

It Is Written

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DO YOU WANT BIBLE KNOWLEDGE?

by Gary Smalley

I once heard an aged gospel preacher refer to a comment he received from a person who appreciated his sermons: "I wish I knew as much about the Bible as you." His reply was, "Lady, if you study the Bible for as many years as I have you would know as much or more!" Bible knowledge was prized, desired and gained in the diligence of study.

Today, it is very sad to realize that there are many people who have allowed themselves to be convinced that the Bible cannot be understood. Many others hold the view that the Bible is very difficult to understand and for that reason they do not investigate it for themselves. How dreadful and dishonorable it is for people to not know what God has spoken! The Apostle Paul said people could have the knowledge he had by reading what he had written (Eph. 3:4; cf. 5:17).

In many cases, people who do not study the Bible for themselves have come to rely upon preachers to provide answers to their questions. Many preachers are very happy to help as many people as possible in gaining an understanding of what God has said. It is the mission of those who preach and teach God's word to "make all men see" or "bring to light" the wisdom of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3:1-ff). But we must heed the warning that Christ gave with regard to relying on men as a source of truth. Of the religious leaders of His day, He said, "...they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:14). People should study the Bible for themselves. If they do not, they become so easily deceived. (1 John 4:1).

Studying the Bible is not nearly as difficult as some would lead you to believe. Being a worthy Bible student is simple if you will follow these three basic principles:

1. Recognize that the Bible is the word of God. This amazing book is unique; no other book compares to it. The writers were men, but they wrote what the ultimate author commanded: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Pet. 1:20-21). This incredible one-of-a-kind book reveals where man came from, why he is here and where he is going. Paul said, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Jesus Christ respected the Scriptures and regarded them as the word of God (John 17:17). You are in good company when you so regard the Bible.

2. Hunger and thirst for righteousness. Following the Lord's directive in Matt. 5:6, if we have an intense desire to obtain "the righteousness of God" (2 Pet. 1:1; Rom. 3:22; 10:3), with the same fervor we seek food and drink when hungry, we will obtain it! When we develop an appetite for regular servings of spiritual food, we will indeed grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2). These are the ones who take advantage of every opportunity to discuss and learn from God's word.

3. Pay the price. Paul admonished, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." (2Tim. 2:15). Study is work. It is careful examination, analysis, seeking answers to questions with the specific purpose or intent to understand and learn. There is no "easy" button to push and no knowledge pill to take. This price is far more than most are willing to pay. The price of that filet mignon causes me to lose my desire for it and choose chicken. The price for knowing the Scriptures causes many to allow others to tell them about their religious views rather than going to the source of truth. Any who are unwilling to do what it takes to know the Scriptures will never know and understand them as they could or should.

Yes, friend, you can obtain a great deal of Bible knowledge, if you remember and apply these simple basic principles. If you have the proper respect for the Bible as the word of God, a burning desire for the

righteousness it contains and a willingness to pay the price for success, you can understand and know what God has spoken! And with that knowledge you can enjoy all the spiritual blessings that God has for man, which are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3). May we help you today?

Things Done Too Soon

By Greg Gwin

Procrastination is a common problem. Often, we wait too long to do things that need to be done. Frequently we lack a needed sense of urgency. In all spiritual matters we must guard against the temptation to postpone doing what is right.

However, there is 'another side to that coin.' Sometimes we are too quick to act. In certain areas we need to slow down, move more cautiously, and be careful that we don't do things too soon. For instance:

* Many folks must fight the temptation to grow angry in an instant. They have the proverbial 'hair trigger' and it takes very little to 'set them off.' These people need to learn that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," and so they need to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19,20).

* Some are prone to assume the worst about other people without sufficient evidence to support their suspicions. Too often brethren suffer long and bitter alienations that are sinful and unnecessary. We all should remember that real love "is not easily provoked" and "thinketh no evil" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

* There is an overly quick tendency to presuppose that certain individuals would not be open to the gospel message. We think that they wouldn't listen even if we tried to share the truth with them – so we do nothing. The parable of the sower surely teaches us to sow the seed everywhere, and let it find the true hearts that will receive it (Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23).

* Many parents are rushing their children into premature interest in the opposite sex. They seek opportunities for their adolescent children to develop feelings should be reserved for a later, more mature time. This push to awaken their senses in this emotional 'tinderbox' has left many families 'burned' with the sad consequences.

In these and other significant areas it may be that we need to 'slow down' a little. Think!

Are You Ready For Your Exodus

By Kyle Campbell

Peter, in 2 Peter 1:15, uses the word exodus (in the original Greek) for "decease" (KJV). When Peter wrote this, he was not going to be in this life for much longer. The children of Israel had an exodus from Egypt and one day, we must all have an exodus from this life.

Are you ready? If you aren't, you need to get ready by obeying the gospel. You can be saved from your sins and be prepared for your "exodus" by repenting of your sins (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30), confession of Christ (Matthew 16:16; Romans 10:10), and baptism (Mark 16:16; 2 Peter 3:21). If you'll then live faithfully (Revelation 2:10), you'll be prepared for your "exodus."