

GOD

The Importance of Biblical Research and Teaching

As we endeavor to live according to God's Word in this Grace Administration, we want to keep something very important in mind: God wants us to know Him and to share His Word. He doesn't just want people to hear enough to be saved, bringing them into His family. Let's look at a familiar verse:

I Timothy

2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

According to Jesus Christ, God's Word is truth (John 17:17). God wants us to gain a full, experiential knowledge of His Word. Why? Look at II Peter chapter 1, where we'll begin in verse 2:

II Peter

1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

1:3 According as his divine power (*he – God*) gave unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by them ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

God, our heavenly Father, has given to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. That's all things pertaining to life in all of its fullness; and godliness, a true and vital spiritual relationship with Him. Verse 3 says that we gain these things "through the knowledge of him that hath called us". We get this full, experiential knowledge of God by reading and studying His Word. And, God's Word contains many "exceeding great and precious promises" that we can know and claim in our lives.

From the next few verses, we see things we are to apply in our lives with all diligence: faith (believing), virtue (strength of mind), knowledge (experiential knowledge), temperance (self-control), patience (endurance), godliness (that true and vital spiritual relationship with Him); and "brotherly kindness" (brotherly love) and "charity" (the love of God manifested as we renew our minds). We then come to verse 8:

1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they *make you that ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (*stumble*):

1:12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

We want to have fruitful lives that are established in the present truth (the truths of the Grace Administration). When we know the truth, we are free (John 8:32). God wants us to know.

Ephesians

- 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
1:19a And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe...

Philippians

- 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment;
1:10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;
1:11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Our love will abound as we gain that full, experiential knowledge of God and His Word, and we can expect to be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

Colossians

- 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing (*growing up*) in the knowledge of God;

How do we “increase in the knowledge of God”? We need to go to God’s Word. We can read it or listen to someone else teach it. But, no matter how we get to God’s Word, God wants us to study it. We see this in II Timothy 2:15:

II Timothy

- 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The Greek word translated “study” is *spoudazō*, which has the connotation of using diligence, keeping in mind the brevity of the time (it’s the same word translated “endeavoring” in Ephesians 4:3 where we read “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace”).

A great example of people studying, diligently searching, God’s Word can be seen in Acts chapter 17, verse 11:

Acts

- 17:11 These (*the Judeans in Berea*) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

After listening to what Paul and Silas had to say, the Berean Judeans didn't just take their word for it, but they went to the scriptures so they could see for themselves whether what they were taught was true. Keep in mind that at that time the only scriptures available to them were from the Old Testament (up to Malachi), as the Gospels had not yet been written. They were searching the prophecies of the coming Messiah and what he would accomplish. The result? Verse 12 begins: "Therefore many of them believed..." Even after seeing what was written in the scrolls, not everybody believed and got saved, but some did.

This brings to mind an important point: Anybody, even natural man, can study, research, and even quote God's Word, but if they do not become born again of God's spirit it won't profit them. We see this spelled out in I Corinthians chapter 2, beginning in verse 9:

I Corinthians

- 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
- 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit: for the Spirit (*spirit, our gift*) searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.
- 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit (*life spirit*) of man which is in him? Even so the (*deep*) things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.
- 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
- 2:13 Which things also we speak, not the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit (*the spirit*) teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
- 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

As born-again believers living in today's Grace Administration, when we go to God's Word and diligently study it, we can expect all the benefits that God has made available to us, and the more abundant life is ours.

The people we read about in our Bible, however, had access to scrolls with God's Word still reasonably accurately portrayed. Today, however, there are no original manuscripts available. The adversary, in his effort to keep people from believing God's Word and getting saved and knowing Him, has nearly succeeded in keeping us from knowing what God really said. Our Bibles are based on translations and interpretations of whatever manuscripts have been found, and all of these were compiled long after the God-breathed Word was originally written as "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit" (II Peter 1:21).

So, today we are faced with a challenge if we want to study God's Word and know what He really said, reaping the greatest benefits as we apply it in our lives. Rather than just being content with reading and "searching" the King James Version (or any other single version), we each should research God's Word. There are numerous research tools available, such as concordances, interlinears, lexicons, and such: and with a bit of instruction and practice anybody can learn to do their own Biblical research.

Listening to teachings by others who have themselves researched the topic they teach is great, but to really make it our own, we'd benefit by doing what those Berean Judeans of Acts 17:11 did, not necessarily conducting a full research project for everything we hear or read, but at least going to God's Word on our own and working what we heard. And, even with all the wonderful Biblical research that has been done, there is still much more that needs to be researched and rightly divided.

In our research we should apply any and all the keys and research principles we have been taught and believe God for His guidance and inspiration as we put away any preconceived notions we may have. The more thorough our research as we adhere to these principles, the less the possibility of falling into the trap of "private interpretation": remember II Peter 1:20, which says "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation".

Once we have received God's Word, whether through our own study/research or hearing someone else teach God's rightly divided Word, we are to hold it fast (Titus 1:9). But we also want to share God's rightly divided Word with others so they too can benefit. We not only want to share it with others in the household, but with those who haven't yet heard so they can have the opportunity to believe and get born again (our ministry of reconciliation).

Our sharing may be by preparing a formal teaching; but can also be simply teaching an individual some truths from God's Word. Even when we simply speak God's rightly divided Word that we have made our own, we are in essence teaching.

While there are members in the Body of Christ with a major long suit in teaching (Romans 12:7) or a gift ministry as a Teacher (Ephesians 4:11), every believer is capable of teaching God's Word that they have made their own.

Here are a few verses that can help inspire us to get out there and teach God's rightly divided Word:

Philippians

- 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;
2:16a Holding forth the word of life...

Colossians

- 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory:
1:28 Whom we preach, warning (*admonishing*) every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect (*fully mature in the mystery*) in Christ Jesus ("*Jesus*" not in text: ...*in Christ – in fellowship*).

II Corinthians

- 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge (*experiential knowledge*) of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (*through the works that Jesus Christ did*).

II Corinthians

2:14 Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge (*experiential knowledge*) by us in every place.

As we teach God's Word, we make God known to others. We shine as lights in this world. We build up others in the household.

We've seen that God wants us to know Him, and in order for us to do this we need to research His Word so that we can make His rightly divided Word our own. Then, we teach God's rightly divided Word to others so they too can get to know Him and reap the benefits of the more abundant life that Jesus Christ came to make available.

- Dr. Rick Batt