

## STUDY THE BIBLE!

I hope I don't have to convince any of you that the Bible is the most important book in the world.

Since the beginning of printed literature the Bible has been the best selling book of all time.

It is read by more people, published in more languages, and circulated more widely, than any other book in history.

Not only is the Bible more widely translated and circulated than any other book, but it is God's unique, inspired message to mankind.

But in spite of all this, the Bible is often neglected.

- a. Most people simply do not study the Bible as diligently as they should.
- b. Many people, including Christians, will frankly admit they do not study the Bible as often or as seriously as they ought to study it.

Many people have a superficial knowledge of the Bible that tends to mask the wide-spread ignorance of the Bible that really exists in our society today, and within many churches today.

You really do need to study the Bible, and I want to talk to you about that for a little while this morning.

### 1. You need a systematic approach if you're going to made real progress in learning more about the Bible.

I can assure you that our Bible class teachers at the North Hixson church of Christ **substantially** increased their knowledge of the Bible over the past 3 years as all of our Bible classes engaged in a study that took us through the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

- a. Every one of our Bible class teachers increased their Bible knowledge considerably, and it shows. How did they do it? (1) They had the desire, (2) they had a systematic approach, and (3) they put in the time.
  - ▶ And the students in their classes who applied themselves, and followed the example of their teachers, substantially increased their Bible knowledge as well.
- b. **You** can make that same kind of progress in your knowledge of the Bible.
  - ▶ But it won't happen just from sitting through the Bible class periods and occasionally reading the Bible in a random, haphazard fashion.
  - ▶ You've got to **want to learn** the Bible, you've got to use a **systematic approach** to Bible study, and you've got to **put in the time**: even if it's no more than 30 minutes a day.

### 2. There are several good reasons why you should make this commitment.

YOU WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT GOD, CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. What real Christian would not want to know **more** about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit?
- b. What true Christian would not want to know **all he can know** about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit?
- c. You can look at the heavens and know there is a God
  - ▶ **Psa 19:1 -- "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork."**
  - ▶ **Rom 1:20 -- "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ..."**
    - So, you can look at what has been made and know there is a Maker.

- You can do that without the Bible.
- d. But you cannot look at the sun, moon, and stars and know **why** God made you and **what** God requires of you.
  - ▶ You cannot look at a sunset and know what God wants you to be.
  - ▶ You cannot look at a tree and know how God wants you to live.
- e. To know why God made you, and what He wants you to do, you have to read and study the Bible.
  - ▶ **Isa 55:8-9** -- “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”
  - ▶ **1Cor 2:11** -- “For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.”
  - ▶ **Eph 3:2-4** -- “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles -- 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), . . .”
    - Notice: you can understand Paul’s insight.
  - ▶ **Matt 11:28-29** -- “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”
    - Notice: you can learn from Jesus.
- f. But you are not likely to get very far beyond a superficial knowledge of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit if all you do is a sort of haphazard, random, hit-or-miss (mostly miss) kind of study.
  - ▶ It’s going to take a real commitment, a systematic approach, and time.

#### IT WILL HELP TO ENSURE YOUR ULTIMATE SALVATION

- a. I’m sure you know that people are saved by the gospel.
  - ▶ **Rom 1:16** -- “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
  - ▶ **John 8:32** -- “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
- b. But it doesn’t stop there: Not only are you **saved** by the influence of God’s Word upon your heart, but you **stay saved** by the continuing influence of God’s Word upon your heart.
  - ▶ **Jas 1:21** -- “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”
    - Notice: written to people already Christians.
  - ▶ **Ac 20:32** -- “
  - ▶ **2Pet 1:10-11** (notice: “if you do these things” — **what** things? v5-7)
  - ▶ **Heb 5:11-13** (would you be embarrassed for others to know how little you know about the Bible? I’m not talking about how little you know compared to others, but compared to what you could know and should know because of the time you’ve had to come to know it!)
  - ▶ **1Pet 2:2** -- “. . . as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, . . .”
    - Is that the way you desire to know God’s Word?

#### IT WILL HELP YOU TO LIVE A BETTER LIFE

- a. I’m sure you are struggling to live a better life if you’re struggling at all.
  - ▶ We don’t all have the same weaknesses, but we all have weaknesses
  - ▶ We don’t all face the same temptations, but we all face temptations
  - ▶ We don’t all commit the same sins, but we all sin

- b. Learning more about God's Word will help you in your struggle to overcome your weaknesses and sins and live a better life.
- ▶ Psa 119:11 -- "Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!"
  - ▶ Psa 19:7-11 -- "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward."
  - ▶ Psa 1:1-3 -- "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."

#### YOU WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO DEFEND THE TRUTH AND REFUTE ERROR

- a. And we all have a responsibility to do just that.
- ▶ Certainly the elders of the church have that responsibility.
    - In giving the qualifications for elders in Titus, chapter 1, Paul says: "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict" (Tit 1:9).
- b. But it's not just the elders who have a responsibility to defend the truth and expose error -- we all have that responsibility.
- ▶ Listen carefully to the first 4 verses of the epistle of Jude: "Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: 2 Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."
  - ▶ And listen to Peter in 1Pet 3:15 -- "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"
- c. And we have examples in the New Testament of Christians in the 1st century taking that responsibility seriously.
- ▶ Paul
    - Gal 2:4-5 -- "And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
  - ▶ Paul and Barnabas
    - Ac 15:1-2 -- "And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' 2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question."
  - ▶ Priscilla and Aquila
    - Ac 18:24-26 -- "Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and

taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

- d. There will always be false teachers among us.
  - ▶ 2Pet 2:1-2 -- “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.”
  - ▶ 1Tim 4:1-3 -- “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”
- e. Only those who “believe and know the truth” can respond to the challenge of the false teachers.

So, there are many good reasons why you should commit yourself to diligent Bible study.

- a. You will learn more about God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
- b. You will help to ensure your ultimate salvation.
- c. It will help you to live a better life.
- d. And you will be better able to defend the truth and refute error.

### **Conclusion.**

I want you to face, with me, 3 personal questions:

- a. How much do you know about the Bible in comparison to what you ought to know? (Considering how long you’ve been a Christian)
- b. How much more do you know now than you did a year ago? How much real progress have you made?
- c. How much more will you know a year from now if you only do what you’ve been doing over the past year?
  - ▶ If you don’t make the commitment I’m talking about, if you don’t use a systematic approach to your Bible study, if you don’t put any more time into it ... how much more will you know about God’s Word a year from now?