word is:*

i. Hebrews 1:1-3

1. The Hebrew writer begins his letter discussing that God has chosen to communicate His Word through His Son, The Word:
2. In the middle of that is one very powerful statement: the universe is upheld by His Word:
 - a. I don't understand all of the complexities behind it: I marvel at the continuous discoveries we make on our planet, and in the galaxy
 - b. I marvel more, that it is all held together by God's word:
- ii. The same Word that created the world, that holds it together, a word that is a treasure beyond compare, that is what we each have the opportunity to hold in our hands: *We need to make time*

II. It's just too hard to understand!

- A. I've heard this on several occasions: from those who grew frustrated from having to dig for the truth, from those who just weren't interested in finding it: While it is again, comfortable and easy to fall back on: it too is an excuse without merit:

B. We don't deny that there are some difficult sayings in scripture:

1. In luke 14:25-27 for instance:
 - a) Hate father and mother? Be prepared to die on a cross? Outside of the context that is a difficult verse to understand:
 - b) Even with the proper understanding, it is still very difficult to apply
2. Consider John 3:1-7:
 - a) Nicodemus was a smart man: And yet when Jesus told him he must be born again to enter the Kingdom, he was at a loss: How can a man be born when he is old: he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?
3. There are passages I still don't understand:
 - a) 1 Cor. 15:29, Baptism for the dead
 - b) 1 Peter 3:19, When did Jesus preach to spirits in prison?

C. And yet scripture acknowledges that there are difficulties: Paul and Peter were some difficult writers:

1. But God's word has been set up for us in such a way that there is a growing process:
2. Hebrews 5:12-6:1
 - a) This passage is written as a rebuke: but there is encouragement to take from it at the same time:
 - b) We don't want to be stuck on the milk of the word forever: but it should be comforting to know that we all start somewhere, and over time, we will be teachers of the word, able to handle the meat of scripture:
3. I would also point out Ephesians 4:1-6: the "Oneness Passage"
 - a) God does not issue impossible tasks:
 - b) God would not say there is a standard for His people to walk by if it were impossible to figure that standard out:
 - (i) But are we putting in the time?

III. I've Read it all before

- A.** First of all, this is seldom true for very many people:

B. Second, *endless repetition doesn't ensure that the message has been taken to heart:*

1. Consider the work of the prophets: 1/3 of the Old Testament, covering hundreds of years:
 - a) There isn't a lot of variation in the message:
 - (1) Stop worshipping Idols
 - (2) Stop mistreating your neighbor
 - (3) Start Worshipping the Lord:
 - b) Yet they are still described in Hoe. 4:6, and Isa. 5:13 as being destroyed, and perishing for a lack of knowledge:
 - (1) You think those folks didn't know the message of the prophets?
2. Consider the Saducess in Matthew. 22:23-33
 - a) V 29 is the key: they knew the scriptures, they used scripture:
 - b) You can know the Bible from cover to cover, word for word, and not really know it: the use of Scripture by Satan should be proof enough of that:

C. If you HAVE read it all before: you need to read it again:

1. 2 Peter 3:1-2: Peter wrote to remind them:
2. 1 Peter 3:15: peter wanted them to be ready:
 - a) How many scriptures come to mind, without having to look them up, for these common issues today:
 - (1) Baptism
 - (2) The end of Spiritual gifts
 - (3) Disapproval of Homosexuality
 - (4) The role of women in the church
 - (5) The ability of Christians to fall and miss heaven
 - (6) God's Word as our sole authority?
 - b) These are some fairly common issues: were you able to call answers to mind?
If so: congratulations! but theres more work to do:

Conclusion

- If we want to make an excuse for not engaging in serious study of God's Word, there are many more to chose from:

- The one thing they all hold in common is that they will not hold up when we have to give account for our stewardship of this great treasure:
- This is not a lesson meant to berate: it is one meant to exhort, and I hope as we've been studying this topic, we've been encouraged to become better bible students: