

Studying The Bible

Prayer and Bible Study

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I would like to take a little trip down memory lane, back to when my wife and I were first called into God's church. For those of you who came into the church in the sixties, our experience may well parallel your experience.

When we were first called and started to look into our Bibles, we began to understand that we really did not know as much as we thought we did concerning what God wanted. I know I felt like a Bible illiterate and that everybody knew more about God than I did. (I was right.)

I remember when the minister came to visit us, we thought they were perfect, and when they told us about God we listened with rapt attention. When we were advised that we had to read specific booklets prior to coming to church, we waited with bated breath for the mail deliveries, and as soon as the booklet reached the house, there was scuffle over who would read it first.

Every time *The Plain Truth* arrived it was consumed from cover to cover, and it ended up all marked up with passages that seemed so important to us. And, then came *The Ambassador Bible Correspondence Course*. I think that most of us appreciated it so much that we followed all the instructions to a T.

I know that my wife and I each had our notebooks, and went through each question writing down the answers. We were leaning so much, and it seemed as if we could not get enough material fast enough. Some even requested the Correspondence Course be sent at twice the normal rate.

When the tests came in after every four lessons we faithfully completed them, and mailed them in for grading. When they were sent back to us we carefully checked to see what questions we missed, and why we missed them.

This was a time of innocence for most of us. We came out of this world not knowing much about what the Bible said, and the first love toward God was

a wonderful thing to behold. We attended every Bible study, and every Sabbath service. We loved the messages, and really wanted the corrections that came our way.

At that time an individual was not baptized immediately; one could sit in church just soaking up the information. The man or woman who really wanted to be baptized would have to ask for baptismal counseling, and then depending on the minister, and what he felt one's progress was, several more counseling sessions had to be gone through, and probably additional booklets had to be read and understood before that special day.

Coming into the church of God was a little like a couple courting with the intent of marriage. The realization that the marriage was such a serious decision caused both parties to want to take time to really come to understand each other's nature, and what was expected of them. Then because of the care and concern for what was about to take place, both parties were really ready and deeply appreciative of being married, or in this case, being baptized.

Then, as with marriage, there was a honeymoon period and the thrill of being husband and wife, but when the excitement and first blush of the new life had subsided, the couple had to get down to the day-to-day process of going through this life we have been given. This life with all attendant problems, trials, and pressures had to be exerted to show love, understanding, and true concern for both parties, or the relationship would fail.

Marriage failure in the United States is over 50 percent, and this does not take into account the failures in relationships that only last for a few weeks, or a few years.

How many failures have there been in the lives of those God has called in their relationship—in their commitment—to Him, and thus to His church? I do not know that I could give a percentage, but would imagine it to be too high.

The churches found in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 lost their first love; allowed the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans; allowed Jezebel's teachings to seduce God's people into committing all manner of

unfaithfulness, including idolatry; and thinking they were rich and increased with goods, not knowing they were naked. There were many factors that led to this, but the big one was their letting-down in their relationship with God.

Luke 8:4-15 And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ' Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. [They with a good heart keep God's Word and bring forth fruit.]

How do we keep God's Word and bring forth fruit with patience?

When we first came into God's church and were on our honeymoon of first love, we would hear the question posed, "How much Bible study and prayer must I do to be in the Kingdom of God?" And if I recall Mr. Armstrong's answer correctly, he would respond, "At least half an hour of each a day." What Mr. Armstrong meant was he knew that for us to maintain our connection with God and to bring forth fruit, we would have to have an

intimate relationship with Him, and that could only be achieved through prayer and Bible study.

I appreciated the guideline of a half an hour a day. When there were schedules that wanted to interfere with that, we made the prayer and Bible study always come first, and blessings came because of it.

As important as the guidelines were, they were a trap as well in that I would focus on the time rather than on the quality of the study or prayer. I felt as long as I got “my time in,” all was well.

Over the years I have come to understand that it is always quality study and prayer that I should be after. With that goal in mind my prayer and study usually went longer than the church’s idea of minimum standards.

I feel most all of us are very faithful in our prayers to God, because we see and know about the needs of others, and because we require contact with God regarding our weaknesses, needs, and problems. However, personal Bible study can be a different situation altogether. We know we must have quality Bible study, but with all the articles available to us, and the messages we hear, with the press upon our time, we find it too easy to justify putting off the study we truly need to have. We think that we can have *article* study rather than *Bible* study.

