

(Guidelines) Study the Bible

by J. Vernon McGee

The Bible needs to be studied intelligently in order to gain a deep understanding of its meaning.

Duration: 9:17

Scripture: John 5:39, Acts 8:30

Topics: "Bible Study", "Scripture Reading"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of studying the word of God. He mentions that Bible classes have been organized in homes and churches, encouraging people to study the Bible. The speaker shares the example of John Wesley, who was known as a man of one book because he dedicated time every morning to read the Bible. The speaker also addresses the misconception of devotional reading, stating that it should not replace studying the Bible in depth. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for individuals to prioritize and make time for studying the Bible.

Transcript

The Bible needs to be studied. I had, many years ago, several hundred students in classes in Bible, and these students were made up of all kinds of young folk, and among them were a few very pious individuals. And I understood these young people very well after a period of time.

I must confess, I didn't understand them at first. They acted very pious, but that covered up a tremendous ignorance and vacuum relative to the Word of God. And some of them would not study the night before an exam.

They always would give an excuse that they were busy in a prayer meeting somewhere or a service. And I would always be rather hard-boiled with them and say, the Lord sent you here to study the Bible, and that's primary. Someone's paying your tuition.

So the thing for you to do is, when an exam is coming up on the morrow, that you will know it's not the Lord's will for you to spend the night in prayer. Do it the night afterward, but not the night before, because He wants you to study the Bible. And I had a feeling that we had some that felt like they could sort of put the Bible underneath their pillar, and that during the night as they slept, that that would come up through the duck feathers, the names of the kings of Israel and Judah.

But I used to tell them, it won't come up through the duck feathers, and it won't come up by you ducking it either. You're going to have to knuckle down and study the Word of God. One fellow I never shall forget in a Bible class when I was in college, he said, Doctor, you've given us a section that's very dry.

And the professor, without even missing a step, he said to him, then dampen it a little with sweat from your brow. May I say to you that the Bible should be studied. And it's very important that we see that, and that we remember that there is certain knowledge that the Spirit of God's not going to give to you.

I do not think that he's revealing truth to lazy people. If you read the Bible and don't understand and then study the Bible, and that it must be studied, after all, you must put it in a category with any other book. You'd never learn logarithms or geometry.

You can't learn Greek by just reading a chapter in it right before you go to sleep at night. By the way, you may be shocked when I say what I'm going to say about devotional reading of the Bible, or devotional reading. And may I say that I do not encourage that type of reading at all, because I've learned over a period of years that a great many people who are very faithful at what they call devotional reading are very much ignorant of the Bible to begin with.

Devotional reading is generally done at a time in which it ought not to be done. I stayed with a family for over a week when I was holding meetings in a place in Middle Tennessee. And every morning at the breakfast table we had devotions.

And unfortunately, breakfast was always a little late, and Susie and Willie were rushing to get away to school. And I'm confident they didn't even know what was read. And Dad was wanting to get away to work, and he generally made it a very brief reading.

And always he'd say, Well, I'll read this familiar passage this morning because we don't have much time. And believe me, we didn't. By the time that the reading was over, these two children, they went away from the table like they were shot out of a gun.

And he got out of there almost as quickly as they did, and Mother was left with the dishes. And I wondered whether she had really heard whether anything would be read. I determined right there and then that in my home we wouldn't have devotional reading.

I've always tried to encourage the members of my family to read the Bible on their own. That's the only kind that is profitable. When I was brought up, that's not the way that we studied mathematics.

My dad didn't get the family around in the morning at the breakfast table and say, Now we're going to have some devotional reading in mathematics. And then he'd take up the lesson that we had for the day. I give you my word, I don't think we'd have learned much in the way of mathematics.

And I don't think you learn history that way. Now, somebody's going to say, But I have my devotions at night after day is over. Well, now really, don't you have it right before you go to bed? You've got one foot in bed already, one eye is already closed.

And again, you turn to a passage of Scripture and you read it. I've made a point never to read the Bible at that time of night. Now, I wake up sometime at night, have difficulty getting back to sleep, and I read the Bible and I find out, friends, it'll put you to sleep.

And if it won't, one of my books will. But may I say to you, I don't think it ought to be read at times like that. I think that you ought to read it when you have time, when you can give time to it.

And if you can't give time, you ought to make time. And you ought to set apart 30 minutes or an hour. And if you do things haphazardly like I do, then you will find out that one day you're going to read 30 minutes, the next day 5 minutes, and the next day 2 or 3 hours.

I find out that's the best way to do it, that is, to fit into my program. And I'd put down no particular rule, but I think each person ought to read it for themselves. I think that that is the thing to do to encourage boys and girls to read the Bible.

And I was delighted to find out when my daughter went away to college, and she got pretty far away from us and from other things. But I was told by a roommate that she got her Bible out and read it because that's the way we had done it in the home. I believe that is true.

Now, I know that's going to shock some folk and say, oh, I think we ought to have our devotional reading together. Well, fine, if that's the way the Lord leads you to do it, you do it that way. But I'll guarantee you, you won't be an intelligent Bible student after 20 years by doing it like that.

You have to study the Word of God. The Bible must be studied intelligently. You remember that Ethiopian eunuch? He was reading the scriptures, and he didn't know what he was reading.

And the Spirit of God got Philip to go down and join himself to the Ethiopian eunuch. And then he asked him, do you understand what you are reading? And the man was very honest. After all, he was the treasurer, and he was an honest man, and he said what I think a great many people ought to say today.

Well, how can I? I need somebody to help me here. I don't know what he's talking about. Is Isaiah talking about himself or some other? I feel that there must be this study of the Word of God, or there'll be no understanding of it.

Now, I have been deeply gratified to find that across this country and in other places, literally hundreds of Bible classes have been organized in homes where people can study the Bible, and many pastors have put in this Through the Bible program. They themselves have found it's been a blessing to them, and they have put it into their churches and asked people to study the Bible. That is very important.

It was said of John Wesley that he was a man of one book. Well, then what made him a man of one book? Well, I'll tell you what made him a man of one book. He got up and read the Bible at 4 and 5 o'clock every morning.

I'm told that he read the Bible in five different languages. Believe me, he studied the Word of God. And you and I today need to study the Word.

We need to get the meaning of the Bible, and that's very important.

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