

**Chapter Three**

**Bible Study**

**Memorize Joshua 1:8**

Having learned about what the Bible is, now we turn our attention to the importance of its study. The importance of studying God's Word cannot be overemphasized. It is through the study of the Scriptures that we are able to determine God's will.

1. According to Paul, how are we cleansed? (Ephesians 5:26)

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2. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he encouraged him to (II Timothy 2:15b)

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3. And this is important because (II Timothy 3:17)

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4. Bible study helps us to understand God, and our relationship to Him. Moses encouraged the Israelites to study God's Word and pass it on to their children. In Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Moses said

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5. Why do you think this is important?

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6. We grow in our faith by taking in God's Word, and then putting it into practice. According to Hebrews 5:13-14, what is the benefit of maturing in the faith?

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7. On a missionary journey, the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel to the Bereans. According to Acts 17:11, why were the Bereans commended?

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Personal Bible study is important because you will be reading the absolute truth. This helps to prevent false doctrine from swaying you. The Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders of the potential for false teachers and doctrines. Look at the passage below:

*"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:27-31)*

When we study our Bible, it is important to have a method in place so we can get the most out of our study.

Step 1: Be consistent. Setting aside time every day for prayer and study will ensure a good habit is developed. As you progress, you will feel empty whenever you miss your daily time in the Word.

8. What does God say about consistency in the study of His Word?

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(Joshua 1:8)

Step 2: Be prayerful. Before we can ever hope to understand what God has said and how it applies to us, we must ask for His help, because of the nature of the Word.

9. In John 6:63, what does Jesus say about this?

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Paul agrees in his letter to the church in Corinth:

*"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (I Corinthians 2:13-14)

10. When we pray for guidance, we must be open and honest before the Lord. According to the psalmist, we must be right before God when we are in prayer. Look at Psalm 66:18, and write what it means to you.

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Prayer is nothing more than having a conversation with God. You do not need to have a "prayer formula," and you do not need to include "religious" words. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He provided them with an example, or rather, an outline. But this prayer example was never meant to be a substitute for your own words. Instead, you can use the outline to form your own prayers.

Let us take a look at what is known as the Lord's Prayer. It is found in Matthew 6:9-13, and Luke 11:2-4.

*"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."* Notice how the beginning of the prayer praises God and honors Him. In your own prayers, you will want to do the same in your own words.

*"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* Next, we ask that God's will be done. We ask that it be done on earth *as it is* in Heaven. In Heaven, no one disputes with God. There is no debate, no negotiating. This should be our heartfelt desire as well.

*"Give us this day our daily bread."* Now we ask for God's gracious provision. We ask Him to supply us. This is where you will want to express the desires of your heart.

*"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."* This part makes so many uncomfortable. That is because this part is conditional. We ask for our sins to be forgiven *as* (or, in the same way) we have forgiven others.

*"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"* This is where we ask for divine guidance and protection from our flesh and the powers of the evil one.

*"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."* We finish our prayer by glorifying God once again--a fitting end to any prayer.

Step 3: The Reading. An initial read of the text is important to get an overview of what the author has to say. After the initial reading of the text, you will want to dig deeper. You can do this by asking questions about what you are reading. This is where you want to look for the facts that are in the text.

As you dig into the text after the initial reading, you might consider having something to write with so you can take notes. Questions to ask include: To whom was this written? Who wrote it? What is he talking about? Where are the people in the text? When did it happen? Why is he writing the text?

Other considerations include: What are the key words in the text? What are the key phrases? Are there commands, warnings or promises in the text? How does this apply to me?

**EXERCISE:** *Galatians 1:1-12*

*"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

11. To whom is this written?

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12. What is he talking about?

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13. Where are the people in the text?

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14. Why is he writing the text?

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15. Write down seven key words you find in the text

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16. Are there any commands, warnings or promises in the text?

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17. What are they?

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18. How does this apply to me?

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To enhance your Bible study, you might want to have study helps with you. It is recommended that you have a Bible Handbook (such as Halley's or Eerdmans), a concordance (consistent with your Bible translation), and a Bible Dictionary (such as Unger's or Vine's). Additional helps such as commentaries are also beneficial.

It is important to remember though, that the Bible is its own best commentary. Scripture interprets Scripture, and does not contradict itself.<sup>1</sup>

Another important consideration in Bible study is context. Never, never, never take the Scriptures out of their context. That is how false doctrines can creep into the church.

For example, if you were looking for guidance from the Lord, you wouldn't want to search these Scriptures out of their context:

Matthew 27:5 *"And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."*

Then try to confirm that word with:

Luke 10:37b *"Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."*

We know that to obey these Scriptures out of their context would be disastrous and contrary to God's nature and will.

**FUN FACT:**

Martin Luther, considered the father of the Reformation, was a monk for many years, and lived in fear of God as Judge. To appease God, he would perform various rituals such as fasting, self-flagellation, and even climbed Rome's "Holy Stairs" on his knees, hoping he would earn less time in "purgatory." He spent so many hours in confession, that he wearied his confessor. At one point, he was sent to study the Scriptures, and discovered while reading the Book of Romans, that *"the just shall live by faith."* This was a startling revelation to him, and opened his eyes to the simple Gospel truth. Grace alone. Faith alone. Scripture alone.

It is through Bible Study that God was able to reveal grace to the man who would light a fire in Christendom and launch the Reformation, freeing people from a works-based salvation to a faith-based salvation.<sup>2</sup>

## **END NOTES**

1. © 2000 by The Word For Today, reprinted from Calvary Chapel Distinctives by permission of The Word For Today, P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. 60
2. Taken from an interview on January 28, 2006 and various sermons by Pastor Darrell Sparks, Berean Fellowship, Palmdale, CA