



The Student in God's Classroom

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What is the greatest hindrance keeping you from possessing a powerful walk with the Lord? Many certainly realize they would be strengthened by a working knowledge of God's Word. God affirms this factor: **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge because you have rejected knowledge"** (Hosea 4:6 NASB unless noted). Information and facts are everywhere, but most are missing a true formula for success because they **"are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"** (2 Tim. 3:7). Their results would be different if they would start from the right place and learn: **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge"** (Prov. 1:7). Being trained in the classroom of God brings life and growth that lasts for eternity.

Many Christians are floundering and confused due to being taught an inadequate education of surface application, anecdotes, and other's opinions rather than the sustenance of the Bible, which would lead to flourishing in their relationship with Christ. A recent survey showed a mere 11% of "Christians" have read the entire Bible more than once. Though many questions arise regarding the survey's specifics, that percentage needs to rise. It also proves the point: too few Christians have a vital connection to God's Word that would change their lives. Many deceive themselves that they already know the truth in their beginning moments of faith! How can this be? The beginning moments link us to Christ, but soundness in truth follows by continuance in taking in His life-giving words. The student will live on every word proceeding from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).

What would happen if Christians devoted ample time to studying the Word of God? The epidemic of those who suffer **"shipwreck in regard to their faith"** (1 Tim. 1:19) would diminish with fewer being tossed by waves of popular thought. Rather than being failing, negligent students, these devoted ones would start mirroring faithful warriors. Their inner beings

would be fortified, and they could lovingly lead others to freedom. These warriors would experience greater victory in battle over sin realizing: **“How blessed [Heb: 'esher] is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding”** (Prov. 3:13). This Hebrew word for “blessed” means “happy.” These students would find happiness and purpose in understanding God's Word.

Knowing God's Word carries infinite value. **“For her profit [wisdom] is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold...and nothing you desire compares with her”** (Prov. 3:14-15). The desire to know the Lord penetrates to the very core of such a student and is well worth the cost. This student will **“enter through the narrow gate...for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it”** (Matt. 7:13-14). He does not need to follow the crowd's popular way.

The student knows there is hard work involved in not being conformed to culture but being transformed by the renewing of one's mind (Rom. 12:1-2). Transformation does not come when we approach the Bible as if we already know what it will say. **“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts”** (Isa. 55:8, 9). To be elevated into God's thoughts we must apply ourselves to listening and letting the Word speak and letting it mold our thoughts.

I was studying chemistry and mathematics when I began to take my relationship with the Lord seriously. Life at a university is centered around applying yourself to your education—where you live, sleep, and eat is arranged around studying for the degree. It was at this point where I began to apply earnest effort to studying God's Word. My blossoming relationship with Jesus was more valuable and deserved my attention. As professors spoke about the scientific method and mathematical proofs, I inclined myself more diligently to the Bible's words. **“Give attention to the reading of Scripture...take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all”** (1 Tim. 4:13,15). There was definitely “pain” involved; however, effort at seeking God is richly rewarded, and God desires students who will “progress” as they learn.

Our world knows advancements within technology and medical science, but what about unlocking truth from God's Word? Christianity could also advance. I question the permanent, etched-in-stone, doctrinal statements. No progress is required there. Doctrines mainly remain permanent throughout the decades and stunt individual growth. Perhaps this is a reason why detailed study is set aside? There are discoveries to be made in the sacred text! In Christ **“are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and**

knowledge” (Col. 2:3). This HIDDEN treasure lies dormant if we remain Biblically illiterate. **“Truly, You are a God who hides Himself”** (Isa. 45:15). **“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter”** (Prov. 25:2). “Kings” are seeking out the treasures of God. There are more “Reformations” to be had. These kingly students are advancing and progressing into this “hidden” wisdom.

We all need to take responsibility for our own walks. We must come out from hiding behind the wall of books, sermons, churches, and man-made credentials. We stand or fall before the Lord and **“must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”** (2 Cor. 5:10). We need to take back our God-given duty and feed ourselves, and not rely on being spoon-fed by others. A student gains wisdom, character, and closeness to the Savior when he takes responsibility for his progress (or lack thereof) by directly considering the Bible. One can be sharpened amidst the study of others, but never leaving the study to someone else or settling for less than personally examining the pure words of God.

When a student actively studies and considers Scripture, he will make errors and develop wrong beliefs along the way. It's humbling to read and re-read passages and still only skim the surface of the depth of God's knowledge. This is part of the “growing pains,” that lead to accurately handling Scripture. Do not underestimate gaining familiarity with the Bible itself and possessing an active, working knowledge of all Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16). Studying rightly shows up as **“retaining the standard of sound words”** (2 Tim. 1:13). God's student should begin to develop a dictionary of sorts including the meanings of words as Scripture uses them by going through “word-studies” (including God's original words). This is a powerful tool that allows a stand on solid ground and an avoidance of the empty words and platitudes that have spread like gangrene (2 Tim. 2:17).

The progressing student realizes he is not perfect but the **“path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day”** (Prov. 4:18). He will tweak, modify, or abandon errors as his understanding grows. He will place all wrong views on the chopping block, as instructed: **“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith: examine yourselves”** (2 Cor. 13:5). Over the years this student may discover new information which forces him to revisit studies to align more closely with Scripture. He is a ground-breaking revolutionary who is not forced to adhere to an immovable doctrine. He is free in Christ. His ears are open to all that the Bible will say and all teachings within it. “Dogma” and “creed” are not held more dearly than the Word of God. This allows contemplation of alternative views if they should more accurately open the text.

The progressing student echoes Paul: **“But this I confess unto thee,**

that after the way which they call heresy [Gr: *hairesis*], so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets” (Acts 24:14 KJV). If insults of heresy assail, like the apostles he will stay the course. He need not fear in studying out any and all topics for his loyalty is to Christ and His Word.

The student who determines to believe God's truth regardless of cost must be **“strong in the grace of the Lord Jesus”** (2 Tim. 2:1). God **“has no greater joy than to hear His children are walking in the truth”** (3 John 4), and so the student has decided to enroll even if the class should seem difficult and rigorous. At other times joy explodes as passages become simple and clear truth is discovered, treasure unearthed. The student will excel in **“[disciplining himself] for the purpose of godliness”** (1 Tim. 4:17). Being **“constantly nourished on the words of the faith”** (1 Tim. 4:16) will enable standing amidst onslaught from the enemy. His place in the classroom is secure. His desk is well worn and His teacher (Jesus) provides him with abundant equipment for any task. Any holes or questions in a current position are revealed waiting for truth to fill properly. This is not done with proof texts or negating one passage over another but with the sum of the Word (Ps. 119:160). He casts off Christian myths and “traditions” and replaces them with thoughtful, detailed beliefs. He is not the simple student of seminaries and churches, but a student of God's classroom.

Studying the living and active Word of God will be a journey and progression like no other. **“When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you. And when you awake, they will talk to you”** (Prov. 6:22). So, I welcome you to join the adventure. We will not be hard on each other, for in the places where we may disagree, we realize we will eventually meet with the same insight if we continue progressing. **“As iron sharpens iron so one man sharpens another”** (Prov. 27:17). God's grace will cover all our shortcomings, but let us model Ezra who **“set his heart to study”** (Ezra 7:10) and **“opened the book in the sight of all the people”** (Neh. 8:5). Maybe others will notice the revival occurring within us. **“O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together”** (Ps. 34:3). **“May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ...give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened...”** (Eph. 1:17-18).

I hope to see you in class.

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