

Who am I?

I am your constant companion.
I am your greatest helper or
heaviest burden.
I will push you onward or
drag you down to failure.
I am completely at your command.
Half the things I do you might just as
well turn over to me
and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed-you must merely be firm with me.
Show me exactly how you want something
done and after a few lessons I will
do it automatically.
I am the servant of all great individuals
and, alas, of failures as well.
Those who are great, I made great.
Those who are failures
I have made failures.

I am not a machine, though I work
with all the precision of a machine plus
the intelligence of a human.
You may run me for
a profit or run me for ruin,
it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me,
and I will place the world at your feet.
Be easy with me and I will destroy you.

I AM _____

THREE FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

1. It is not automatic

Heb 5:12-14 *In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths, you need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. Acquainted with the teaching, one ought to be able to distinguish between right and wrong without needing to be rebuked by the Lord's words, which are living and active, sharper than any sword, piercing even to the soul and to the marrow, and ready to punish every thought.* (NIV)

We all know people who have been Christians for many years but exhibit the traits of immaturity. Just owning a Bible and reading it will not produce spiritual growth.

2. It is a process

2 Pet 3:18 *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* (NKJ)

Regular study, along with prayer and constant application, leads to the development of spiritual muscle.

3. It requires discipline

1 Tim 4:7 *discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.* (NAS) or *exercise yourself toward godliness.* (NKJ)

There are no shortcuts. Diligence over the long run produces the most desirable things in life.

"The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavorable. Favorable conditions never come." C.S. Lewis

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship and discipline share the same root. The truth is, only those willing to undergo discipline can rightly be considered *disciples of Jesus*.

1. Maturing believers are called _____
2. I cannot be a disciple without being _____
3. The more disciplined I become, the more _____
4. Discipline is doing the right things _____.

What is needed is, *a long obedience in the same direction*.

BIBLE STUDY: A FUNDAMENTAL DISCIPLE HABIT

To be a disciple I must develop discipline habits. *your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*" (NIV)

John 8:31-32 *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word,, you are My disciples indeed. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* (NKJ)

Sustained Bible study is a key element in spiritual growth. The good news is, that the more you do it, the more you will want to do it. This class will equip you with the basic skills you need to achieve positive results.

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| <p><i>Sow a thought, reap an act Sow an act, reap a habit Sow a habit, reap a character Sow a character, reap a destiny</i></p> |
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Effective Bible Study

Effective Bible Study is the first in a series of special studies we will do each year. Each group of studies will deal with one of the things elders have outlined for the year 2007. One of the things elders have outlined for the year is an ongoing and productive study of God's word in every part of the River. We believe that when the Bible's character is imprinted upon us, we hope the lessons will inspire and equip us all to study the scriptures to greater effect.

VARIOUS QUOTES ON THE VALUE OF BIBLE STUDY.

Thinking Christianly is not simply thinking by Christians, nor is it thinking by Christians about Christian topics, nor is it thinking by Christians about developing a Christian line. Thinking Christianly is anything at all in a profoundly Christian way. Where their minds are so influenced by the truth of Scripture in their presuppositions that they begin to think that way. — Os Guinness

These are the words of God. Read them to be wise. Practice them to be holy. — Gillpatrick

I maintain that every encounter between the sincere Christian and the law of *thy mouth* (Psalm 119:72), however harrowing or humbling its import, brings joy as its spin-off... and the keener the Christian the greater the joy. I know for myself what it is to enjoy the Bible — that is, to enjoy the Bible that is in and through the Bible; I know by experience why the joy of promise and command is his *delight* (Psalm 119:14, 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 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2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2

How To Get A Grip On Bible Study

(Part One)

People offer many reasons for not studying and explain the tremendous benefits that result. Once people are convinced that they can understand the benefits, nothing can stop them.

REASONS FOR NOT STUDYING:

"I don't understand what I read."

