

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

- A. The Study of the Bible is a key spiritual discipline, Donald Whitney, *No spiritual discipline is more important than the intake of God's Word.*
- B. How to study the Bible must be grounded on why it is important to study the Bible.
 - 1. Men were inspired by God to write His words to us for our benefit. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work,*
 - 2. Let's be encouraged to study the Bible by the testimony of Psalm 119 and Christian leaders down through the centuries.

A LOOK AT PSALM 119

- A. What can we learn about God's Word?
 - 1. God's Word is true

Psalm 119:160, *The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.*
119:172, *My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right.*

- a. Henry Blackaby, author of *Experiencing God*, *You never discover truth; truth is revealed*
- b. Athanasius, *The Holy Scriptures given by inspiration of God are of themselves sufficient to the discovery of the truth.*
- c. Clark Pinnock, *The Bible is not infallible because it says so—but because Christ says so. There is no more reliable witness to the nature of Scripture than the one who died and rose to be our Savior.*
- d. C.H. Spurgeon, *Defend the Bible? I would as soon defend a lion! Unchain it and it will defend itself.*

- 2. God's Word opens hearts and minds

Psalm 119:18, *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*
119:105, *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

- a. Martin Luther, *The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.*
- b. John Flavel (17th), *The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.*
- c. Charles Colson, *Who speaks for God? He does quite nicely for Himself. Through His holy and infallible Word—and the quiet obedience of His servants.*

- 3. God's Word is Eternal

Psalm 119:89, *Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.*

- a. Martin Luther, *I'd like all my books to be destroyed so that only the sacred writings in the Bible would be diligently read.*
- b. Timothy Dwight (18th), *The Bible is a window...through which we may look into eternity.*

- B. Why is God's Word important for us?
 - 1. The Bible is convicting

Psalm 119:4, *You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.*
Psalm 119:5, *Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!*
Psalm 119:101, *I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.*

- a. Mark Twain, *It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand.*
- b. Author unknown, *Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself but because it contradicts them.*
- c. Author unknown, *The Word is like a mirror, it reflects the sin that is in our lives.*

2. The Bible gives wise counsel

Psalm 119:9, *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.*
Psalm 119:24, *Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.*
Psalm 119:32, *I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!*
Psalm 119:130, *The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.*

- a. John Wycliffe (14th), *Holy Scripture is the preeminent authority for every Christian, and the rule of faith and of all human perfection. It alone is the supreme law that is to rule Church, State, and Christian life, without human traditions and statutes.*
- b. A. W. Tozer, *The Bible is a supernatural book and can be understood only by supernatural aid.*
- c. Author unknown, *The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers.*

3. The Bible strengthens spiritual commitment

Psalm 119:11, *I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*
119:15, *I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.*
119:16, *I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.*

- a. Howard Hendricks, *The core problem is not that we are too passionate about bad things, but that we are not passionate enough about good things. Has the Word of God become your passion?*
- b. C. H. Spurgeon *Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years...Each man should use the word of God personally, practically, and habitually, that he may see his way and see what lies in it.*
- c. Gregory the Great (6th), *The Bible is a stream wherein the elephant may swim and the lamb may wade.*
- d. Chinese Student, *I am now reading the Bible and behaving it.*
- e. Author unknown, *The Bible is not meant merely to inform, but to transform.*

4. The Bible is personally fulfilling

Psalm 119:103, *How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*
119:165, *Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.*

- a. Chrysostom (4th), *It is not possible ever to exhaust the mind of the Scriptures. It is a well that has no bottom.*
- b. Oswald Chambers, *God's Book is packed full of overwhelming riches; they are unsearchable—the more we have the more there is to have.*
- c. Christian Johnson, *A Bible that's falling apart probably belongs to someone who isn't.*
- d. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *I have found in the Bible words for my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterance for my hidden griefs and pleadings for my shame and feebleness.*
- e. John Bunyan, *I never knew all there was in the Bible until I spent those years in jail. I was constantly finding new treasures.*

5. The Bible provides eternal hope

Psalm 119:81, *My soul longs for your salvation; I hope in your word.*
119:93, *I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life.*

- a. Ambrose (4th), *As in paradise, God walks in the Holy Scriptures, seeking man.*
- b. Augustine (4th), *The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home.*
- c. Antony of Egypt (3rd), *Be astounded that God should have written to us.*

CONCLUSION - STUDYING THE BIBLE IS WORTH THE EFFORT

- A. Martin Luther, Studying the Bible reveals Jesus Christ for Who He is and What He has done.
 1. *Every word of the Bible rings with Christ...The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid...Remove Christ from the Scriptures and there is nothing left.*
 2. Alistair Begg, *In the Old Testament, we have Jesus predicted. In the Gospels, we have Jesus revealed. In Acts, we have Jesus preached. In the Epistles, we have Jesus explained. In the Revelation we have Jesus expected.*
- B. Studying the Bible is the primary means of knowing God.
 1. A.W. Tozer, *The sacred page is not meant to be the end, but only the means toward the end, which is knowing God Himself.*
 2. *Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end.* Author unknown
- C. Studying the Bible is the primary spiritual discipline, Donald Whitney, *No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God's Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture.*