

"How Can I Get More Out Of Bible Study?"

Many people ask this very question. It comes from a sincere desire to read and understand the Bible - just as God intended - for God did not give us an unintelligible book. He knows we can understand His word, and He gave us that word to comprehend. However, the Bible is a book which must be "rightly divided" as Paul said to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:15). One must study the Bible in order to properly discern its teachings. Timothy was commanded to study and read the Scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13). The fact that he was so commanded means that it was possible for his study to be productive and useful. As Christians, Peter exhorts us to add knowledge to our faith (2 Pet. 1:5). If we achieve this knowledge, it will come through study of God's word. No one will be miraculously endowed with scriptural knowledge in our generation.

If Bible study is to be profitable to us, we must make the proper approach to Scripture. Bible reading is different than reading the newspaper or a novel. Following some of these guidelines for effective Bible reading and study will help you get more out of the time you spend with the Word of God.

- * Read with reverence. The Bible is "inspired" of God. It did not originate with man. 2 Pet. 1:21 says that the Holy Spirit "moved" the men who wrote the Scriptures.

- * Read with a sense of need. Realize that you need God's instruction and that He will provide it through His word. Man is incapable of directing his own steps (Jer. 10:23).

- * Think while you are reading. How often have you read words but did not comprehend because you were not thinking about what you were reading? The Bible deserves meditation - deliberate thinking. Don't imagine that just reading the words of the Bible will help you. The upright man of Psalm 1:2 meditated on the law of God.

- * Don't "read something into" the Bible. Let the Bible speak for itself. So many people make the mistake of reading the Bible with their minds already made up concerning what it has to say. We must not decide what we want to believe and then go to the Bible to try and prove it. The Scriptures are profitable for doctrine (teaching) according to 2 Tim. 3:16. Allow the Scriptures to formulate your beliefs.

- * Determine to apply what you are reading. If you love God's truth, you must be governed by it. If you read the Scriptures but fail to do what you read, do not be surprised if soon your Scripture reading stops altogether. We must not only listen to the Scriptures, we must also obey them (Jas. 1:22). The Scriptures are not designed to be ignored.

Why not give these suggestions a try and see if your personal Bible study doesn't improve?

- by Mark White

"Throw Grandma Under the Bus"

The expression "throw Grandma under the bus" refers to a person who is willing to sacrifice even someone they love in order to protect themselves or gain some personal advantage. It describes the ugly practice of shifting blame, abandoning loyalty, or publicly criticizing another when it serves one's own self interest. Sadly, that attitude is all too common in our world. Some are quick to "throw" even family members, close friends, or faithful brethren under the bus if it serves their own purposes.

Sometimes this happens over nothing more than matters of opinion and judgment. One person likes one approach, another prefers something different, and suddenly a needless conflict erupts. Why? Peter instructed Christians to be "subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5:5). Humility leads us to yield, to listen, and to value our brethren above our own preferences in judgment matters. Not every disagreement has to become a conflict.

"But what if the disagreement involves doctrine?" Truth must always be defended. Error must always be opposed. However, even then our purpose is not to humiliate or destroy those who are wrong. Instead, we patiently teach, reason from the Scriptures, and plead with them to return to the truth (2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 5:19-20). There is a vast difference between exposing error and treating people as though they are disposable.

Too many seem eager to condemn, criticize, and cast others aside. That spirit is foreign to the teaching of Christ. Even when firm actions - even disciplinary measures - become necessary, it must be motivated by love for God, love for His truth, and love for the soul that is in danger.

Let's refuse to "throw Grandma under the bus" - or anyone else. Be humble in matters of judgment. Be patient in matters of doctrine. Stand firmly for the truth, but never lose the love and concern that should characterize every faithful servant of Christ. Think!

- *by Greg Gwin*