Part of our problem is that we live in a tape, DVD, and CD society. I know that John Ritenbaugh has felt concern over the years that many find his tapes so helpful, that they listen to them and the tapes of others in place of personal Bible study.

It is true that the ministry puts a great deal of research into each sermon, and that the sermon might be fascinating and helpful, but it may not be the message we need personally! The message we need may be right under our nose, and because of our putting off regular Bible study, it can be lost to us.

God calls us individually, and because we are all different, with different backgrounds, strengths, abilities, interests, weaknesses, living in different situations, with different problems; because of all this we all need different personal instruction from God.

What value do we place on personal Bible study?

We place a value on everything we do. I remember when I first took up the hobby of photography. I read every photo book and catalogue I could lay my hands on. I haunted the camera shops and dreamed about all the lenses and gadgets I could buy for my camera. I valued the hobby so much that I gave it a very high priority in my life. Dolores could have almost become a “darkroom widow.”

In a similar manner those who set the Olympics as their goal truly value the training they need, and many willingly rise at three in the morning to get in their four to five hours of training a day. Because they realize the value in reaching their ultimate goal, they give it a high priority.

We all value our jobs because the remuneration that comes from them enables us to have a family, home, clothes, food, auto, etc. And because of this our jobs take a very high priority.

Education is valued by some as a must for a prosperous future; strength can be valued by young men growing up; beauty is valued by young women as well. Because of this, time is spent on becoming educated, working out, and watching diets and figures. Hopefully we have learned to value each other in the home and church showing love and consideration toward each other.

Sometime back we had a sermonette about the cost of a Bible prior to the invention of the printing press. In that message it was brought out that it took a skilled copy man ten months of copying eight hours a day, five days a week, to produce one copy of the Bible. Using the manner of how we do things today with the minimum wage, typical overhead, marketing costs, and mark up, he arrived at an approximate cost of \$114,000.00 per Bible! I can remember reading, where one Bible at that time was worth a landed estate. Obviously that was true. Those who could afford to purchase one, treasured it greatly, and no doubt spent much time in it.

Today, Bibles are given away. Everyone who wants a Bible may have one. The Bible has been, or parts of it have been translated into more than 1200 different languages, and every year more copies of the Bible are sold than

any other individual book. Today the cost of a Bible is in the range of everyone. Whereas in times past it could be said that the cost of Bible reflected its value, today the cost of a Bible in dollars and cents does not remotely reflect its value.

What does the Bible contain that makes it so valuable?

Proverbs 2:1-9 My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path.

Incline your ear toward wisdom.

Psalms 19:7-12 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.

The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.

Why is the Bible referred to as the greatest book ever written, and the absolute treasure beyond all treasures? It is because it is written by God to man for his instruction in how to live, and it is written by God to His church that they may become His Family.

I Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

II Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible alone answers the questions that men from all ages have asked. Where have I come from? What is my purpose? What is truth? How should I live my life? Where am I going?

A comment made by the study Bible concerning the Bible itself stated that, “The Bible is not simply one book. It is an entire library of books covering the whole range of literature. It includes history, poetry, drama, biography, prophecy, philosophy, science and inspirational reading.”

With all this so easily available to us why is it so difficult at times to consistently study God’s Book that has been written for us specifically? I will tell you why:

1. We live in one of the busiest of all societies. Though we have conveniences of all sorts that save us time, we usually take the time saved to find other things to do with it, thereby giving us less time. This produces an attitude of wanting to combine ways of doing things to save more time. Thus we often have the desire to listen to sermon tapes rather than taking the time for personal study.
2. The things of this busy life cry to be done. There is the commute to and from work, the overtime, the projects around the house, the family needs, all seeming to shout at us as being so vital, and requiring immediate attention. This is not the case with our Bible. It does not shout at us. God allows it to just sit there to see what we will do with it. It can sit there on the shelf, or in the briefcase all week if we are not careful, only to be touched on the Sabbath.

The problem of course is setting priorities. The priority that should always cry at us is to get our Bible study time set first, letting other crises be taken care of after we have accomplished our duty to God. It is our duty before God to study His Word.

