

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

John Edwards

There is no good reason not to study the Bible. There are many good reasons for studying the Bible:

TO FULFILL A COMMAND. We are taught, *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”* (Rev. 22:14). Study is a command! Paul commanded, *“Study...”* (2 Tim. 2:15). This word means to exert oneself, “endeavor, give diligence.”

TO SHEW THY SELF APPROVED UNTO GOD. We should want to be approved unto God, our Maker (Psa. 95:6). Either God approves of us or He does not. It is up to you and me, individually, to present or show ourselves to God and receive His approval. This requires study! *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God...”* (2 Tim. 2:15).

TO NOT BE ASHAMED. Ecclesiastes 12:12 says, *“...much study is a weariness of the flesh.”* Paul said, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed...”* (2 Tim. 2:15). When we put in the time and put forth the effort it takes to properly study, we will not be ashamed. If we are lazy and neglect careful study, we have every reason to be ashamed.

TO RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH. *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15). This would imply that the word of truth may be wrongly divided. This happens due to lack of study. We must not handle *“the word of God deceitfully”* (2 Cor. 4:2) or *“wrest”* the Scriptures to our own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

TO KNOW. God expects us to know. *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (Jn. 8:32). We can’t afford to take someone else’s word for the truth. We must search the Scriptures for ourselves (Acts 17:11).

TO UNDERSTAND. Jesus taught the importance of understanding when He said, *“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”* (Matt. 13:15). Understanding is necessary to conversion! And study is necessary to understanding! *“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ”* (Eph. 3:4). One reason some do not understand is because they do not read and study so as to understand!

TO GROW. The Lord wants His children to grow. One of the last things Peter said was, *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...”* (2 Pet. 3:18). The word of God is the nourishment vital to our spiritual growth. *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”* (1 Pet. 2:2). Where are we in our spiritual growth? A babe, full age, or somewhere between (Heb. 5:13-14)?

TO BE ABLE TO TEACH. Teaching is not an option for the Christian. *“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers...”* (Heb. 5:12). Timothy was instructed, *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”* (2 Tim. 2:2). *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach...”* *“Apt to teach”* means skillful in teaching. This comes through study and experience in teaching.

The Bible can benefit us in ways no other book can! ■

PREDESTINATION

By Kyle Campbell

Are some people predestinated to be saved while others are predestinated to be lost? If this true, would it make any difference for one to do right if he is predestinated to be lost?

Predestination is definitely a Bible topic, but not in the way which espouses that every individual has been hand-picked by God to be either saved or condemned. The critical question is, "Did God predestinate the man or the plan?" God predestinated a system of salvation by grace through faith in Christ. God did not set up the popular system of predestination for the following reasons:

It would make God a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9). It would make God responsible for the damnation of the wicked (Ezek. 18:21-23; 33:11).

It would deny that God wants all men to be saved (Mk. 16:15-16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Tit. 2:11-14).

It would refuse to accept that Christ died for all men (Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:14).

It would reject the free will choice of man (Jn. 5:40; Matt. 23:37; Rev. 22:17; Jn. 24:15).

It would make the call to repentance hypocritical (Matt. 11:28; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Acts 10:34-35).

God chose a plan of salvation through Jesus (Eph. 1:3-14). We cannot control who will obey no more than God can. God in His sovereignty could control man like a robot, but He chose not to do so. Whatever happens to us, it will be determined by our individual response to God's predestined plan of salvation.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). ■

A "TO DO" LIST FOR CHRISTIANS

By Hugh Fulford

1. Do to others as you would have them do to you (Matt. 7:12).
2. Do the will of the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 7:21-27).
3. Do this (the Lord's Supper) in remembrance of Christ (1 Cor. 11:23-26).
4. Do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10).
5. Do all things without murmuring and disputing (Phil. 2:14).
6. Do the one thing that will enable you to move forward in life with confidence (Phil. 3:12-14).
7. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord (by His authority and to His glory) (Col. 3:17).
8. Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men (Col. 3:23).
9. Do not forget to do good and to share (Heb. 13:16).
10. Be doers of the word and not hearers only (Jas. 1:22).
11. Do those things that will enable you to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:5-11, note verse 10).
12. Do the commandments of God (Rev. 22:14).

In the event that you have never been saved from your sins and become a Christian ask, ***"What shall I do?"*** and do it (Acts 2:37-38; cf. Acts 10:1-6, 48; Acts 22:10-16). As long as you have life it is never too late to do the right thing, but one day it will be too late. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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