God assures us that His word can be understood. Eph 5:17 says, "*do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*" (NKJ) God would not require what we cannot do. The following four suggestions will help you understand God's word.

1. Use a readable translation - Many people have difficulty following James and American Standard. Some of the words are antiquated which can get in the way. I recommend the following versions for new Christians:
 - a. New King James Version - NKJ: This translation is very old King James, but removes the antiquated words and phrases.
 - b. New American Standard - NASV: This is also a solid translation with readable language, however its sentence construction and word make for awkward reading at times.
 - c. New International Version - NIV: This is a good translation in the Old Testament. It has a few problems in the Old Testament accuracy and ease of reading, it is very useful.
 - d. English Standard Version - ESV: This translation has been out for only a few years, but has already proven to be both readable and reliable. It follows much the same translation philosophy as the NKJ and NASV.
 - e. There are dozens of translations you can use. Avoid relying too heavily on paraphrase *Version* and *The Living Bible*. These can be used for quick reading. Always compare them with a reliable translation for serious study.
2. Use learning aids- Inexpensive Bible reference books are available at many bible book stores. You can also order books from C.B.D. at bargain prices. They will send you a catalog if you call them at 1-978-977-5000 or www.christianbook.com. A disciple's Basic library should include:

- a. AA Study bible with cross references, margin concordance. However, I avoid the ones with concordance. However, interpretive notes. *Thompson's Chain Reference Bible* available in available NIV is hard to beat.
 - b. AA Concordance contains an exhaustive listing of every word used in Bible and gives you the reference to every place that word appears in scripture. Make sure the concordance you buy is the one you use. This can be used as a verse by verse topical study.
 - c. AA Bible Dictionary has basic information on most biblical subjects as well as valuable historical, geographical and cultural information. *Unger's Bible Dictionary* is a good choice.
 - d. AA Dictionary of Biblical Words provides a definition and usage of most important Bible words from the Biblical perspective. *Vines Expository Dictionary Of Biblical Words*.
 - e. Bible Software there are many software packages containing all of the above resources. Many of these works can be downloaded at www.e-sword.net good and *free!* program can be downloaded at www.e-sword.net
3. There are a lot of helpful books in the church's library that you can check out. If you want help with these, just ask!
 4. Ask someone for help - Books - Books can do a lot, but sometimes you need a "real person."

"The preacher studies and tells me what the words will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). It is everyone's responsibility to do God's will. You can't be saved by the preacher's faith and faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Be like a Berean *The Bereans were those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word of the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*" (Acts 17:11).

"I'm too busy." - You're right! If you're too busy to eliminate something that is less important (busy league or extra half hour of sleep). These are things you should eliminate. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Father.*" You might find it helpful to read *tyranny of the urgent* which is available for about \$1.00 from InterVarsity Press.

Bible study is boring. Read Psalm 1, it speaks of *delighting* in the word of God. Serious study can be hard work, and it certainly is not boring. We are sometimes boring; we often think the plainest of stuff is interesting, but nothing is more interesting than interacting with the mind of God!

The Value Of Bible Study

Identifies sin:

1. Rom 7:7 *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! For I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." (NKJ)*
2. Psa 119:9 *How can a young man cleanse his way? By keeping Your word. (NKJ)*
3. Knowing the Bible gives me _____.

Produces growth:

1. 1Pet 2:2 *As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. (NKJ)*
2. Acts 20:32 *"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the grace, which is able to build you up... (NKJ)*
3. Rom 10:17 *Faith comes by hearing...the word of God.*
4. I cannot have a lot of faith if I only have a little _____.

Frees us from delusions:

1. John 8:31-32 *...If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (NKJ)*
2. Th 2:10-12 *and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe lies, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (NKJ)*
3. The only safeguard against error is _____ the truth.

Makes us productive:

1. Psalm 1:1-3 *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that will bear fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither, and who will flourish like a tree planted by the rivers of water. (NKJ)*

