

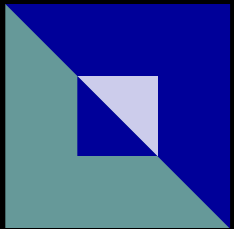


The Road to Success in Christian Living

The Road to Gaza...

Study God's Word

Lesson Three



The Road to Success in Christian Living

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The Road To Gaza...Study God's Word

COMMITMENT

I believe:

- that God the eternal Father, creator of all things, loved me so much that Jesus came to earth to be my Savior.
- that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died to pay for my sins, was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, appeared to many people, ascended to Heaven where He sits at the right hand of God, and will one day return to earth taking all believers of all the ages to be with Him in Heaven forever.
- that when I made declaration of this, my belief, to God, I became His adopted child and His Holy Spirit came to be with my spirit forever.
- that my relationship with God is in His hands, and He will never let me go.

Lesson Goal: To encourage the student to study and meditate on God's Word.

Lesson Scripture: Acts 8:26-40; II Timothy 2:15; II Timothy 3:16

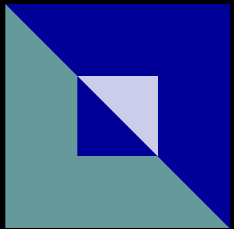
Memory Verse: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105

A very important man from the country of Ethiopia was traveling down the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. He was the official treasurer of the whole country of Ethiopia. God sent Philip to minister to him. As Philip approached, he saw that the Ethiopian was reading the Bible. Philip asked if he understood what he was reading. The man said that he needed someone to interpret for him. As they continued down the road, Philip began to help him understand the scripture (Isaiah 53: 7, 8). When this man, who was from a different culture and religion, understood God's Word, he professed Jesus as Lord and wanted to be baptized.*

Christians depend on God's Word, the Bible, for guidance. Studying God's Word is one of the most important things believers do. Paul tells Timothy that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." II Timothy 3:16. (Scripture and Bible are used interchangeably to refer to God's inspired Word.) As Christians we want to know what God has to say. The Bible is the most important word that we can hear.

We learn about God from His Word which teaches us. We learn what is not good for us from God's Word which rebukes us. We understand how to live a righteous life from God's Word which trains us in righteousness.

We can trust God's Word. II Peter 1:21 tells us that "...prophecy (Scripture) never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." God Himself, through His Holy Spirit, guided humans as they wrote His Word. They could not write lies. They had to tell the truth... God's truth. So, if God is the basic author, Christians can trust His Word for guidance...just as the writers trusted His Holy Spirit to guide them in their writing. In II Timothy 3:16, we saw the words, "God-breathed." That means that God's Holy Spirit (the word for spirit is the same as wind or breath) inspired the writers. Inspired means breathed into.



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The Road To Gaza...Study God's Word Page 3 of 5

We can believe that the Bible applies to us today. We are told that, "The word of God is living and active..." (Hebrews 4:12) Even though Scripture was written thousands of years ago, it applies to how Christians know God and how Christians live today.

So, if the Bible guides us, teaches us, is trustworthy, and is relevant for today, it can be trusted for helping us deal with current problems. When there is trouble in some area of life, one can be pretty sure that the Bible deals with that subject in some way. For instance, the Bible has a lot to say about children and parents. It has a lot to say about God's protection of His own. There may not be a Scripture that tells you how you should use your computer. However, there are many scriptures about the kind of things that we allow into our minds...the kind of things we should or should not say about others. The Bible speaks about priorities. We are to seek God first and foremost in our lives. All other things should be dealt with in an order which honors God.

How should one study the Bible?

Read it regularly. Set aside a time each day to read a portion of Scripture and pray. Some do this with their family. This is very good. However, it should not take the place of individual Bible reading.

Have a plan. Many begin reading in the New Testament; a good place for new Christians to begin is with the Gospel of John. Ultimately however, one should try something like reading one chapter from the New Testament and two chapters from the Old Testament each day.

Get Bible study helps. A one volume commentary on the Bible, a Bible handbook, and a contemporary translation of Scripture different from the one normally read. One copy of the Bible, that one owns, should have a concordance, maps, and center (or side) reference on the pages of Scripture. These kinds of books are usually found in Christian bookstores, though many secular book merchants have sections dedicated to Bibles and Christian literature. Ask a trusted Christian friend or minister who is a mature Christian and student of God's word for suggestions for these books.