3. There is so much in the Bible to learn that we are overwhelmed by it. Where do I start? What do I study? How do I go about it? We can feel defeated before we even begin.
4. But perhaps the biggest reason we do not make Bible study first priority is that we do not understand or consider or that we have forgotten the intent of our calling by God.

Why were you called?

Were you called to be saved? Is it that God saw that we were so great that we should be saved, and given a wonderful life in His Kingdom? Many ask the question, “Why would God call a person like me with all my problems?”

I Corinthians 1:26-27 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.

Hebrews 1:1-2 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

Christ is the Heir of all things.

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

We are heirs with Christ.

Hebrews 1:3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The express image is like an exact copy, perfect image, or engraving of the character of His Father.

Hebrews 2:1-9 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

The plan of God is for us to reign with Jesus Christ ruling the universe!

I will make a short paraphrase of Herbert Armstrong from the booklet, *Why Were You Born*:

We who repent come to believe God, believing what He says, believing what He reveals to us through the Bible, instead of

rejecting the knowledge from Him as did Adam and Eve, as most in science and higher education do. We become God's sons when He puts within us His Holy Spirit. We are the sons and daughters He is bringing to His supreme glory.

This is the intent of God's calling! We are called not just to be saved, but to gain the mind of God, that we may rule with Him for the betterment of all of mankind.

Can we rule with only the knowledge of this world we were raised in? What have the lessons of this world, of this way of life produced? I will remind you: War, death, fear, intimidation, lust, greed, the way of selfishness, perversion, destruction of the environment, of family life, hatred, destruction of crops, disease, mental anguish, deadly pollution etc.

Do we begin to see that we must unlearn the ways of this world, and learn the ways of God? And if we do not, of what use will we be to God? We would be like the man in Luke 19 who did nothing with his calling. God took what He had given him, gave it to another, and then cast him into outer darkness.

Matthew 5:48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Become complete.

II Peter 3:15-18 And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

We are to grow in grace and knowledge that we might gain the mind of God, and not be tricked back into the ways of this world! Gaining the mind of God is the most important occupation we can work at.

Some have told me that with their busy schedules there is just no time to study. Then, with some others, they study, but they wonder if they are studying correctly.

Mr. Armstrong knew that Bible study was something that could be confusing and difficult for those God was calling, and thus he developed *The Bible Correspondence Course*. For the same reason we have a Bible study outline on the back of each edition of the *Forerunner*. Most of us do not have the old correspondence course. All of us do have the course on the back of the *Forerunner*. But, even if we do that faithfully, and then review it carefully, it can still be completed in two to three days, and then we have a period of time to wait for the next one.

Even if we by chance have both courses, and go through them, there is information we need regarding our own lives, and those needs cannot be acquired in those courses. Marriage, child rearing, sexual problems, drinking problems, financial situations, and the principles of living that will produce a full happy life can only really be found through personal Bible study.

One of the better study Bibles has listed in its section on how to study the Bible, six pages of suggested approaches to Bible study, and I thought it profitable for us all to go through them to the goal of improving our study habits.

How To Study

Bible helps would be a good concordance, a Bible dictionary, a Bible atlas, and other Bible translations.

But before we go into the various methods of study, I would like to bring up something that causes some to have concern. All of us are not the same when it comes to our studying ability. We all have different backgrounds, with different educations based on the interests and the skills we possess.

Some of us have the gift of being naturally inclined to study. They take to it like a duck to water. I know I am often awed by what our sermonette and sermon speakers bring to us, because to me study has always been difficult, and everything I come up with requires a great deal of struggle.

We all live in different situations, as well. Some live alone, and have ample time to devote to study. Others may be working two jobs to make ends meet, and still others have a house full of children to take care of that requires a great deal of thought.

The point here is that we are not in competition with anyone, and we should not become discouraged if others seem to come up with dazzling information that we had never noticed. I know that all of us that speak hold you in great respect, because of the understanding you have and because of the questions you bring us.

Whether we are gifted in study, or not, we all have to put forth the effort needed to uncover the treasures God has for all of us. God measures us by the effort put forth, based on the talents given to us, and He will reward each of us on that basis as well.

There two additional principles we need to consider before we get into the methods of study.

