

THE ESSENTIALS OF BIBLE STUDY

"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6.62). Later the disciples said to Jesus, "You have the words of eternal life" (John 6.68). The Bible is not just a good book. It is the only book that comes from God showing us how to obtain eternal life. This makes studying the Bible essential.

There are also some essentials that we need to bring to our Bible study. 2 Timothy 2.15 tells us to have a passion for the word of God as in expressed in the words "*Be diligent*" (2 Tim. 2.15). This verse also tells us that there is a purpose to our study. **2 TIMOTHY 2.15:** "*Be diligent to present yourselves approved of God.*" It is essential that I approach my Bible study with a mind of seeking God's approval.

In Acts 20, Paul reflects on his work with the Ephesian brethren and says, "*I kept back nothing that was helpful*" (Acts 20.20). Whatever Paul preached, he did so because he wanted to help them be right with God. He goes on to say, "*but proclaimed it to you and taught you publicly and from house to house*" (Acts 20.20). Paul is saying that he is studying and preaching the gospel because he wanted to help these brethren go to heaven. This is why we study our Bible.

We find this same thought in Philippians 1.24. Paul did not know if he would live or die in prison. He contemplates which outcome would be more desirable. To die would be better because he would be able to be with the Lord (v. 23). **VERSE 24:** "*Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.*" The word translated as "needful" is the word "anagkaios." The root word "agkos" means "to bend an arm." It has as a prefix, "ana" which means "up." Literally, it carries the idea of bending someone's arm behind their back and lifting up. When you do so, the individual is at your mercy and will go wherever you lead them. Paul is telling these brethren that he needs to stay so that he can put their arms behind their back and lead them where God wants them to go. In other words, Paul wanted to stay to help them in their relationship with God.

I am not to bring to my studies an attitude of trying to prove myself right and prove someone else wrong. I am to approach my study with a desire to be right with God and help others go to heaven. We study to learn how to have God's approval. Do you have God's approval? Only by studying the Bible can you know. CLP

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"*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*"
-Mark 16.15

August 30, 2020

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

HAS GOD ABANDONED US?

Does it sometimes seem like God has removed Himself from our lives? Do you feel alone and abandoned? This is a year that will go down as one of the most difficult years in our history. Have you asked as David did, "*Why do You hide Your face, and forget our affliction and our oppression?*" (Ps. 44.23).

The apostle Paul asked the same rhetorical question in Romans 11.1: "*I say then, has God cast away His people?*" Notice how he answered. "*Certainly not!*" He goes on to elaborate by using two examples. First, he refers to himself as one who is benefiting from God's involvement in his life (Rom. 11.1). Second, he refers to Elijah who was being pursued by the wicked Jezebel who sought to take his life. Feeling abandoned, Elijah cried out, "*LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life*" (Rom. 11.3). What Elijah did not realize is that God, though seemingly absent, was working behind the scenes (Rom. 11.4).

There are times when you might feel abandoned and alone. Do not forget that God is still involved in our lives working behind the scene in ways we may not realize. Remember the promise that God has made to His people: "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*" (Heb. 13.5). CLP

THE SHOWCASE OF GRACE

EPHESIANS 2:7

INTRODUCTION:

1. After seeing the face of grace (Acts 11.23), we want to turn our thoughts to the showcase of grace (Eph. 2.7).
2. **1 TIMOTHY 1.12-17:** The apostle Paul puts the grace of God in display by putting himself on display as an example of grace.
3. We put grace on display when we make grace the emphasis in our lives. How can we show others the grace of God?

I. BE THANKFUL FOR JESUS

- A. Why was Paul thankful to Jesus?
 1. **1 TIMOTHY 1.12:** "*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me...*" Literally, empowered me.
 2. **1 TIMOTHY 1.12:** "*because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*" Diakonia – table server.
 3. **1 TIMOTHY 1.13:** "*although I was formerly...*" Who did Paul used to be? (Acts 9.1; 26.9-11)
- B. We will only be able to emphasize and display God's grace before others when we appreciate of Jesus who saved us.

II. THINK ABOUT JESUS

- A. How did Paul think about Jesus?
 1. **1 TIMOTHY 1.14:** "*And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant*" (cf. 1 Cor. 8.6)
 2. **1 TIMOTHY 1.14:** "*faith and love... in Christ Jesus.*"
 3. **1 TIMOTHY 1.15:** "*Christ Jesus came into the world*"
- B. We can emphasize the grace of God and put it on display when we think of our Lord as Jesus.

III. TALK ABOUT JESUS

- A. How did Paul talk about Jesus?
 1. **1 TIMOTHY 1.15:** "*Christ Jesus came...to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*" (cf. 1 Cor. 15.9; Luke 13.18)
 2. **1 TIMOTHY 1.16:** "*However, for this reason, I obtained mercy.*" People could see the changes. (cf. Gal. 1.23)
 3. **1 TIMOTHY 1.16:** "*in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern*" Paul talked about Jesus.
- B. How many people have heard you mention Jesus?

CONCLUSION: All sinned, but all can be saved. (Rom. 3.22-24)

FINDING ENCOURAGEMENT IN OTHERS

Returning from their excursion into the land of Canaan, ten of the twelve spies reported that "*The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there*" (Deut. 1.28). The people of Anakim were giants (think of Goliath; Josh. 11.22). When the people heard the report, they said, "*Our brethren have discouraged our hearts*" (Deut. 1.28).

Have you felt discouraged because of what seemed to be insurmountable challenges? No matter what hardships you experience, there is always someone else who has it worse. This does not invalidate the severity of your suffering, but it can help you learn from them and find strength in their example.

Consider the example from the apostle Paul. One would be hard pressed to find someone whose sufferings were more severe than the apostle Paul. If we were to read 2 Corinthians 11.22-29, we would find a list of the many different hardships that Paul had to endure. Turning back a handful of chapters to 2 Corinthians 4, Paul has a list of hardships in verses 8-12. Then in verse 16 he writes, "*Therefore, we do not lose heart.*" Despite all that Paul endured, he was not going to be discouraged. The next two verses explain why.

In 2 Corinthians 4.17, Paul wrote, "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" To paraphrase, Paul was not discouraged despite all his sufferings because he had heaven in his future. The next verse then says, "*while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal*" (2 Cor. 4.18).

We are comprised of the outward man which is the body and the inward man which is the soul. Paul suffered in his body. But his beaten, bruised, and bleeding body was only temporary. Knowing that, Paul did not focus his attention on the outward man which was temporary. He focused his attention on the inward man which was eternal.

Life is filled with heartache, disappointments, and insurmountable challenges that leave us feeling discouraged. Let's learn from Paul's example and give our attention to our soul and our eternal destination where there will be "*no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying...no more pain*" (Rev. 21.4). CLP