

Preparing the Heart for Bible Study

Ezra 7:10

Introduction

1. Every Christians has a responsibility to study God's word.
2. For many Christians, however, it is difficult to build up the motivation to diligently read and study their Bibles.
3. However, if we take into consideration the example of Ezra the scribe, perhaps we can develop the needed motivation to prepare our hearts for Bible study.
 - a Ezra 7:10 – Before Ezra did anything with the Law itself, He **Prepared his heart**.
 - b Preparing our heart will increase our motivation to search God's law and better apply it to our lives.
 - c We have an example in Ezra, and we have a command in Christ. Luke 8:18 – *“Therefore take heed how you listen.”*
4. We must prepare our hearts to hear the things of God and learn from them what He intended.

Discussion

I. Approach the Bible with Reverence

- A. To have reverence for something or someone is to fear, be in awe, or in a sense, have a humbling respect for who, or whatever it is.
- B. Depending on what version of bible you are reading out of if we read 2 Tim. 3:15 it will refer to the scriptures in the bible as either, “holy scriptures,” (KJV) or “sacred writings” (ASV).
 1. As they are “holy,” and “sacred,” one should listen as reverently to the reading of scriptures as if God were orally speaking at that moment.
 2. When the scriptures were read in the Old Testament they were treated with reverence by all the people.
 3. Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5.
- C. In this same manner let us determine in our hearts to show reverence toward God's word.
 1. This means that we will see our Bible reading as a need, rather than something to do when we have time.
 2. At least once a day we will set aside a time where we can free our minds and focus only on the word that we are reading: “And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law” (Neh. 8:3).
 3. This means that we will spend time thinking about what we read.

II. Desire The Truth

- A. A student of the scriptures must always desire the truth. Prov. 23:23; John 8:32

- B. If truth is our desire then we will seek to understand God’s will, rather than justify our own will.
 - 1. There are many who search the scriptures with false motives.
 - a. To prove what they’ve already made up in their own mind, as the false prophet who speaks presumptuously.
 - b. To find something wrong with the scriptures themselves, as the critics do.
 - 2. Only a person who has prepared their heart to search out the truth will be able to search the scriptures for what it is, not what he wants it to be.
- C. If we do not prepare our hearts to love the truth, God will permit us to believe a lie that we might be condemned – 2 Thess. 2:10-12

III. Expect To Understand

- A. Eph. 3:3-5 - Paul said that the scriptures were written that when we read we may understand.
- B. Eph. 5:17 – We are even commanded to understand what the will of the Lord is.
- C. 2 Peter 3:16: At the same time we are told that some of the scripture can be difficult to understand.
- D. For this reason when we must prepare our hearts to understand God’s word.
 - 1. We must be prepared to ask questions and then learn how to find answers to those questions.
 - 2. Therefore we must understand that simply reading through the Bible is not enough. We must work to understand what we read.
 - 3. Therefore it is written, “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15).

IV. Intend To Do

- A. Remember that Ezra prepared his heart to do the law of the Lord (Ezra 7:10).
- B. In John 7:17-19 Jesus taught that if we truly desire to do God’s will, we will be able to understand: “*If anyone will to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.*”
- C. There are many today who study the Bible yet either do not believe what it says, teach error concerning it, or simply choose not to obey it.
 - 1. Luke 6:46; Mt. 7:21-27 - Jesus said that those who call Him “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what He says will not enter the kingdom.
 - 2. James 1:25 – A “forgetful hearer” will receive no blessing, but that divine blessings are only for those who do His will.

D. When the heart is prepared and has the attributes here listed, Bible study will not be in vain, but be profitable to both us and to God.

Conclusion

1. Most Christians know that the Bible hold a great many treasures for those who search them out.
2. Let us develop in our hearts the motivation and the attitudes needed to search for those treasures for our selves.
3. If we neglect our responsibility to read God's word then we starve ourselves of the spiritual nourishment that is so vital to our lives.
4. Therefore I exhort all who read this to determine in your hearts to read God's word every day. Look for reasons to love it, devote yourselves to it and make it a part of your life that you can never let go of again.
5. If we can do this, then the benefits will be innumerable.

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