

Chapter 20. The Bible Student

Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law, he meditates day and night. – Psalm 1:1-2

There is a loud call on every side for more, true, effective Bible study. Evangelists like Mr Moody and many others have proved what power there is in preaching that is drawn directly from God's Word and inspired by the faith of its power. Earnest Christians are asking: "Why can our ministries not speak in the same way by giving the Word of God a more prominent place?" Many young ministers leaving seminary confessed that they had been taught everything except the knowledge of how to study the Word themselves, and then how to stir up and help others to study it. In some of our churches, the desire was expressed that the training of ministers must address this need. It may look like a simple thing to find good men to undertake the work; and yet, men with theological training find it hard to turn to the simplicity and directness of an appeal from God's Word. Young ministers in training should be taught how to make Scripture the one source of their knowledge and teaching. Praise God that in student movements of our day, Bible study is given a place of prominence. There is a wonderful opportunity, as there is a very great need, for guiding to bring a full blessing to the individual lives, by allowing God's Word its true place in the work that must be done for Him.

Let us look at the principles underlying the demand for more Bible study, and how it can be truly effective if faithfully applied.

1. **God's Word is the only authentic revelation of God's will.** All human statements of divine truth, however correct, are defective and carry a measure of human authority. In the Word, the voice of God speaks directly to us. Every child of God needs direct interaction with the Father, through the Word. Because God reveals His whole heart and grace in it, His child can, if he receives it from God, get all the life and power that there is in the Word into his own heart and being. Second-hand reports of messages and events cannot really be trusted. Very few people can accurately report what they have heard. Every believer has the right and calling, to be in direct communication with God. God revealed Himself, and still reveals Himself, to each individual in the Word.

2. ***This Word of God is a living Word. It carries a Divine lifegiving power in it.*** The human expression of the truth is often mere concepts or images of the truth, appealing to the mind and having little or no effect. The faith that the Word is God's own word, and has His presence and power in it, makes it effective. All life and spirit create for itself a form in which it is revealed. The words in which God has chosen to clothe His own Divine thoughts are God-breathed and the life of God dwells in them. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. The Word was not only inspired when it was first given; the Spirit of God still breathes in it. God is still in and with His word. Christians and teachers need to believe this. They will then teach the simple Divine word with a confidence that no human teaching can give.
3. ***Only God Himself is, and most surely will be, the Interpreter of His own Word.*** Divine truth needs a Divine teacher. Spiritual understanding and application of spiritual things can only come from the Holy Spirit. The deeper the conviction of the unique character of the Word, that it is essentially different from, and infinitely exalted above all merely human understanding, will show the need for a supernatural, directly Divine teaching. Then the blessing, which is the purpose of the Word, will be released. The soul will be brought to seek God Himself, and it will be led to find Him in the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart. When that Spirit, in Whom God, so wonderfully, has entered our very life and identified Himself with it, is waited on and trusted, He wants us to know wisdom in the hidden part, in the heart and temperament. When the Word is prayerfully read and cherished in the heart by faith, it will through the Spirit, be both light and life within us.
4. ***The Word then brings us into the closest and most intimate fellowship with God – union of will and life.*** God has revealed His whole heart and all His will in the Word; in His law and precepts He shows us what He wants us to do; in His redemption and His promises He shows what He wants to do for us. If we accept that will in the Word as from God Himself, and yield ourselves to its working, we learn to know God in His will, in the power of which He works in us, and in which His love towards us is known. The Word works out His richest purpose as the Divine presence and nearness fills us with reverence and dependence upon Him. This should be our aim. This will be our experience in all our Bible reading and study.

Practical application of these four thoughts:

- In Holy Scripture we have the very words in which the Holy God has spoken and in which He speaks to us.
- These words are, today, full of the life of God. God is in them, and makes His presence and power known to them who seek Him in them.
- The Spirit will reveal the spiritual meaning and power of the Word to those who ask and wait for the teaching of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

The Word is meant to be the means of the revelation of God Himself to the soul and of fellowship with Him every day. Have we learnt to apply these truths? The Word continually speaks: *"Seek God. Listen to God. Wait for God. God will speak to you. Let God teach you."* All our Bible reading, and Bible study, must lead to this one thing: Encountering God. We must be men and women, and encourage others to be men and women, ***who never separate the written word from the Living God Himself, and who hear God in heaven speak every day.***

Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, I want to meet with You every time I read the Word. Teach me to read the Word in such a way that Your Spirit will bring the life and power of God into my heart and life, and change my behaviour and attitudes, so I can live according to Your will."