

Sunday, August 25, 2024 am

COMMUNICATING WITH GOD (23)

Bible Study - 2

Why study the Bible?

Last week we began a study of how to study the Bible. We did so by introducing our subject and then asked the question, “If a book was from God, what would you expect it to contain?” That is my way of introducing the Bible because it “checks all the boxes” (claims inspiration, God identifies Himself as the author, He proves it is from Him in various ways – historical & scientific accuracy, prophecy, etc. Also we noted that it would expect it to be timeless in its application and meaningful to us). Today I want to note some reasons why we should study the Bible.

- I. **So that we can know who God is** – we touched on this in our last lesson. Roman 1:17, 1 Corinthians 2:6-12 explains that we know the God because the Spirit has revealed Him to us. As we study the Bible, we find God to be the prime reason for its existence. Ephesians 2:8 speaks of being saved by God’s grace – a term that is descriptive of who He is and all that He has done for us.
- II. **So that we can see ourselves as God sees us** – Because God’s word reveals Him, we find within its pages that He has told us what He expects of us.
 - a. God sees us as His creation made in His image – Genesis 1:26, Psalm 139:14 notes that “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” He views me as valuable – Matthew 10:29-31
 - b. God sees who I am within – cf. 1 Samuel 16:7 – He looks at the heart.
 - c. With its pages we learn what sin is (cf. 1 John 3:4), and that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23)
 - d. He also sees me as redeemable – John 3:16, Romans 5:8 – while we were sinners, Christ died for us.
 - e. He sees us as capable of good works - Ephesians 2:10
 - f. There are so many other qualities we could consider in this, and we learn who we are before Him through His word.
- III. **What we can do to correct ourselves** – knowing that God sees us as sinners and in need of relationship with Him, in His word we learn that He has provided a way for us to be forgiven and have a relationship with Him. And, as noted, that IS the theme of the Bible, from the first prophecy (Genesis 3:15), to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, to His consummation.
 - a. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...
 - b. God has provided a plan through which our sins can be washed away – Acts 2:38, Galatians 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 22:16, etc.
 - c. He has also given us instructions on how to stay saved – through faithful living and forgiveness when we do sin – 1 John 1:7-9, 2:1-2, etc.
- IV. **To express your gratitude and love to God** – IF we appreciate the previous points (having learned them through His word), it ought to provoke us to gratitude and loving Him.
 - a. 1 John 4:19 declares that we love Him because He first loved us. Matthew 22:37-39 shows that this is the greatest commandment. 1 John 5:3 ties loving God to keeping His commandments – we need to obey Him.
 - b. With that love in place, we will crave more of His will. Consider Psalm 1:1-2, 119:47-48, 97-99 – do you “delight in His law”?

- V. ***To inoculate ourselves against error*** – we have recently addressed the dangers of false teachers and their teachings. With so much misinformation and error being taught, how can insulate ourselves from being deceived? The answer is through a thorough knowledge of God’s word.
- a. Ephesians 4:14-15, Paul noted that they were given teachers to keep them from being “tossed to and fro...”
 - b. 1 John 4:1 calls for us to not believe every “spirit” but rather to test them, whether they are from God or not. He gives an example in vs. 2 – if one does not confess Jesus came in the flesh, he is a false teacher. 2 John 9 warns of those who do not abide in “the doctrine of Christ...”
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 calls for us to “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” It is my understanding that the way the treasury department teaches its agents how to spot counterfeits is not by first showing them a bunch of them (though they certainly might show a few), BUT by having them study and learn everything they can about “the real thing” (texture, color, special features, tests available, etc.). When you know the genuine article, it becomes much easier to spot the fake.
 - d. 2 Timothy 2:15 – we are called upon to “rightly divide the word of truth.” Implied in that is that we do NOT wrongly divide it. The only way to accomplish that is by devoting time to learn the truth.
- VI. ***To better understand it*** – if you appreciate that the Bible is the word of God, you will want to understand its message as fully as possible.
- a. Ephesians 5:17 - This is an imperative – meaning a command (not a mere suggestion).
 - b. Colossians 1:9 – Paul’s prayer was that they be filled with all knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.
 - c. 2 Peter 3:18 calls for us to keep growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 - d. God wants us to seek Him (Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:6, Acts 17:27) - IF it is through His word that He reveals Himself, that is where we are going to find Him.
 - e. And this needs to be more than the surface meaning – the “surface meaning” is the word or phrase you read without digging any deeper. To fully comprehend what is intended requires that we THINK and DIG a little deeper at times.
 - i. E.g., Jesus warned His apostles, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” (Matthew 16:6-12). They thought he was talking about their bread. But Jesus rebuked them and asked them to THINK! With a little prodding they UNDERSTOOD He meant their teaching. NOW, why did Jesus not tell them plainly? Jesus wanted them to think.
 - ii. Consider Matthew 13:10-15 – when asked why Jesus taught in parables. He explained it.
 - iii. The Bible is designed to get us to think - Acts 17:11 – the Bereans investigated.
 - f. NOTE: The more you study, the better you understand. That is what is wonderful and powerful about the Bible. You will never learn it so well that you can quit studying. Ephesians 1:15-19 – Paul’s prayer was that their understanding being enlightened. Ephesians 3:3-5 – Paul said that he wrote so that they could understand. Hebrews 5:12-14 – the mature are able to discern the “meat” of His word.

- VII. ***When we study it we are blessed*** – James 1:22-25. The “blessings” come with many of the things we are discussing in this lesson. Also, as the verse states, when we obey God’s will, He blesses us in whatever ways that happens.
- VIII. ***So that you can teach it to others*** - we occasionally emphasize that God intends for us to share the gospel with others.
- a. Romans 10:13-17 – faith comes by hearing the word of God and that is dependent on it being shared with others.
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20 calls for us to go and make disciples...
 - c. HOW can we teach others what God expects if we do not know it ourselves? Furthermore, consider all the misunderstandings prevalent around us – can we give an answer for the hope that is in us? 1 Peter 3:15.
 - d. THOUGHT: One of the greatest hindrances to sharing the gospel message with others is fear of being “stumped” or rejected by someone misusing scripture. While it is certainly not a cure-all, the MORE we study (and work at teaching others), the less apprehensive we will be about this.
- IX. ***Because one day you will be judged by what it says*** – one lesson we will learn as we study the Bible is that this world has an end time to it. And even if that is a long time away (we do not know – 2 Peter 3:9-10ff), our time on earth is limited.
- a. 2 Peter 3:11-12 follows up this point by noting because of this, we need to be living in holy conduct and godliness.
 - b. Hebrews 9:27 – calls for us to realize that after we die we will face the judgment.
 - c. John 12:48, *He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day* (cf. John 5:28-29).
 - d. Revelation 20:12-15 describes this judgment as well.
 - e. WHAT can we do to prepare for that day? KNOW what God wants to you to be and do and apply it to your life. It is that simple.

In conclude with Psalm 19:7-11, David’s description of God’s law (revealed through His word).

These are some reasons why we ought to study God’s word. Others could be added to them, but I hope we have been impressed with its importance in our lives as Christians. Like prayer, Bible study is a “spiritual indicator”. Can you see how important it is that we devote time to the study of His word. What about you? How much time do you spend listening to Him? Think about it!