
Why Study the Bible Part III

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The Biblical basis for why we should read the Bible

In the last two months we looked at common objections, why people do not study the Bible, and how we can find the right common ground, so people can get more out of what is in the Bible. We also took a look at how we can avoid the counterfeit teaching's and self-grandstanding that takes places in a lot of our churches and airwaves. We have to know the real One and avoid the distractions. We have to end the apathy, arrogance, confusion and falsehoods coming out of the church and keep the focus on the message of preaching Christ crucified. And we did this because it is about Him not us! All this is centered on the crucial point why we study the Bible. And that 'WHY' is because we need to study the Bible to bring our mindsets in line with His truth. We cannot do that when we refuse to yield ourselves to our Lord. We cannot do that when pride and arrogance are piloting our helm, or apathy running the bridge. And when we do get what we are supposed to do, we are then able to yield ourselves to His precepts. And when we are giving Him glory we are fulfilling our call and dispensing the primary fruit from studying the Bible.

Before we can get into what the Bible says about itself we need to clear the skeptics away. First you need to remember the Bible is not merely one book, but a library of 66 books all with a unifying theme, purpose that is all divinely inspired by our Lord. This is important because of the primary objections of using the Bible to claim authority for itself is because this is considered a logical fallacy by academia, and educated skeptics. To them it would be just plain dumb to consider the Bible relevant because of its age and using just 'one source', itself to prove itself. It would be like quoting a single magazine article saying it holds all of the truth and quotes itself to prove itself. Versus using scores of separate research and information to state your case. To use one source is what crazy people and cult leaders do! But the Bible is not just one book! So there is no logical fallacy using Scripture to support itself!

To give our scientific friends a thought: In the scientific field of physics the holy grail quest is to find a theorem to unify all the fields of physics and natural law. To tie all of these scientific statements of facts such as gravity, things measured and things observed all together all in one neat package. Sounds easy? Well all of these fact-based sciences all contradict each other and sometimes even themselves! This would include quantum mechanics, Newtonian law, and Einstein's relativity. This quest is call the 'Unified Field Theory'. Some of the brightest minds that have ever existed such as Steven Hawking and Einstein himself spent all of their professional lives in search of it, but no one can find it. Why is this important or relevant? Because all those disciplines of science 'Fact' all contradict each other! The Bible does not and it was written over a 1,500-year

period of time. Even Shakespeare the greatest English work of literature of all time does not even come close! So we can take a confident look into God's Word to see what the Bible say's about itself!

The Authority of the Bible

Why should we listen to a book? Why is the Bible to be our authority for faith and practice, for life? Because God tells us so! That God is the author and has given it to us, so we can, as the Army say's, be all you can be! So again some would ask why should we heed this instruction, what right does the Bible have to rule over us? Well it does not rule over us, God as Creator has chosen His right to exercise divine guidance and authority, and has given us the institutions in written form, the Bible. As it is "*God breathed*" the Bible is the only infallible authoritative truth we have; thus it is true in all that it says. And what God requires of us. The Bible is actually the voice of God to His children, us. Thus because He is God and we are not, we should, we must, submit to His authority through His Word. Because He has the right to command, and we are his troops called to proclaim His glory.

On the dark side, we must be aware that many misuse the Bible for their own gain and pronounce their authority into it. The reformers freed the Bible from the captivity of those who would not allow her pages to be read. The Bible can never say what it does not, nor mean what it does not, yet so many trade the truth of His Word for human lies, manipulation and deception. We must free the Bible from those who dare tread their will upon its pages and hide its truth for self-gain and self-gratification. We must claim God's Word for what it is, His Word, His authority, and His right to command and teach us.

So what does the Bible itself say regarding the importance of Bible study?

A lot, but for this article we will take a look at two passages, one in the Old Testament, and the other in the New. Both of these passages are the foundation to scores of theological works for centuries. They convey to us the power and importance of what is important in life. Why we do things, how we can do things right and what we can do to be the best we can be. The basic 'meaning of life' stuff.

Duet 6:4-9

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." (NIV)

This verse starts out what is called the “Shema”, it means hear what God has to say. This saying was and still is the Jew’s rallying cry to know their Lord. This verse also points to the imperative of the next two verses that in a nutshell is about memorizing and knowing and doing God’s Word. God is commanding us to teach ourselves, our children, His Word so that it penetrates our heart, mind and will, that is every aspect of who we are. And then we are to write it down and bind it to all our daily aspects of life. And that call is still for us today!

II Tim 3:14-17

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (NIV)

Paul in this passage gives us a similar call to heed God’s Word. Here is the call to scrutinize and understand, then apply Scripture. This passage is not an instruction to give the Bible the occasional ‘once over’. It is the clear uncompromising call to continue in our studies constantly.

To make a point, I received an E-mail from a young man recently who believes he is anointed to bring God’s Word to the world. OK, that sounds good, but he went on and on that study is a waste of time and at 17, he did not need to go to college or seminary or be disciplined. He says he knows all that he needs to be a great teacher. So I asked him what will he be teaching. He responded “God’s Word.” I again asked him what he would be teaching and he replied the same. So I asked him specifically what are some of his lesson outlines and subjects? He said he did “not need all of that”, all he needs to do is show up and be like Paul in Acts.

