

Do You Understand? Will You Obey?

Mark Twain, an unbeliever, said about the Bible; "It's not what I don't understand about it that bothers me - it's what I do understand that is the problem!" Although he apparently never did anything about those fears, his observation was absolutely accurate.

Someone else observed: "You may not understand all you read in the Bible, but you can obey what you do understand." That statement is true, too.

What we're saying here is that the Bible, while difficult to understand in a few places, really has a very simple story to tell. It teaches us about God in a down-to-earth, easy to digest sort of way. Its commands are explained so that a person with little or no formal education can still comprehend and comply. Simply put, you can know and obey the will of God. The only remaining question is: Will you do it?

- ***Selected***

7 Things That Will Help You Grow Spiritually

1 - LIVE and WORK to reach others each day as if you knew the world were going to come to an end next Sunday night. Think of that feeling of urgency and priority! (*Read 2 Peter 3:1-12*).

2 - BE AS ENTHUSIASTIC about the church and its services as you would be if there were an overflowing crowd each time. Think of the interest, anticipation, and excitement of an overflow crowd!

3 - COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS. Make a list of the things you are thankful to God for and thank Him for them one by one as you pray in your closet. This will help you to be grateful (*Philippians 4:6*). It will also help you to realize your dependence on God (*Acts 17:24-25,28; John 15:5*).

4 - MAKE & MAINTAIN A LIST OF YOUR FAULTS. And pray for forgiveness and help to overcome them as you truly strive to overcome them. This will help us see that we are really not as good as we think we are and how very much we really do need Christ for Savior. It will also help you to sympathize with the faults of others (*James 5:16; Galatians 6:1*).

5 - KEEP A QUIET TIME. Set aside 30 minutes every day to spend with God in prayer, Bible study, and meditation. If you really love someone or a game you want to spend some time with them. Just so, if you truly love God you want to spend some time alone with Him. (*Psalms 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1*). First century Christians kept an "hour of prayer" (*Acts 13:1*).

6 - VISIT SOMEONE FOR CHRIST EACH WEEK. Visit some member you do not know very well; or a sick person; or a visitor to our services; or a weak member who needs encouragement; or someone who needs to become a Christian.

7 - REACH ANOTHER PERSON. Conduct a Bible class in your home once a month and invite your relatives, friends and neighbors to attend. The preacher or elders will assist you if you want them to. *Matt. 5:12-15; James 5:20; Daniel 12:3*. There are 168 hours in a week. If you were to attend Bible Study, morning worship, and evening worship on Sundays and Bible study on Wednesday, and 30 minutes 6 days a week in Bible reading, prayer, and meditation, and conduct an hour long study once a month, you would be giving God less than 10 hours a week, leaving you 158.

- ***by Grover Stevens***

Is It Narrow Minded?

I don't know about you, but I get a little weary of hearing the word "narrow" used as a slur against preachers who adhere to the Bible in their preaching. Sure they are "narrow," but so are factory workers, surgeons, druggists, and teachers.

The factory worker is so “narrow” that he uses micrometers and measures to the thousandth of an inch the bores and pistons of engines, electronic components and balancing wheels in timepieces.

The surgeon is so “narrow” that he insists on ultra-technical laboratory analysis and meticulously sterilized instruments of special design. Why is he so “picky narrow” that he makes his assistants wear cloths over their faces?

The druggist is so “narrow” that he just has to have a prescription before he will let you have certain drugs. He says he has to be “narrow” because government regulations are narrow, and even thinks it is for your good!

As you think about it, it’s a blessing that somebody is “narrow-minded.” And however much we need to be narrow about vital material matters, we must be infinitely more careful and exact about spiritual laws. God will not be mocked!

- by Jere Frost

Church Discipline Works!

The scriptures plainly teach the concept of church discipline. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thess. 3:14). ". . . with such an one no not to eat" (1 Cor. 5:11).

There are always those who complain that this discipline will not work. "It drives people away," they claim. And, because they do not believe the process will work, they often refuse to participate in it - continuing to open associate with the one who has been withdrawn from. Sometimes they will even openly oppose the disciplinary action and work against it.

Wait a minute! Who are these people arguing with anyway? Not with us! They are arguing with God! These folks need to be taught, and the teaching needs to begin with the very basic concept of faith in God's word and confidence in His plan.

The truth of the matter is that church discipline, when properly administered does work. In fact, when done correctly, it always works! 1 Corinthians 5 serves as an interesting study of the benefits of church discipline. Notice how it:

- a) demonstrates to all that sin can not be tolerated (vs. 2)
- b) proves our commitment to God and His will (vs. 4)
- c) shows the erring brother that we love him and are concerned for his soul (vs. 5)
- d) protects the rest of the congregation from a damaging influence (vs. 6-13)

If anyone still doubts the effectiveness of this approach, please note that the actions described in the text above had the desired effect - the erring brother was restored! (2 Cor. 2:4-8). This is God's plan, and it works. We must have enough faith to employ it.

- by Greg Gwin