

# What To Do With The Bible

Joe Slater

Elders, preachers, teachers, parents, and other concerned Christians frequently encourage us to read our Bibles regularly. Why? What should we do with what we read? Let's take some pointers from Psalm 119.

**Learn it.** "Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments" (v. 73). Understanding God's word takes study, prayer, and determination. You will not grasp everything the first time you read it. Read passages over and over; look at similar passages; ask questions; pray for wisdom.

**Hope in it.** "Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in Your word" (v. 74). Hope is the combination of strong desire and confident expectation. We certainly desire the good things God has promised; and we are confident that we will receive them, not because we are perfect, but because God is faithful. He keeps His word.

**Affirm it.** "I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right" (v. 75). God's word is not to be strained through the filter of our personal desires or opinions. If God and I disagree on something, guess who needs to change?

**Delight in it.** "For Your law is my delight" (v. 77). How sad, that Bible reading and study would ever seem boring or tedious! What could be more delightful to a child of God than to read the words of God Himself?

**Meditate on it.** "But I will meditate on Your precepts (v. 78). Meditation is simply deliberate and prolonged thought. It is not some strange mystical alteration of consciousness. What occupies your mind as you go through the day? Be sure to take time each day to reflect and consider what God has said in His word.

**Know it.** "Let those who fear You turn to me, those who know your testimonies (v. 79). Mathematicians know math; scientists know science; and Christians certainly ought to know the Scriptures! Such knowledge will help you resist temptation and be able to teach others.

**Do it.** "Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes, that I may not be ashamed" (v. 80). Sin is the only thing that can keep the heart from being blameless. Doing what is contrary to God's word is sin (1 John 3:4 & 5:17), but so is failure to do what is right (James 4:17). God's word tells us how to be saved by His grace and how to live so as to please Him.

May I invite and encourage you to read your Bible!

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## Try Harder

I'm convinced that many of us may not resist the temptation to sin as we should. It's not that we want to sin, for we don't. It's just that when temptation crosses our path, we don't fight it as though we were in a life or death struggle. We may resist, but the resistance is only token.

Not long ago, a friend of mine gave a lecture in which he raised the question, "What if every time we sinned, an ugly scar appeared upon our face? How much harder would we resist sin? Good question. None of us would like to have our faces scarred. Scars to our faces would be embarrassing, affecting our relationships and our behavior. I'm sure we would tenaciously fight the temptation of sin if succumbing meant a big scar on our faces.

You see where I'm going, right? Why should we fight harder to preserve our temporal flesh than we would to preserve our eternal soul? The fact that we can't see the scars sin leaves upon us doesn't mean they're not there. Friends, resist the temptation to sin, using not just a token resistance before you succumb, but a persistence that reflects a life and death struggle.

--Steve Higginbotham (Knoxville, TN) via Bulletin Gold

## DO YOUR BEST

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

I recall that Jesus talked about people who have great intentions, but fail to carry through their plans. *"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'"* (Luke 14:28-30).

Of course, Jesus wasn't talking about people failing business pursuits; rather, He was addressing those who are quick to follow Jesus, but are not willing to make a total commitment to endure to the end to receive God's approval.

In our text, Paul told Timothy to make it his aim to do his best in serving the Lord. Imagine a hard working craftsman building a beautiful table for a wealthy man. He won't take shortcuts or use inferior quality wood. He knows that his reputation is on the line. If the customer rejects his production, it may hurt his future ability to find work. A craftsman must maintain his good name. He knows if he does his very best, he won't be shamed by shoddy workmanship.

Paul made tents (Acts 18:3). I visualize him going about getting work. A customer tells him he wants his tent made a certain width, length and height. He follows accurately the "blueprint." He delivers the tent to his customer. He knows the tent meets his clients expectations; no reason for him to be ashamed of his work. He will be paid well.

Do you see Paul's analogy? Like a craftsman who seeks the approval of his employer by performing his work with the utmost attention to detail, we, as God's workmen, seek God's approval by following closely the teachings of God's word.

Do you pay attention to details with regard to God's word concerning your beliefs and behavior? Will you receive a word of approval?

Let's do our best!

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)