1. Set aside the best time possible for you to have a productive Bible study on a consistent basis. It should not be one time one day and a different time the next if at all possible. Try to never set a time slot that will rush you. This is a special time set aside to be with God to receive His instruction. It has been said that when we pray we talk with God, and when we study He talks with us; therefore set a quiet time for study—morning, noon, evening—but, most people often find it best before your business day starts.
2. Always precede your study with prayer—pray for correction, for encouragement, and an opening of your mind for God's truth. Remember, only that part of God's Word which we have made a part of our very character will be of any account to us.

Psalm 119:33-40 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way. Establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You. Turn away my reproach which I dread, for Your judgments are good. Behold, I long for Your precepts; revive me in Your righteousness.

All of us have had difficulty in knowing how to study and what to study. I would have imagined most of us have started in Genesis 1:1 and read all the way through the Bible to Revelation 22:21. I know I have at times just let the Bible fall open and started to read. I feel a little guilty about that, but I imagine I am not the only one to do that.

Reading the Bible Through:

This method is just general reading of the Bible, but with the reading applying of rules that help one to understand and retain what is read.

General Rules For All Bible Study

1. Start study with prayer. Psalm 119:33-40
2. Take brief notes on what you read. Keep a notebook, or use 3X5 cards.
3. Read slowly through the area you are studying. After reading, ask yourself what the passage means, and then re-read it.
4. Ask these questions:
 - A. What was the main theme or subject of the passage or book, and how was it presented?
 - B. Who is the author, and what were his circumstances when he wrote the book?

C. Who are the persons revealed in this passage? Who is speaking, and who is being spoken to?

D. What are their needs, circumstances, and problems?

E. What is the key verse?

F. What does this passage teach me about God the Father and Jesus Christ?

G. Does this passage point out a sin or problem I should repent of?

H. Does this passage contain a command or principle for me to obey?

I. Is there any instruction for me to follow?

5. Memorize key passages.

6. Meditate on what you have studied.

7. Obey what you have been shown. As James 1:22 says, be doers, not just hearers.

Study by Chapters:

There are 1,189 chapters in the Old and New Testaments. By taking one chapter a day, a person could cover the Bible in a little over three years. Read through the entire chapter carefully, seeking to find its main subject or subjects. Then, give the chapter a title that suggests its main content. An example might be: The Gospel of John, Chapter 1; Jesus: The Word of God.

Then, make a simple outline of the individual chapter, such as:

Chapter 1:1-9: Jesus Christ is the Word of God.

Verses 10-18: Jesus came into the world.

Verses 19-28: John witnesses that Christ is to come.

Verses 29-37: John says "Jesus is the Lamb of God."

Verses 38-51: Jesus calls His first disciples.

Now, ask the questions previously given, as they apply to the chapters studied. Remember that not all questions apply to every chapter.

Many times you will have to read the chapters on either side of the chapter you are studying to fully understand what is taking place. It is important to see what is being studied in context of the information around it. Always check the context. For instance, in professing Christendom Acts 10:9-15 has been taken out of context to show that the eating of unclean food is alright, but upon reading verse 28, we can see that God is not talking about food, but of other races of people.

Bible Study By Paragraph:

This is also called analytical Bible study.

1. Study the paragraph carefully for its main thought or subject.
2. To assist in finding the relation of the important words and sentences, it is helpful to rewrite the paragraph.
3. Then make an outline of what you wrote.

For instance, if you were covering Matthew 6 which covers how to pray, your outline might be something like this:

Matthew 6:5-13

Title: How to Pray Properly.

How not to pray.

1. Verse 5: Hypocritically.
2. Verses 7-8: With vain repetition.

How to pray:

1. Verse 6: Pray in private.
2. Verses 9-13: Following the model outline set forth by Jesus Christ.

Bible Study by Verse:

1. Study the verbs, then the nouns.

I Timothy 6:12 Verbs: Fight, lay hold, called, professed (confessed) Nouns: Fight, faith, eternal life, profession, witnesses

Then one can study what it means to fight the Christian fight, how we are to fight the fight to lay hold, to be called, and what does it mean to profess (or confess) before others this way of life.

What is “the fight,” “the faith,” “eternal life,” and the “profession” we follow?

