

Bethel Baptist Church
Dr. Edward O. Williamson, Pastor-teacher
Bible Study and Discussion Group Handout
February 7, 2024



Scripture: Proverbs 18:15

- *“The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear to the wise seeks knowledge.”*

Meditation: “An Intimate Knowing” from Devotional Reading – “Exploring The Mind of God (Hebrew Word Study)” in The You Version Bible App

- Knowledge is “yada” in Hebrew
- When you read the word knowledge in the Bible, think like an ancient Semite – think in terms of relationships.
- A better word translating “yada” for our cultural perspective is “intimacy”...
- “The heart of the prudent becomes *intimate* with God, and the ear of the wise seeks words of *intimacy*.”

Prayer

Encounters with God: Transforming Your Bible Study

By Henry, Melvin, and Norman Blackaby

Chapter 7 – “Questions for Personal Preparation”

*“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;
And these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to
Come to Me that you may have life.”
John 5:39, 40*

Introduction – First Things First

- Anytime you come to the Bible with the intention of meeting with God, you need to prepare for such an encounter.
- You need to begin by asking yourself questions for personal preparation.
- Your relationship to God is the greatest hermeneutical key to unlocking the Scriptures.

- Rules for interpreting the Bible must be guided by a relationship to the God of the Bible.
- Your relationship to God through Jesus Christ is the vehicle God uses to help you hear and understand His Word, the Bible; and you really can't be successful without this relationship.

I. Personal Preparation Questions:

- Question #1 – Is my heart clean before God?
 - When you come to the Bible with the intention of meeting with God, you need to prepare yourself for entering a holy place. (see Psalm 24:3-6)
 - God will either see you washed in the blood of Christ and clothed in His righteousness or He will see your sin.
 - God will not open your eyes to see His kingdom until He first opens your eyes to see your sin.
 - Cleansing must happen before He takes your hand and walks you through the Most Holy Place...Allow God to search your heart and bring cleansing of sin, so that He may lead you in “the way everlasting.” (see Psalm 139:23, 24; 1 John 1:9)
- Question #2 – Is there current evidence of the Holy Spirit in my Life?
 - The presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is also necessary for biblical interpretation.
 - You must be “filled” with the Spirit. This is not just the initial work of salvation, but the continual work of the Holy Spirit in your life. (see John 16:13)
 - The question is not “Were you saved?” The question is if there is current evidence of the Holy Spirit controlling your life and leading you to know and do the will of the Lord. Can you see the fruit of the Spirit in your life? (see Galatians 5:22, 23)
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you...Then watch as He takes the Scriptures and guides you into all truth.
- Question #3 – What has God recently said to me?
 - God does not speak in isolation or move in some way detached from what He is already doing. He knows what He is doing and where He is going.

- Take a moment and review what you know God has already been speaking to you about in previous time so study. The Holy Spirit will help you remember what the Lord has said to you. That will be important, for His words will guide you to know the Father's will. (see John 14:26)
 - Remembering what God has been saying to you will help you as you consider what God want to say to you today...This will give you a context in which you can hear and understand,
 - Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind what you have already heard from God in the Bible. Meditate for a moment as you regain your awareness of His activity in your life. Look around your life and allow the Holy Spirit to help you understand your circumstances in terms of the activity of God. Be sensitive to what God is doing so that you will be ready to respond to Him as He speaks to you through His Word.
- Question #4 – Am I obeying the last thing God said?
 - Calling Christ “Lord” does not mean He is Lord of your life.
 - Obedience reveals our relationship and will lead us into greater encounters with Him. If you have not done the last thing Christ said, why would He tell you something new?
 - As far as God is concerned, what you do reveals what you believe about Him, no matter what you say.
 - If you have not obeyed the last thing He said, He most likely will not say anything else until you understand His lordship...Ask the Lord to help you put into practice what He has already been saying through His Word.
 - Question #5 – Am I ready to respond in obedience to what God is about to say?
 - A heart of readiness is critical when it comes to hearing God speak through His Word.
 - You must answer God before you begin your study of His Word...The only answer is, “YES, Lord.”
 - A heart of ready obedience is necessary for Him to freely speak...So, what is your answer?
 - If you have not accepted the fact that He is Lord, don't expect Him to give you an assignment or entrust you with greater

things of the kingdom...He will simply talk about His right to be Lord.

- When God knows you are ready to respond, He can talk to you about what is on His heart.

II. The Privilege of Relationship

- Knowing the right questions will help you keep your relationship with Christ up to date.
- When the relationship is what it should be, you are in a position to see the Bible come alive.
- You will see that walking with Jesus allows you to see more things than you ever imagined. (see Luke 10:23, 24)
- The relationship is the goal; it is what the Christian life is all about.
- ***“Bible study is not an exercise to learn more about God. Bible study is the privilege of walking with Him. It doesn’t lead you to an encounter with God; it is the encounter.”***

Question/Comments: