

HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

James 1:21-25

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Christians can never grow in knowledge, skills and be of use to the Lord without having a strong working knowledge of God's Word. The Bible tells how to be saved, how to get sin forgiven, how to develop the kind of relationship with God that He wants. During difficult times in a Christian's life, the Word of God can sustain and hold him/her up. It is not so much feelings or an attitude that gets the Christian through difficult times, but it is relying on God's Word. Christians need to open their hearts and minds to the Lord and allow Him to speak to them through the written Word. Here are four thoughts to help understand and study the word of God

I. GET A CLEAN HEART

1. **"...Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness..." (v21)**
 - To study God's Word and to understand it, it is not so much intellect that is involved as it is one's moral condition - purity of heart.
 - The word used to describe filthiness can literally mean "ear wax." - so one needs to "clean out his/her ears so he/she can hear the Lord speak.
 - Whatever hinders one from "hearing" God's Word, needs to be removed/cleaned out..
 - Perhaps one of the reasons so many have a problem understanding God's Word is that their lives need cleaning up.
 - Before one comes to study the scriptures, it is important that all sin be confessed and the heart searched to make sure all evilness is gone.
 - Get your heart clean before you get into God's Word.
2. Then there are the habits of living the old human nature way of life.
 - After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, did Lazarus continue to wear his grave clothes?
 - Christian, when Jesus made you alive spiritually, you need to put off that way of life which you had before He gave you new life.
 - Remember the prodigal son returning home from his wanderings, how he was dressed in rags?
 - What did his father do? He took the rags off his son and put on new clothing, shoes, etc.
 - The old way of living things were removed and replaced.
 - Christian, you are saved, on your way to heaven, but are there still some of the "old things" still there?
 - As one studies the Word of God, he/she learns how God wants him/her to live and there will be the need to get rid of some of the old ways of life and replace them with what the Lord has.
 - Don't you prepare the soil, get rid of weeds, etc., when planting a garden?

II. BE TEACHABLE

1. **"...Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls..." (v21)**
 - Have a teachable attitude - spirit.
 - Meekness is not a "sissy" thing but it is having one's strength under control.
 - God wants to put the Christian under His control, under His authority, sensitive to His leadership, ready to respond at any time.
 - It is being ready at any time to respond to what the Lord wants rather than doing what one wants.
 - **"...If any man will do (God's) will, he shall know of the doctrine..." (John 7:17)**

- Being teachable is learning God's truths not by just reading the words, but by obeying God.
 - That's a teachable spirit - receptive spirit.
- To study God's Word and benefit from it, one must be clean and have a teachable spirit.

III. PUT INTO PRACTICE WHAT IS LEARNED

1. **"...But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves..." (v22)**
 - If a person doesn't respond to what he/she learns from God's Word, that person is self-deceived.
 - Know anybody in church who is always shouting "amen, that's right, etc..", but never act or live through the week on what they just shouted "amen" to?
 - Jesus said, **"...Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man..." (Matthew 7:26) - "...Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it..." (Luke 11:28)**
 - It's not enough to hear/learn the truth, the Christian must put it into practice.
 - The way to understand the parts of the Bible that are not now understood is to obey that which is understood.
 - Why would God reveal more to a person who hasn't acted on what he/she has already learned?
 - Jesus said, **"...He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him..." (John 14:21)**
 - If a person doesn't keep Christ's commands, he/she doesn't really love Him.
 - To understand God's Word, one must respond to what he/she learns in obedience.

IV. ACCEPT WHAT THE WORD OF GOD REVEALS ABOUT YOURSELF

1. The Bible has been referred to as a hammer, a sword, a lamp, the bread, the seed and now it is called a "mirror." Within it's pages one finds a reflection of him/herself - what WE are really like.
2. The illustration James gives is of two people looking at themselves in a mirror.
 - One only glances at him/herself not paying any attention to what he/she sees, not noticing his/her hair messed up, unshaven face, dirt on the forehead, because he/she is busy and goes out the door looking shabby and awful.
 - The other person gazes/stares at him/herself in the mirror and "takes inventory," noticing every little detail, shaved, mascara, lipstick, hair combed, shirt/blouse straight, etc..
 - This is the way Christians are to study the Bible and see what it reveals about themselves and then do/change/start what is learned.

CONCLUSION:

1. To study God's Word, one doesn't just skim over a few verses and think, "that's it..."
2. To study God's Word, one must get his/her heart clean,, then have an attitude of wanting to learn, then after learning put into use/practice that which was revealed/learned and then to accept what God's Word reveals about one's true character/self and make any changes needed in order to be the kind of person God wants and to do what God wants.
3. So, have YOU ever really studied God's Word? Or have you just "read" it?