The study of a verse can be expanded by using a concordance and looking up these same words, and how they are applied in other verses, giving you an insight you never enjoyed before.

Study the Bible by Book:

After you have begun to study the Bible by chapters, paragraphs, or verses, you will be ready to study the Bible by books. If you have been outlining chapters of a book, these can be used to assist in the study of that book.

The inductive method entails that you study the book in detail. Draw conclusions and principles from those details showing the contents and purpose of the book.

The synthetic method entails that you read the book over several times to get a general impression without specific details to get the main ideas and purpose. As you read and re-read the book, ask yourself the relevant questions you have already written down, and jot down the answers you find as you read. Ask the first question with the first reading, the second question with the second reading, and so on.

Then divide the text into paragraphs, giving each a name. Then make an outline noting any problems, questions, or ideas that require further study. Look for other facts and information suggested by your earlier readings. After all previous study, these words should leap off the page at you.

For example, in the book to the Philippians, the word “joy” appears many times. In the book of John the words “believe,” or “belief” occurs almost 100 times.

Bible Study by Doing a Word Study:

Use a concordance and pick a word or term you wish to study, like “fear,” “believe,” or “grace.” Look up all the verses that have that word in them, looking up the *Strong’s* numbers, and the word’s meaning, noting how it is used. In the back of *Strong’s*, there are tables of weights and measures, and a list of obsolete terms and their meanings, plus other Bible study helps.

Then write down the various applications you find. This will give you a broad picture of the various associations of that word.

It also helps in a word study to look in a Bible dictionary as well for additional help or understanding. There usually will be other scriptures listed under the word you are looking up, that can be turned to.

Then in your own words, summarize what you have learned in your notebook under the word you have been studying.

Study by Topics:

This is similar to doing a study by word, except in this case one chooses a subject in an area that is of special interest—Bible geography, biographies of

men and women who have accomplished a great deal, genealogies, wars, the Flood, husband and wife relationships, etc.

This is a good method to use to study into subjects that pertain to problem areas we are faced with on a daily basis, such as work ethics, childrearing, respect due to parents, faith, courage, etc.

Always remember to check the context of what you are studying, asking “What?” “Where?” and “Why?” as well as who is doing the speaking. Plus, why is this being said, and how does this apply to me? Then read the accompanying texts.

An example might be a short study on childrearing. Let us put some of these principles into practice. What words would one consider looking up in Strong’s to guide the study? I have picked six words to look up: Father, mother, parents, son, children, and love. As I go through my concordance, I pull out every scripture that has to do with parents, father, mother, son, children, and love. As I start to list them, I try to put them in proper sequence.

Because this example is short, I will use just seven scriptures out of the many to use in this study. After looking over the material available, what one theme stands out to me? It is the responsibility every child has toward his mother and father.

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Leviticus 19:2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.'

1. 1. Who is speaking? God Himself.
2. What is the occasion? The giving of the Ten Commandments.
3. Who did He give the commandment to? His people and the church.

4. Why did God give this commandment? To show the duty of every child, no matter what the age, toward his or her parents.
5. Why is this important to God?

Reasons you may come up with.

1. The family unit is the smallest governmental unit. God the Father, Jesus Christ, the father and mother, and the children. If order breaks down in this unit, then the entire nation is in danger.
2. Parents stand in the place of God to their children, thus when a child rebels against his or her parents, they have developed a nature that, if not corrected, will lead them to rebel against God.
3. Children that honor and respect their parents will be of a nature to care for them in their late years if the need is there.
4. That your days may be long on the land which the Lord your God gives you. That by honoring the instruction of your parents who are teaching you about God, one will have stableness. One will not run with gangs, be involved in wrong sexual practices, have a rebellious attitude that will cause one's early death.

Questions and problems you may see.

1. What if my parents are not in the church? They are still your parents, do the very best you can to honor them.
2. What if the parents are terrible role models, miserable and difficult to get along with, and don't deserve honor?

How serious is God about this?

Deuteronomy 27:16 'Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.' "And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'"

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.

Whose statements and instruction are these? They are from God through Moses.

