

Preparing the Heart for Study

Ezra 7:10

Every Christian has a responsibility to study God's word, but for many it is difficult to find the motivation to study. To help us become more motivated, we have Ezra the scribe as an example. If we learn from his example then perhaps we can develop the needed motivation to prepare our hearts for Bible study. In Ezra 7:10 it says that before Ezra did anything with the law, he prepared his heart. If we prepare our hearts for study then we will be better able to search God's law and to apply it to our lives.

Approach the Bible with Reverence

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. In 2 Tim. 3:15 Paul refers to the Scriptures as, "*holy Scriptures*," or "*sacred writings*," depending on the translation. Since the Scriptures are "holy," and "sacred," one should have a strong sense of reverence toward the reading of Scripture. It is not the ink or the pages that we must respect, but the One who is speaking when we read the Scriptures. In our reading we must understand that God is speaking to us. For this reason, when the scriptures were read in the Old Testament they were treated with reverence by all the people (Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5).

In this same manner let us prepare our hearts to show reverence toward God as we approach His word. To do so will motivate us to make reading our Bibles a necessity of daily life rather than a past-time. At least once a day we will set aside a time where we can free our minds and focus only on the words of God: "*And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law*" (Neh. 8:3).

Desire the Truth

A student of the Bible must always desire the truth (Prov. 23:23; John 8:32). If our desire is for the truth then we will search the Scriptures in order to understand the will of God, rather than twisting the Scriptures in order to justify our own will (2 Pet. 3:16).

There are many who search the Scriptures with false motives. Their only desire is to prove what they want to be true. They have no regard for the will of God.

Expect To Understand

Many people approach the Bible believing that they will never be able to understand it. Therefore, they only take from it what they want. In Eph. 3:3-5, however, Paul said that the Scriptures were written that when we read we may understand. In Eph. 5:17 we are commanded to understand what the will of the Lord is.

Therefore, when we study our Bibles, we must be prepared to learn what the will of the Lord is. We must be prepared to ask questions and then learn how to find answers to those questions.

Simply reading through the Bible is not enough to know the "whole counsel of God." As with any subject, proper understanding requires diligent study. God's word is no different. We must

be prepared to search the Scriptures. 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 Tim. 2:15).

Prepare To Do

Remember that Ezra prepared his heart to DO the law of the Lord (Ezra 7:10). 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.”*

There are many today who study the Bible and know what God expects, but simply choose not to obey it. Jesus taught in Matt. 7:21-24 that not everyone who says to Him, “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom, but only those who do the will of God. Also, in James 1:22 we are commanded to be *“doers of the word, and not hearers only.”*

Most Christians know that the Bible is important, but many have not prepared to diligently search the Scriptures. We have in written form the words of the Almighty God. Let us not overlook the significance of that. Instead, let us develop in our hearts the motivation and the attitudes needed to search for those treasures for ourselves and to learn and grow in the wisdom of God.

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