

## God's Word – Foundations For Understanding (#7)

Text : **II Timothy 3: 1-17**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

#### **A. Our recent lessons have shown the scriptures to be the words of God.**

**This means :**

1. When one reads the scriptures God is speaking to Him.
2. There are no mistakes or conflicts in the scriptures.
3. The words of the scriptures communicate the authority of God to man.

#### **B. Because the bible is the way God communicates with man :**

1. All man knows about God has been revealed by God in His inspired word.
2. One can neither establish nor maintain a relationship with God apart from His word.
3. The only way one can learn how to please God is from His revealed word.

#### **C. God desires to maintain a relationship with man.**

1. He sacrificed His Only Begotten Son on a cross to make such a relationship possible.
  - a. That sacrifice was not a knee-jerk reaction; it was His eternal plan.
  - b. **I Pet. 1: 20-21** **For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**
2. God revealed Himself to man through 40 different men of over 1500 years.
  - a. Thus, we know God has the desire to communicate Himself to man.
  - b. Since He created man, God obviously has the ability to communicate to man.
3. It is insulting to God to affirm that men cannot understand His word.
  - a. God gave His word through common men.
  - b. He gave His word in the language of the common man.  
( *The N.T. is written at an elementary level. The average word has 5 letters .* )
  - c. It is twice commanded that the reading of scripture be done publically.  
**1 Thess. 5:27-** **I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.**  
**I Tim. 4:13-** **Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. ( Compare: Col. 4: 16 )**

**Note :** *Even brethren who could not read for themselves were to hear it.*  
Obviously, there was no reason to hear it if they could not understand it.

**Therefore, it is of vital importance that every Christian learn God's word.**

**I. In order to study the bible successfully one must approach the study of God's word with confidence, "*I CAN understand it.*"**

**A. One of the greatest obstacles to bible study is an irrational fear of failure.**

1. The devil fills men's hearts with fear and doubt. ( **II Tim. 1:7, Rev. 21:8 fearful** )

a. "*I cannot understand the bible.*"

b. "*One has to have a special education to be able to understand the bible.*"

2. Questions :

a. If God requires people to read a book that they cannot understand, would He be wise or foolish ?

b. If God judges man by a book that he cannot understand, would God be just ?

c. If the God who commands unity were to give a guidebook to man which was so unclear as to cause divisions, would that be the act of a friend and benefactor ?

\* *The problem of understanding stems from the heart of man, not the word of God.*

**B. God anticipated that those who read His word will understand it.**

1. Jesus affirmed that men can understand the word of God, even the prophets.

**Matt. 24: 15-** Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),

2. The Apostle Paul expected that his writings would be understood by readers.

**Eph. 3: 3-4** that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. **4** By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

**C. God has promised to give us understanding.**

1. The heart of the Christian is different from the heart of those outside Christ.

a. Those outside Christ are "*darkened in their understanding.*"

**Eph. 4: 17-18** So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, **18** being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

b. Those in Christ have been given understanding,

**I John 5: 19-20** We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. **19** And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

2. God has promised understanding to them who serve Him.
  - a. **II Tim. 2:7-** Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. ( *Consideration is one of the keys. Meditate on it.* )
  - b. If we lack understanding, we can ask and it will be given.  
**James 1: 5-** But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
  - c. **Prayer and meditation will open the eyes of understanding.** ( cf. **Luke 11: 9ff** )
3. Understanding the word of God is essential to Christianity.
  - a. The lack of understanding of the word brings spiritual doom.  
**Matt. 13: 19-** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.
  - b. Understanding is essential to becoming a productive member of the body.  
**Matt. 13: 23-** And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.
  - c. Understanding is commanded.  
**Eph. 5:17-** So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.  
\* **Note :** *A just God will never require what cannot be achieved.*

#### D. Not all of the scriptures are as easy as others.

1. Writing to Jewish Christians Peter said :  
**II Pet. 3: 14-16** Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, <sup>15</sup> and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, <sup>16</sup> as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.
2. Satan seeks to prevent men from understanding the word of God.
  - a. False teachers confuse weaker Christians. ( Text )  
**II Tim. 3: 6-7** For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, <sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
  - b. The false teachers are representatives of Satan.
    - 1) **II Cor. 11: 12-15** ... Today, false teachers abound beyond measure.
    - 2) They sound convincing so we must confirm everything. **Acts 17: 11**

**II. In order to study the bible successfully one must first familiarize himself with it.****A. We have already discussed familiarizing one's self with the general content.**

1. Understanding is built on a broad base. ( *Like the pyramids* )
2. This broad base is accomplished by repeated reading.
3. Reading requires little more than self-discipline to accomplish. ( **1 hr. daily** )
  - \* **The standard reading speed for a 4<sup>th</sup> grader is 149 words per minute.**
    - a. If you read 150 word per minutes it take 85 hours to read the whole bible.  
Reading 5 hours a week one can read the bible ever 17 weeks. ( **3.9 times per year** )
    - b. If you read 125 words per minute it takes only 103 hours to read it. ( **2<sup>nd</sup> grade+** )  
Reading 5 hours a week one can read the bible ever 21 weeks. ( **2.5 times per year** )

**B. The bible is divided into sections.**

1. This is not in reference to the chapters and verses.
  - a. Chapters and verses are NOT part of the text.; they were added by men.
  - b. The first bible to have chapters and verses was the Geneva Bible in 1560
2. The major sections are the Old Testament and the New Testament.
  - a. There are 39 books in the Old Testament. ( **929 chapters = 3.5 x N.T.** )
  - b. There are 27 books ( writings ) in the New Testament. ( **260 chapters** )
3. About 400 yrs. passed between the Old & New Testaments.
  - a. Catholics accept 14 inter-testamental writings called the apocrypha.
  - b. Jewish and Non-Catholics reject these as being part of the text.