1. Do we see the results of rebelliousness in this society, with gangs, and anti-government movements?

Proverbs 30:11-14 There is a generation that curses its father, and does not bless its mother. There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filthiness. There is a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, and whose fangs are like knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

Proverbs 30:17 The eye that mocks his father, and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it.

2. Do children today disobey and talk back to their parents from their childhood into their adult lives?
3. How does God look at this? It is an abomination to God.

The Solution

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Instructing your children.

Proverbs 23:24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him.

Parents are to take their job seriously and correct their children.

Proverbs 19:18 Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction.

Be persistent in your training even though there may be tears.

What will happen if one does not teach and correct?

I Kings 1:5-6 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. (And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He was also very good-looking. His mother had borne him after Absalom.)

David never corrected him.

Questions

1. Why did David not correct him? Was he too busy with governing, going to war, or did he just did not see the importance of it?
2. Do I consider myself to be too busy to work with my children?
3. What did his half brother Absalom do? He rebelled. Why? For the same reasons.

4. Why did Solomon not rebel and seek the office of king?

Ephesians 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Children obey. Fathers do not provoke. Fathers train your children in God's way of living.

1. What will provoking a child produce? A beaten down or hate-filled child, and later an adult who will carry on the same process.
2. What is provoking?
3. How can I best train my children? Study into the subject.

We have just followed another principle of Bible study—one scripture does not tell it all!

Isaiah 28:9-10 "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little."

The last two methods I have to share are:

Make your own Proverbs index. Every day one can study a proverb or a section of proverbs that applies to the same subject, and list it in a binder under a specific heading. Possible example headings would be: Anger, laziness, faithfulness, character, right control of one's mouth, etc.

The beauty of this type of study is not only do you have a reference to go to for specific needs, but in a study of Proverbs there is lesson after lesson of

cause and effect. (Proverbs 14:1: Every wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.)

Memorize the Bible with Scripture Cards Take individual meaningful scriptures you wish to remember and write the scripture on one side of a 3X5 card, then write the scripture out on the other side. By making these cards, and reviewing them weekly, it is amazing how much of the Bible one can learn.

A great deal of information concerning possible methods of study has been presented, and it might tend to overwhelm us. God is not asking that we spend all day in Bible study. God knows that we have responsibilities that need our attention. What is being said is that a portion of our day, *every day*, should be set aside for personal Bible study, and hopefully one of these methods may help your study to be more interesting and more profitable. One can change methods for variety.

The most important thing is to follow faithfully some systematic method of Bible study.

Why is study so important?

1. Consistent study will change our way of thinking to God's way of thinking. We will begin to see things from God's point of view, and we will begin to make changes in our lives that will please God.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ.

2. Proper Bible study will *protect* us from incorrect doctrines, and teachings such as a 15th Passover, or that tithing has been done away, or the Old Testament is done away, or the law of God is no longer necessary, and so on.
3. Bible study will help you to develop faith in God. Faith comes with hearing the Word of God. As one studies they hear the Word of God, and your reliance and trust in Him is strengthened greatly.

4. It will show you how to love your husband, wife, family, and your fellow man.
5. And it will help us to reign in the Kingdom of God as kings and priests.

What was required of Israel's kings?

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel."

"He shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests and Levites." The king was required to study that he might rule as much as possible with the mind of God. How much more are we to prepare who are to become members of the God Family?

What value does God place on us?

Earlier in the sermon, I talked of value, stating that we give time to what we hold to be valuable.

How does God value those He has called, and what has He given for those He values so very much?

Matthew 13:44-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

We are the treasure and the pearl of great price that God gave everything for! He could not give any more than His life. This was absolutely the greatest thing He could give.

What can we give in thanksgiving?

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

We can show our gratefulness to God for all He is doing with us by putting forth our effort to learn about Him, and by obeying Him to the best of our abilities.

II Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Adam Clarke: "Endeavor so to cultivate, and improve your heart and mind, that you may not be a reproach to God, from whom you profess to receive your commission."

Barnes' Notes: "Give diligence, be a man that faithfully performs his duty that when he looks over what he has done, he will not blush."

Expositors Commentary: “Do your best, which means make haste, and so be zealous or eager.”

Study is too narrow a term. The true meaning is make every effort to be approved. Brethren, let us truly value this opportunity that has been given to us, and set ourselves to make every effort to get our personal Bible study in every day!