

Study To Learn What The Bible Teaches
Franklin Camp

The Bible should not be studied to prove what one already believes. Too many think the Bible is a book to prove "their doctrine." The Bible is doctrine (Acts 2:42). One of the reasons for the claim that we cannot see the Bible alike is because people decide first what they want to believe and then try to find support for it in the Bible.

It is a good practice to study every verse as though it was the first time to study it. The first time I worked at East Gadsden I conducted a daily radio program. I received numerous questions that I answered on the program. I had questions on baptism, the Lord's supper, the church along with many others. Some of the questions would be repeated from time to time. I always made it a practice to study the question as though I had never studied it before. This helps to avoid prejudice. It aids in learning additional things about a subject or a verse.

If one studies a subject as though it were the first time, if one's understanding were correct, then restudying it one will reach the same conclusion again. But if one's understanding were wrong, one had the opportunity to correct a false interpretation. If in studying it again one reaches the same conclusion, one's faith will be deepened and his convictions strengthened. One never has anything to lose in following this rule.

Go Only As Far As The Bible Goes

What is not written cannot be known. The secret things belong to God (Deuteronomy 29:29). Only that which is revealed can be known. What is not made plain one cannot be certain about and one can never be any more certain than the Bible. God has revealed all He wanted us to know and all we need to know to please Him. Everything that has to do with one's salvation is revealed and made simple. Thus one has enough to keep one busy for a lifetime studying what has been revealed and what one may know with profit. In view of this why should one get caught up in speculation. Why should one be bothered about Cain's wife when the Bible is silent on the subject? Why not study Lot's wife as Christ said, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). All can profit by a study of Lot's wife.

Do Not Study To Agree or Disagree with Someone

My first interest should be in agreeing with God (Amos 3:3). I am accountable only to God (Romans 14:10-12). My supreme aim must be to find out what God desires. If others believe the same thing that is good but if they do not there is not anything I can do about it. Whatever the Bible teaches pleases God and ought to satisfy me. I should be satisfied with nothing less.

Study The Whole Bible

Much misunderstanding develops from a lack of a general knowledge of the Bible. "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever" (Psalm 119:160). The ASV says, "the sum of thy word is truth."

The Bible is made up of 66 books. But there is one subject that runs through it. The subject has many subdivisions but they are all in relation to the main theme. I try to think of the Bible as one book of 66 chapters. Read the books as chapters, ignoring the chapter divisions. Read a book through at one time. This helps to see the purpose of each book. Once you have read the book, study its background and its relation to the preceding books unless it is Genesis.

Romans, Galatians and Hebrews were all written for a different purpose yet there is a common factor that is found in each book. Each book discusses the relationship of Judaism and Christianity but from a little different approach. For example, the third chapter of Galatians is a summary of the first eleven chapters of Romans. Romans has a detailed discussion while Galatians only hits the high points. Hebrews approaches the same problem from the standpoint of the priesthood. Each helps understand the other.