

1 Reasons for Bible Study

Proverbs 2:1–5 advises, “If you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”

You may have known times when there was no rain for your crops or water for your animals and yourselves. You perhaps dug deep into the ground looking for a hidden stream. When you need something as important as water you try very hard to get it.

When you study God’s Word to gain wisdom and knowledge of God, you will have to work hard, digging deep into the Scriptures, just as you would search for water. When you work at studying the Bible, you will find life-giving water.

Jesus used water as an illustration of our need to have Christ in our lives. He said, ““Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”” (John 4:14).

To have this experience of drinking living water, a person must study the Bible daily. This lesson tells why we study the Bible.

The Plan

- A. God's Will
- B. Our Needs
- C. Our Attitude

The Goals

1. Explain why Bible study is necessary.
2. Describe how Bible study meets our needs.
3. Describe attitudes that affect the results of Bible study.

A. GOD'S WILL

Goal 1. Explain why Bible study is necessary.

If you love someone, you want to be with him and know everything about him. You want to understand his thoughts and share his feelings. As your love for that person grows through close contact, you become more complete and more satisfied.

God's will for us is that we love Him above all else. When we truly love God, we want to spend time getting to know Him. One way to do this is by reading and studying His Word. Then, our love increases.

Our relationship to God depends upon our obedience to His commands. The only way we can obey Him is to know what His commands are. The Bible tells us to give full attention to our work so that we can understand the Word of God and be able to teach it to others (2 Timothy 2:15). Jesus noted the importance of knowing God's Word: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). As we use our minds to search for the meaning of God's Word, we are fulfilling part of God's great command: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). In other words, to do God's will, we must study His Word. In

this way we learn of His commandments and come to love Him more.

In Psalm 119 King David writes about learning God's law. The word *law* in this psalm means the advice and commands given in Scripture. David repeats the idea that learning and obeying go together. He says, "I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands" (v. 6). Obedience produces understanding and wisdom to know the meaning of God's Word. Then we can apply it to our lives and teach it to others.

First Peter 2:2 notes, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." The apostle Paul, in Colossians 3:16, writes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Just as food is eaten and absorbed into our bodies to give us strength, God's Word must envelop our spirits for us to grow spiritually.

Studying God's Word is easier when we ask the Holy Spirit to help us. God expects us to study His Word. Thus, He gave us the Holy Spirit to teach us. Jesus told His disciples:

"When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (John 16:13)

Application

- 1** God's will for you is to
 - a)** have a relationship with Him built on love.
 - b)** always be very religious.
 - c)** become educated about the format of the Bible.
- 2** The study of the Bible is necessary for you to
 - a)** become a Christian.
 - b)** know God's will.
 - c)** prove your goodness.

- 3** Obedience to God's will depends on
- a)** responses you make when you are saved.
 - b)** learning what God's commands for you are.
 - c)** knowing that God will punish you for disobeying Him.
- 4** You can best accomplish the task of studying the Bible when you
- a)** ask your friends to help you.
 - b)** spend much time at it.
 - c)** allow the Holy Spirit to teach you.
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Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

B. OUR NEEDS

Goal 2. Describe how Bible study meets our needs.

God made us and is concerned about us. He knows our needs better than we know them. A master craftsman knows his product better than anyone else does. If a product does not work, we send it back to the craftsman to have it repaired. He makes it work again.

Our lives are broken. We have bad habits and do not follow God as we should. We need repairing—teaching, correcting, and reshaping. The Word of God is the only instrument equipped to make the repairs. Second Timothy 3:16–17 record, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” God begins to repair our lives when we accept Christ as our personal Savior. He cleanses us from sin and gives us a new start. He instructs us how to become like Jesus. The teachings of the Bible guide us in our growth and describe God's will for us in our daily living.

As God's Word makes repairs, it fulfills many needs in our lives. It helps us know the truth about our salvation. It teaches us what our heritage in Christ is. It gives us strength and power through Christ. It discusses how to be filled with the Holy Spirit

and provides joy and peace that come from God. It directs us to live holy lives.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us, “The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” The Word of God shows us when our desires are against God’s will. It helps us shape our thoughts to be like His. Our desires and thoughts are at the center of our spiritual life in the same way that joints and marrow are central to physical life. The more we read and study the Bible and listen to the Holy Spirit teaching us, the more we are able to know and do God’s will. We will have purpose in life and the wisdom to make the right choices. Psalm 119:130 notes, “The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” This light guides us in our daily lives. It gives us understanding about Christ’s return and our eternal life in heaven. The light of God’s Word changes us into the image of Christ. As we study, we take off our old self with its practices and have put on the new self (Colossians 3:9–10). Then the likeness of Christ can shine through us to a lost world who needs Him. When we truly know God, our spirits are joined with His Spirit which is the source of life. In this way our greatest need is met—the need for life itself.

Application

5 Who is best qualified to meet our needs?

- a)** We are.
- b)** Our parents are.
- c)** God is.

6 Circle the letter in front of the correct completion: The Bible teaches us

- a)** how to earn special favors.
- b)** God’s will for us personally.
- c)** the major religions of the world.

- 7** (Circle the letter of all the correct completions.) God’s Word meets our needs by
- a)** teaching the truth.
 - b)** condemning us.
 - c)** correcting our faults.
 - d)** giving instruction for right living.
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C. OUR ATTITUDE

Goal 3. Describe attitudes that affect the results of Bible study.

The Bible is different from all other books. We must approach God’s Word in an attitude of obedience. The apostle Paul was concerned about the disobedience of the church in Corinth and wrote them a letter (1 Corinthians) to counsel them. He explained that because of their arguing and other bad attitudes, they were not growing spiritually. Paul wrote, “I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly” (1 Corinthians 3:1–3).

Our attitude must include discipline. We cannot expect God to reveal things to us unless we make a real effort to learn. Jesus taught, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). We need to spend time in careful study.

Now, for our study to change our lives, we must be teachable and be willing to receive our heavenly Father’s instruction. Both King David and the prophet Isaiah admitted to God their need and desire to be taught. The psalmist wrote, “I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:102–103). Isaiah records, “The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning

by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught” (Isaiah 50:4). When we are teachable, we approach God’s Word humbly. We must not to boast, for it is God who made us what we are. God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By Him we are put right with God; we become God’s holy people and are set free. So then, as the scripture says, “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:30–31).

We can never learn everything in God’s Word, but we continue to learn as the Holy Spirit reveals God’s truth to us. Our learning will go on even in heaven, for God’s Word will not pass away.

Application

8 (Read 1 Corinthians 2:10–12 and circle the correct answer.) People who are not Christians cannot fully understand the Bible because they

- a)** are not teachable.
- b)** do not have God’s Spirit.
- c)** are not hungry for truth.

9 Our attitude toward studying God’s Word should include all the following except

- a)** hunger.
- b)** obedience.
- c)** self-righteousness.
- d)** discipline.
- e)** teachableness.
- f)** humility.

10 The proper attitude toward God’s Word develops when we

- a)** think we are wise.
- b)** open our hearts to receive His Word.
- c)** have learned everything.



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order, so that you will not easily see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Look for the number you need, and try not to look ahead.

- 1 a) have a relationship with Him built on love.
- 6 b) God's will for us personally.
- 2 b) know God's will.
- 7 a) teaching the truth.
 - c) correcting our faults.
 - d) giving instruction for right living.
- 3 b) learning what God's commands for you are.
- 8 b) do not have God's Spirit
- 4 c) allow the Holy Spirit to teach you.
- 9 c) self-righteousness.
- 5 c) God is.
- 10b) open our hearts to receive His Word.