Understand the Bible. As one reads through Scripture, Bible study should become a part of the activity. When words, phrases or passages of Scripture appear that are not clear to the reader, consult the Bible study helps you have available. Look up the Scripture in the commentary and see how someone else understood it. When beginning a new book in the Bible, look it up in the Bible Handbook and read what the author says about that book, who wrote it, to whom it was written, etc. Read it in another translation...this sometimes gets the message across with different words. Also, people find it helpful to discuss such Bible passages with Christian friends who have more experience in Bible .

*Underlined sentences in the Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

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The Road to Gaza: Study God's Word

Memory Verse:

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalm 119:105

Study God's Word:

>When the Ethiopian, who was from a different _____ and _____, understood God's _____, he professed Jesus as _____ and wanted to be baptized.

>All Scripture is _____ and is useful for _____, rebuking, _____ and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly _____ for every _____." II Timothy 3:16.

>God Himself, through His _____, guided humans as they wrote His _____.

>We can believe that the Bible applies to us _____.

How should one study the Bible? *

- Read it _____.
- Have a _____.
- Get _____ study helps.
- _____ the Bible.
- Use questions to _____ Scriptures.
- Ask God for _____.
- _____ on His Word.

*Refer to the guide, "How Should One Study the Bible?" furnished with this lesson.

How Should One Study the Bible?

Read it regularly. Set aside a time each day to read a portion of Scripture and pray. Some do this with their family. This is very good. However, this should not take the place of individual Bible reading and study.

Have a plan. Many begin reading in the New Testament. A good place for new Christians to begin is with the Gospel of John. Ultimately however, one should try something like reading one chapter from the New Testament and two chapters from the Old Testament each day.

Get Bible study helps. Purchase a Bible handbook and contemporary translation of Scripture different from the one normally read. One should have a Bible with concordance, maps and center (or side) reference on the pages of Scripture. These kinds of books are usually found in Christian bookstores, though many secular book merchants have sections dedicated to Bibles and Christian literature. Ask a trusted Christian friend or minister, a mature Christian and student of God's word, for suggestions for these books. Halley's Bible Handbook, is a good choice.

Study the Bible. As one reads through Scripture, Bible study should become a part of that activity. When words, phrases or passages of Scripture appear that are not clear to the reader, consult the Bible study helps you have available. When beginning a new book in the Bible, look it up in the Bible Handbook and read what the author says about that book, who wrote it, to whom it was written, etc. Read it in another translation...this sometimes gets the message across with a different choice of words. Also, people find it helpful to discuss such Bible passages with Christian friends who have more experience in Bible study, or possibly a leader in the church attended. The concordance, in the back of some Bibles, lists words with Scripture references. When one encounters words that need further clarification, or remembers verses, the location of which is not certain, referring to the concordance can give Scripture locations for the words. The center (side) reference, usually set off by lines in the middle of the page, lists comparable verses, normally referenced by letters within the text. Sometimes an alternative translation is indicated by a number listed within the text. Maps, normally at the very back of the Bible, help one identify geographical locations referred to in Scripture.

Use questions to clarify Scriptures. Consider: To whom was this written? What were their circumstances? What was the writer trying to say to them? What does it mean to me in my circumstances? With this in mind, what is God saying to me today through Scripture?

Ask God for guidance. God promised that His Holy Spirit would make Scripture clearer to us. Jesus promised that "when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13) When we read God's Word and ask for His help in understanding it, His Holy Spirit speaks to us giving guidance in knowing what God wants to communicate through His Word.

Meditate on His Word. Don't rush the reading. When we ask God for guidance, we must wait for His Spirit to communicate to us. Sometimes our own study makes it clear. Sometimes the words of someone else help. Sometimes as we think and pray things become clearer. Sometimes in the quiet of our meditation, God speaks to us without words, but very clearly. All these are ways God uses to communicate the meaning through His Holy Spirit.

What about those problem passages...the ones that aren't too interesting? This may refer to lists of genealogies that don't seem to have much relevance to living our Christian lives. These have purpose...maybe not for memorizing, but certainly for understanding how God brought things about for His purposes. One should not ignore any part of Scripture. It is, however, not necessary to understand everything the first time one reads it.