

Bible Study Lesson One

Focal Texts: Psalm 119:9-16; Acts 17:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Background: Psalm 119:9-16; Acts 17:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Teaching Aim: To lead members to gain a renewed understanding of why it is so important for them to be students of God's Word.

Connect with Life: Begin with the following material taken from an article entitled, "How to Generate Excitement for Bible Study" by Lucien E. Coleman: "The Bible is an exciting Book by almost any measure which can be applied to it. The fact that our people often approach Bible study with a spirit of dullness betrays the fact that human beings have managed to make the Bible something less than it really is—a living, dynamic Book. A few years ago, James Smart wrote some startling words, disturbing words. He said, 'The voice of the Scriptures is falling silent in the preaching and teaching of the church and in the consciousness of Christian people, a silence that is perceptible even among those who are most insistent upon their devotion to the Scriptures.' He did not mean, of course, that people don't respect the Bible. He meant, simply, that people—even church-going people—do not know it. Though thousands hold it in their hands, this does not mean that it is in their heads and hearts."

Allow time for members to respond to this article. Do they think these accusations to be true? If so, what should be done about it? Our study for today will examine three reasons why the study of God's Word is so very essential for every Christian.

Guide Bible Study: Ask members to discover different aspects of the following reasons for the importance of Bible study in the related sections of verses:

1. Bible study leads to salvation (Acts 17:10-12).
 - a. This is a picture of seekers of the truth in God's Word. "The Greek word for 'examine' came from the legal system in the first century. It meant to investigate thoroughly without bias. These Jews in Berea were willing to take an unbiased approach to Paul's teaching and compared it to the Scripture."
 - b. Many of them became Christians. "Ever since the time this record was provided by Luke, people who are open to God's word and are willing to study its truth impartially have been referred to as 'Bereans.' We can learn from their example."
2. Bible study then leads to spiritual growth (II Timothy 3:14-17).
 - a. This time of growth should begin as early in life as possible and immediately after our salvation experience (14-15). "Paul admonished Timothy to continue the journey of learning that had characterized his life in Christ. He

- also reminded him of his family's commitment to biblical truth and how vital this had been to his own salvation.”
- b. The Holy Spirit will give us confidence in the truth of God's Word (16a). The Bible is “God-breathed.” Read it and use it to guide your conduct. “This word hearkens back to the story of creation where God's breath contained creative authority.” “The Scripture is the very ‘word’ of God, revealed by his breath. This is a powerful word image for the normal English translation of ‘inspired’.”
 - c. Bible study will help us learn doctrine or teaching (16). “Teaching implied the need for God's people to be taught the truth. The Bible contains the truths of God and thus, it should be taught to his people.”
 - d. It will expose our rebellion and errors in living (16). “Rebuking indicated God's need to address false doctrine and poor theology.”
 - e. Bible study will help us correct our mistakes (16). “Correcting is a word that referred to behaviors that need to change.”
 - f. It will give us training to live in God's way (16). “Training in righteousness is an overarching idea that means God's word can help his people live upright and holy lives.”
 - g. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us (17). “The result of the serious study and application of the God-breathed truth of Scripture is that the man of God can be appropriately equipped for God's service. Paul used the word ‘man’ in the generic sense. We all have the responsibility as disciples to study and apply the truths of God's word to our lives.”
3. And then the study of God's Word leads to life transformation (Psalm 119:9-16).
- a. Obedience to God's Word (9). “God's word was revealed through his behavior.”
 - b. A genuine desire to know God (10a). And to have an intimate relationship with God. This depth of desire for this relationship will always result in increased revelation from and intimacy with God.
 - c. Adherence to His commandments (10b). “One is to cultivate a pure lifestyle as if that cultivation all depends on one's self, while recognizing the reality that all depends on God's grace working in us.”

- d. Scripture memory (11). “God’s word is truth and our minds need to be shaped by truth. As we memorize passages from the Bible, we are soaking our conscious and unconscious minds with truth.” “Hiding God’s word in our hearts leads to behavior that is consistent with his word. So, in fact, hiding God’s word is one sure way of making its truths known in and through our lives!”
- e. Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance (12). It is from the Holy Spirit that we will receive the truth of God’s Word.
- f. We are to then share this truth with others (13). We must never be reluctant to share God’s Word or be ashamed of its demands. “The psalmist testifies to the transforming power of God’s word. This transformation can be perceived by our hearers. People are persuaded and transformed by the passion and conviction they hear from us, implicit and explicit in the word.”
- g. A genuine love for God’s Word (14). “He rejoiced as he followed God’s commands in his own life.” “The psalmist’s delight comes not from a quantifiable source necessarily; but rather from the ‘quality’ of God’s decrees—the power of ideas shaping how we remember and how we hope. This comes as we engage God’s word, and it answers the questions we raise about living this life.”
- h. Daily meditation (15). “Meditation means to consider, mull over, cogitate, and reflect on truth. It is not the emptying of the mind as some have suggested. In the Bible, this word means to saturate your mind with truth. It is both necessary and valuable to take time to reflect and contemplate on truth from Scripture.”

Encourage Application: Share the following from the article by Lucien Coleman: “People are not going to obey God’s commandments if they do not know God’s commandments. People cannot pattern their lives after the teachings of Jesus if they are ignorant of the teachings of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels.” Then share the following from the Study Guide: “There is nothing like God’s word. His word is worthy of our energy spent in memorizing, meditating, and meaningfully applying it to our lives. The path toward spiritual maturity is paved with the disciplined study and application of biblical truths. God’s word is powerful and is able to accomplish his purposes in our lives. As disciples, we should hunger and thirst for the wisdom of God revealed through his word.”

Then ask members to share summary statements related to this study that should serve as additional motivation for the importance of the study of God’s word. Some of these will include the following:

1. It leads to salvation.

2. It leads to spiritual growth.
3. It leads to life transformation in such areas as the following:
 - a. It leads us to holy living.
 - b. It leads us to a knowledge and love for God.
 - c. It leads us to saturate our lives with His Word.
 - d. It leads us to a deep and abiding relationship with the Holy Spirit.
 - e. It leads us to share God's truths with others
 - f. It leads us to increase our appreciation for God's Word.
 - g. It leads us to meditate and reflect on God's word through each day.
 - h. It leads us to actually prefer (overwhelmingly) obedience to disobedience.

Close with prayer that each member will prayerfully consider these factors as they evaluate the quality and quantity of their own response to Bible study.