So I was curious, and decided to check up on him. Perhaps he is ‘anointed’ (whatever that may mean to him). And would you believe he was just proclaiming nonsense in incomplete thoughts, jumping from one point to another point without an explanation or conclusion to another disjointed thought with no substance and so forth. His audience was intrigued because of his extreme emotion, and gestures. But when I interviewed some of the attendees on what he said, they could not reply to my question. Because he did not say anything. This young man with great energy, enthusiasm and ability decided to put off the call of Scripture and engage in the call of the stage. He may have had the call to preach, but not the obedience to learn and grow, so he was not able to be his best and truly do his call. His audience was not able to gain any substance from his message, only an emotional tickle. Of course he was more than capable to deliver a message without formal education, but this young man would not even

learn basic Sunday School stuff. He did not believe in what the Bible calls us in these two passages.

So I decided to share with him in a kind and gentle manner what Scripture calls us to do. I did not want to quench his enthusiasm. But he just went on and on how Paul was not educated. I tried to explain to him that Paul graduated from the highest academia of his day and was educated as all of the disciples were. But he would not listen. So I gave him some books on discipleship, he said he did not need them. I asked him if he read the Bible, he says he does. But he reads just his favorite passages (out of context) over and over. He will not read through a whole book, because the Holy Spirit told him he was anointed and did not have to! So I just keep him in prayer.

Now what if this young man was disciplined and was teaching God's Word? Then his audience would go away with "*substance*", "*profitable for teaching*"!

The context of this passage in Timothy is that he was writing to correct false teaching, people misleading others with twisted Scriptures not in their context. The Bible clearly states that a person without knowledge is ignorant. And when we are without wisdom, we are a fool. It does not come to us magically. Paul had a special 'anointing' and was preaching before the advent of the New Testament. Paul was also well educated as all the apostles and early church preachers were. Even the fisherman! Peter went to a Rabbinic school as all Jewish children did then. They learned the OT Scriptures as well as to read and write. The Jews believed in a firm education for all of their people. I know a lot of Bible commentators like to pick on Peter as an example of a non-educated person teaching others, but this is not true. Just check up on Jewish history and customs, if not, how did Peter write? He could not have without the training he had. Yes, we have the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit uses the Word too!

Scripture Calls us to be Instructed

These two Scriptures call us to live our lives as pleasing to our God. As countless other passages do, such as Proverbs 1, "...*fear the Lord*..", which is the understanding and vigorous reverence of God. Not the fear of what is under the bed as a child. It is the wow, the awe and majesty of God. And this understanding is wisdom to deal with life. To make the most out of what He gives us in our gifts and opportunities.

These passages give us the reason and the opportunity. We can teach ourselves, and each other to bring the Word of life in all that we do. And we can rest in the assurance that the Word is directly inspired, it is His Word's to be put into our actions, by His guidance and support. Thus, the opportunity is given to us to seize His Word so we can be wise and live our lives with purpose, direction, and meaning. Or we can ignore Him as most people do and live in a meaningless rut, as the Bible says: To be foolish. Or worse be teachers of the Word and

refuse to be disciplined ourselves, exchanging the truth of the Word for our arrogance and wanderlust!

These two Scriptures lay a clear foundation that we need to be educated from the Word. Because the command to teach and be taught from Duet. 6 combines synergistically with Paul's proclamation that the Bible is profitable for teaching in II Tim 3. The word "useful" (NIV); "profitable" (NKJV) implies that we actually profit from God's Word. But this type of profit is not money as we may see on some TV shows, but in what is important in life. That God the Creator of all things who has our best interests in mind desires us to learn and grow. And we do this through His Word! Thus we gain our values, moral center which is how we are to be to God and to those around us. And we gain our wisdom and knowledge, through the Word, as well as learning in life. But without the Word we may have knowledge from life, but we will not have wisdom! As I illustrated last month, a teller can tell the phoney bill better by knowing what a real one is like. The Bible shows us the real One, both who is Christ and how then we are to live. This is our instruction on how to live.

This is not a list of do's and don't's, but a love letter that lets us know what is best. This is how we are to view God and each other. How we are to conduct ourselves. How we are to measure our ideas and activities. It contains all we need to know for salvation and godly living.

NOW WHAT? NOW I KNOW WHY; WHAT DO I DO?

So how do we study the Bible? Countless copies of Scripture are sold and sit on shelves and bookcases unread! Why? Because people do not know how to engage it, how to read the Word of our Lord: Too apprehensive with fear of conviction or unsure how to go about it. This is what we do at Into Thy Word Ministries, teach you how to study the Bible and give you quality discipleship tools so you can "continue" to learn and grow in Him!

God Himself gives us the directions and the ability to proceed.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened". (Matt 7:7)

"He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me". (John 14:24)

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:25)

We can make the Bible real in our lives, so let us not be filled with fear or with apprehension; but, put our discouragement away with confidence that we can go before God by the power of His Spirit, through His Word!

So jump in and envelop yourself into the study of God's Word. You may start off with Genesis or with Matthew or John. You may want to do a little OT and NT each time in which case I recommend the "One Year Bible" by Tyndale. Check out our Bible reading charts and devotional how to information, we are here to help you!

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