

Lesson 2 How to Know the Bible – Supplemental Notes

Why study the Bible? (See section I of study book)

- ♦ To prepare oneself for service (1 Peter 3:15; 1 Timothy 4:6)
- ♦ To sanctify our lives (John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:14-19)
- ♦ It is God's will that we dwell on the Word and obey it (Joshua 1:8; Colossians 3:16)
- ♦ Understanding the Scriptures helps Christians know God more deeply (John 5:39; Proverbs 2:1, 5; 1 John 2:14)

What does it mean to meditate on Scripture? (See section II E of study book)

Answer: To ponder on; to think upon prayerfully with a goal to a fuller understanding and application.

Note: Meditation is not trying to empty our minds of all conscious thought. People who have been exposed to Eastern religious thought are often confused about the nature of biblical meditation. Eastern religions urge followers to meditate on emptiness or nothing, while biblical meditation is definitely about content – God's Word. We are chewing and digesting God's Word. The blessed person in Psalm 1:2 is meditating on God's law day and night. Biblical meditation is not the emptying of our minds, but it is a prayerful reflection on Scripture with a view toward understanding and application. It is giving prayerful thought to God's Word with the goal of conforming our lives to His will.

The Bible study process (Section III of study book)

There are formal rules for studying the Bible, as there are rules for the study of any serious subject. The name for these rules is "hermeneutics" [hərmə'n(y)ōdiks]. The objective of hermeneutics is to allow the text to speak rather than "reading into the text" what we think or feel. Hermeneutics considers the historical, grammatical, and cultural nature and context of the passage being studied to understand what the original writers meant to say.

Why is the Bible sometimes hard to understand, even for Christians? (See section III C of study book)

- ♦ One possibility might be sin in a person's life. Sin might blind someone to the truth of a passage because they do not want to submit their lives to it.

- ♦ Another possibility, and this is more likely, is that the person is not mature enough in the faith to understand the passage. Scripture speaks of some truths that are elementary and others that are for more seasoned saints (Hebrews 6:1). Peter himself mentioned that some of Paul's letter were hard to understand (2 Peter 3:15-16).

- ♦ Finally, because God is infinite, and His Word depicts His character, there may be some truths that are too deep to be understood in this life. For example, the tension between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, or between the deity and humanity of Christ.

Source: Fundamentals of the Faith Teacher's Guide, pages 43-45