

FIRST UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

GROWING IN THE NEW LIFE

BIBLE STUDY:

Bible reading, memorization, meditation, study, and obedience form the foundation for Christian growth. The saying is ever true: “Sin will keep you from Gods’ Word, or God’s Word will keep you from sin.”

READING GOD’S WORD: The person who can read well has a much better opportunity of knowing and understanding the Word of God than a person who has to rely upon what others tell him about the Word of God. Reading the Word of God is a very important part of communicating God’s Word to God’s people. Public Scripture reading was a regular part of the worship services in Israel and in the early church. Today we are blessed above all people in history, for not only does nearly everyone know how to read, but there also are enough copies of the Bible available so that everyone may have a personal copy.

- A. Read the Bible prayerfully. Ask the Spirit of God to meet your heart’s need as you read, Psalm 119:18.
- B. Read the Bible thoughtfully. Think about the meaning and implications of what you are reading.
- C. Read the Bible carefully. Take careful note not only of the words that are used but also of how they relate to one another.
- D. Read the Bible repeatedly. It may be of great help to read the same portion over daily for a month’s time. This is a good way for its words to take root in your heart. If you are reading a short book, read it every day. Divide longer books into manageable portions of two or three chapters and read that portion through every day.
- E. Read the Bible extensively. Sometimes it is of great help to red large portions of the Word of God through at one sitting. If you do this, do it at a time when you are alert and not likely to be disturbed during your reading.
- F. Read the Bible regularly. It is good to have a particular time every day when you habitually give yourself to the reading of the Word of God.
- G. Read the Bible faithfully. Inevitably there will be days when you will fail to read the Bible. Do not let your momentary lapse discourage you. Faithfully resume your practice of reading Gods’ Word.
- H. Read the Bible obediently. Because the Bible is God’s Word written to you, it is essential to obey it. Exodus 24:3

MEMORIZING GOD’S WORD: You are not always able to study the Bible by reading it. If you have memorized a portion of the Word of God, you are able to gain insights into its’ meaning at times when a Bible is not readily available. The Bible recognizes the importance of Scripture memorization. The following benefits can be cited:

- a. It keeps the child of God from sinning: Psalm 119:11
- b. It provides comfort in times of trouble: Psalm 119: 52, 92
- c. It keeps your mind upon God: Psalm 43:3
- d. It provides daily sustenance for the spiritual life: Duet. 8:3
- e. It provides continual and ready guidance in all the situations of life: Prov. 6:20-23
- f. It provides the basis for formal and informal instruction of your children: Duet. 6:6,7

MEDITATING UPON GOD’S WORD: Joshua had just succeeded Moses in the leadership of the nation Israel. Moses had led the nation for 40 years and had the benefit that all the wisdom and culture of Egypt and the King’s household could provide. Moses was a seasoned, multitalented man who had walked closely with God. Joshua, by contrast, was relatively untried. He was assuming an awesome responsibility in taking command of two-and-a-half million people. If anyone needed a formula for success, Joshua did. Likely there were many well-meaning people with all kinds of advice and formulas to help Joshua in the seemingly impossible task that lay ahead. What comfort and assurance it must have been as the Lord spoke directly to Joshua, assuring him of His presence with him as He had been with Moses (Josh. 1:5), and giving him the key to success, meditating upon God’s Word.

Joshua is to meditate upon the Word of God day and night, and is promised (1) prosperity and (2) good success in the God-given task that lies ahead. Reading and memorizing God’s Word provide the basis for meditating upon God’s Word. You meditate upon the Word of God by rehearsing its thoughts over and over in order to understand its’ implications for the situations of life. Meditating upon the Word of God will guarantee prosperity and success in the new life.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WORD: Reading, memorizing, and meditating upon the Word of God are of no value without obedience to the Word of God. To obey the Word of God, you do what the Word of God indicates should be done in any situation. Obedience to the Word of God is the only way that the child of God can be pleasing to God in the new life. Obedience to God’s Word results in: being treasured by God. Ex. 19:5-8; Blessedness (happiness) in life; Ps. 119:2; Not being ashamed; Ps. 119:4-6; Understanding, Ps. 119-100; Avoidance of evil, Ps. 119:101; Guidance for life; Ps. 119:105; Safety and freedom from anxiety; Prov. 1:33; Life, Prov. 19:16. God’s blessing; Isa. 1:19; Greatness in the kingdom of heaven; Matt 5:19; Bearing fruit for God; Matt 13:23; Manifesting love for God; John 14:23; 1 John 2:5; Promise of God’s presence, John 14:23; Abiding in the love of God John 15:10; Evidence of the doctrine that has been taught; Rom. 6:17; Assurance of salvation, 1 John 2:3; Eternal life, 1 John 2:17; Dwelling in God 1 John 3:24; Love of God’s children, 1 John 5:2; Entrance into heaven Rev. 22:7.

PRAYER

Prayer may be the most neglected element of growth. Prayer is talking with and listening to God. We talk to Him with our lips and heart, and He tells us His will through His Word. Prayer is a two-way conversation. Spiritual maturity depends on systematic prayer.

PRAISE: Ps. 150:1- To praise God is to acknowledge the glories of His excellent Person. It differs somewhat from thanksgiving, which describes what God has done rather than what He is. Here are some facts about praise.

- A. God alone is worth of our praise; Ps. 18:3; 113:3
- B. It is His will for us that we praise Him; Ps. 50:23; Is. 43:21
- C. This praise should be continuous; Ps. 34:1; 71:6, and public Ps. 22:25
- D. We are to praise God for His holiness; 2 Chr. 20:21; grace, Eph. 1:6; goodness, Ps.135:3; and kindness, Ps. 138:2.
- E. All nature praises God; Ps. 148:7-10
- F. The sun, moon, and stars praise Him; Ps. 19:1; 143:3
- G. The angels praise Him, Ps. 148:2

We are told that on occasion God uses even the wrath of men to praise Him, Ps. 76:10. An example of this is seen in the selling of Joseph by his brothers into slavery, Gen. 37:28. God later uses this cruel act to promote Joseph as second ruler over all Egypt. As Joseph would remind his brothers: “But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive”. Gen. 50:20

CONFESSION:

Worship is a third essential to spiritual growth. Worship involves honoring God, engaging in private and public devotion, and joyfully witnessing for the Lord. Christians who submit to the lordship of Christ in reverence and service will grow in their spiritual lives.

The Bible describes the Christian life as a “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16). Walking pictures the step-by-step character of the spiritual life. Living by the Spirit’s power is a moment by moment yielding to His will that results in a display of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). Walking in the Spirit involves confession of sin, yielding to God, and being controlled by the Spirit.