**C. The Old Testament :**

1. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew Language.
2. About 132 B.C. is was translated into the Greek Language. ( **Septuagint** )
  - a. It was translated by 70 scholars in 70 days in Alexandra Egypt.
  - b. Jesus and the Apostles usually quoted from the Septuagint version.
  - \* ***This is important because it assures us that a translation can be authoritative.***
3. The Jews ( *incl. Jesus* ) divided the O.T. into three ( 3 ) parts : ( **Luke 24: 44** )
  - a. Law
  - b. Prophets
  - c. Psalms

4. Modern scholars divide the O.T. into five ( 5 ) parts :
  - a. Pentateuch or Law ( 5 books = Gen – Deut )
  - b. History ( 12 Books = Joshua – Esther )
  - c. Poetry ( 5 Books = Job – Song of Solomon )
  - d. Major Prophets ( 5 Books = Isaiah – Daniel )
  - e. Minor Prophets ( 12 Books = Hosea – Malachi )

#### D. The New Testament :

1. The New Testament was primarily written in the Greek language.
2. Modern scholars divide the N.T. into five ( 6 ) classes of writings :
  - a. Biography ( 4 books = Matthew – John )
  - b. History ( 1 book = Acts of the Apostles )
  - c. Pauline Epistles ( 13 books = Roman – Philemon ) ( *Prison / Pastoral* )
  - d. Hebrews ( Anonymous epistle )
  - e. General Epistles ( 7 books = James – Jude )
  - f. Prophecy ( 1 Book = The Revelation of John ) ( *Hebrew Apocalyptic Language* )
3. These divisions help one to know the function of the books, and knowing that is essential to understanding and to establishing the broad context.

### III. In order to study the bible successfully one must understand the style in which it is written and why it is written in that specific style .

#### A. All of the bible was written to at least two audiences, i.e., two sets of recipients.

1. It was written to those ancient peoples who originally received it.
2. It was written for all peoples who would come after the original recipients. ( **Rm 15:4** )
3. Therefore, most writings have at least two meanings. ( *for original, then future gen.* )

#### B. The new testament in not a law book or a book of rules.

1. Law books clearly and precisely set forth a table of regulations.
  - a. Each section deals with a specific set of circumstances.
  - b. Laws must be updated, changed as circumstances change.

**ILL.** – *Different rules are needed for roads traveled by horse than by cars.*

- c. The O. T. book of Leviticus was written in typical law book style.

**It consists of lists of laws :** *burnt offering, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin ..*

2. The N.T. has a completely different format.
  - a. There is no chapter that lists rules for conducting worship services.
  - b. There is no chapter that lists rules how much to give, who to help and how to help.
  - c. It is **BECAUSE** of the bible's format that it has stayed relevant for millennia.
3. One who has a heart to seek the will of God can find it in His inspired word.
  - a. The principles are all laid out before us. (**Principles are eternal.**)
  - b. We are given illustrations of how they are applied. (**Applications differ.**)  
(*Welcoming and accepting are eternal .. the holy kiss is now a handshake.*)
  - c. The "Law of Liberty" gives us the freedom to apply them in our time and place.

**For Example :**

- a. The Old Testament records many laws and interactions between God and man.
- b. Jesus explained to us what it all meant.

**Matt. 22: 35-40** One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,  
<sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"  
<sup>37</sup> And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'"  
<sup>38</sup> This is the great and foremost commandment. <sup>39</sup> The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'  
<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

**Matt. 7: 12-** In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

- c. **Therefore,** we see that the intent of the O.T. commands was to enforce love.

**C. The N.T. is addressed to those who seek God. ( O.T. was for all Jews. )**

1. Those who seek God will seek His will for their life.
2. Those who seek His will also seek ways to obey it.

**CONCLUSION :**

**A. Today we have observed that those who successfully study God's word :**

1. Approach it anticipating that they will understand it. **I Can Understand !!**
2. Become familiar with its structure as well as its content. **Handle Accurately**
3. Recognize that it is not to be approached as a law book or set of rules.

**B. Those who have a heart for God will by nature have a heart for His word.**

**C. Do your study habits reflect a heart for God -or- for this earthly life ?**

**Lesson Text :****II Timothy 3 : 1-17**

**1** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. **6** For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, **7** always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. **8** Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. **9** But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

**10** Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, **11** persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! **12** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. **13** But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived. **14** You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, **15** and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17** so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.