

STUDYING WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

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The need to study the Word of God cannot be emphasized enough. I believe one of the greatest challenges Gospel preachers have in their ministry is to help members recognize their need to study, as Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:15. As a workman for God, we should be ashamed not to know how to handle the Word of God. The only cure for this is to study His Word. Let me suggest three things one needs to remember when studying the Word of God.

THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

As we look deep into the Word of God, we should understand the need for having a proper attitude toward it. As we study the bible, we must understand it is not just an inspirational book; it is a book inspired by God Himself. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As we read and study the Bible, we should have a clear understanding that the words we are reading came from the very mind of God. Remember the words of Jesus to His disciples, “But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost” (Mark 13:11). The words they were given are the very words they wrote down, and these are the words we read when we study the Word of God. If one does not love and appreciate the Word of God, then he or she will never be able to study it properly. It will never mean anything more than just a commentary on life to be taken with a grain of salt.

YOU NEED AN OPEN HEART

Also, when we study, we should do so with an open heart. Luke wrote concerning the Bereans, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). “Readiness of mind,” means with a willing mind or that of an open heart. They were willing to make changes if God called upon them to do so. An open heart has always been needed and it is one of the more difficult things to convince people to do. In the parable of the sower of Luke 8, four different kinds of hearts are described. The last one is said to be a good and honest heart. “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). This is the kind of heart we need, a heart that will be open to hearing the Word of God and then making proper application.

YOU NEED TO MAKE PROPER APPLICATION

Of what value is the Word of God if it is not placed in one’s life properly? Jesus spoke about the attitude of the Pharisees and Sadducees and said, “All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matt. 23:3). James said, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jam. 1:22). James says when you are a hearer only, you deceive yourself. That is, you

are lying to yourself in telling your mind that you don't need to make any application to yourself concerning the things you have heard as it relates to the Word of God.

How often do we read a passage and then say something to the effect; that is me? What we need to say is, "He is taking about me and I need to apply this to my life." For example, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 about how love acts. Next time you read these verses, take and place your name in the place of love and when you finish reading it in this manner, ask yourself is this true about me? It might open your heart to see that a proper application has not been made in your life. God is not speaking to everyone else, He is speaking to me and I need to apply His words to my life daily.

CONCLUSION

There is no greater book than the Bible. We must read it daily, study it daily, open up our heart to it, and make proper application of it. If we will, God will bless us abundantly. And because we will be blessed, we will be a blessing to others as they see us walking with God.