

Lesson
1

Reasons for Bible Study

The Bible tells us:

Listen to what is wise and try to understand it. Yes, beg for knowledge; plead for insight. Look for it as hard as you would for silver or some hidden treasure. If you do, you will know what it means to fear the Lord and you will succeed in learning about God (Proverbs 2:2-5).

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, which we need for physical life, as an illustration of our need to have Christ in our lives. He said:

Whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will



give him will become in him a spring which will provide him with life-giving water and give him eternal life (John 4:14).

In order to have this experience of drinking living water, a person must keep studying the Bible day after day. This lesson tells why we study the Bible.

In this lesson you will study . . .

God's Will
Our Needs
Our Attitude

This lesson will help you . . .

- Explain why Bible study is necessary.
- Describe how Bible study meets our needs.
- Approach your Bible study with the proper attitude.

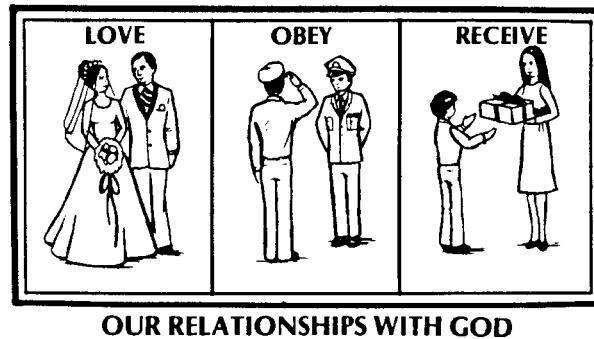
GOD'S WILL

Objective 1. *Recognize why Bible study is necessary for the Christian.*

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

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. We can do this 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. He said, "Man cannot live by bread alone, but needs every word that God speaks" (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, with all your soul, and with *all your mind* (Matthew 22:37). In other words, in order 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 over and over the idea that learning and obeying go together. He says, "If I pay attention to all your commands, then I will not be put to shame" (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.

We are told in 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." As we study the Bible it gets inside of us in the way that Colossians 3:16 describes: "Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts." Just as food has to get inside our bodies to give us strength, God's Word has to get inside our spirits to cause us to grow spiritually. Only when we feed our spirits with the rich nourishment of the Word will we 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, however, the Spirit comes, who reveals the truth about God, he will lead you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own authority, but he will speak of what he hears and will tell you of things to come (John 16:13).



For You To Do

In each one of these *For You to Do* sections, the question or exercises will help you review or apply what you have studied. Do not look up the answers until you have marked your own.

In these exercises, draw a circle around the letter in front of the correct sentence completion.

- 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 upon
 - 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.

You will find the answers to these exercises on the last page of this lesson. Check your answers to these exercises now.

OUR NEEDS

Objective 2. *Recognize how our needs are met through the study of God's Word.*

God made us. He 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 are bitter or sad. We have bad habits. We 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. We read in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed.

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. They 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. It 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 alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of man's 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 thoughts. 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 have purpose in life and the wisdom to make the right choices. The Bible discusses God's Word: "The explanation of your teachings gives *light* and brings wisdom to the ignorant" (Psalm 119:130). 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 "put off the old self with its habits 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.

5 Draw a circle around the correct answer to the following question: Who is best qualified to meet our needs?

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

6 Fill in the blank with the correct word:

The Word of God is like because it guides our way and brings life to us.

7 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.

8 Circle the letter in front of each correct completion: God's Word meets our needs by

- a) teaching the truth.
- b) condemning us.
- c) correcting our faults.
- d) giving instruction for right living.

OUR ATTITUDE

Objective 3. *Select statements describing attitudes which affect the results of Bible study.*

The Bible is different from all other books. Just as you can understand a letter from your own family better than an outsider can, true Christians can best understand the Word of God. This is possible because we become God's children when we are born again through salvation. We have His Spirit as 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 tells us.



The Bible is like a letter from God

Being born into God's family is only a beginning. As we take God's Word, we become hungry for more of His truths. As young children who come daily to their parents to be fed, we must come to God to have our spiritual hunger satisfied. (See 1 Peter 2:2.)

Also, we must approach God's Word in an attitude of obedience. The child who gets the most from his parents love and receives an inheritance is *obedient*. He listens to his parents commands. 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. He said:

I could not talk to you as I talk to people who have the Spirit; I had to talk to you as though you belonged to this world, as children in the Christian faith. I had to feed you milk, not solid food, because you were not ready for it. And even now you are not ready for it, because you still live as the people of this world live (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. The Scripture says, "*Ask*, and you will receive; *seek*, and you will find; *knock*, and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). This means we need to spend time in careful study.

Now, in order for our study to change our lives, we must be teachable. We must be willing to receive our Heavenly Father's instruction. Too often we try to live life our own way. Both King David and the prophet Isaiah admitted to God their need and desire to be taught.

I have not neglected your instructions, because you yourself are my teacher. How sweet is the taste of your instructions—sweeter even than honey (Psalm 119:102-103).

The Sovereign Lord has taught me what to say, so that I can strengthen the weary. Every morning he makes me eager to hear what he is going to teach me (Isaiah 50:4).

When we are teachable, we approach God's Word humbly. There may come a time when we think we are very wise spiritually or self-righteous. But we must remember not to boast. God has made us what we are, as 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 tells us.

But 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, 'Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done.'

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.



For You To Do

9 Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-12. Circle the correct answer to this question: People who aren't Christians can't fully understand the Bible because they

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

10 Circle the letter in front of the **WRONG** answer: 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.

11 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.

Now that you know more about why you need to study the Bible and how you should approach God's Word, you can look forward to Bible study.



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order, so that you will not 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.
- 7** b) God's will for us personally.
- 2** b) know God's will.
- 8** a) teaching the truth.
c) correcting our faults.
d) giving instruction for right living.
- 3** b) learning what God's commands for you are.
- 9** b) do not have God's Spirit
- 4** c) allow the Holy Spirit to teach you.
- 10** c) self-righteousness.
- 5** c) God is.
- 11** b) open our hearts to receive His Word.
- 6** light