



Worship Service: 10am, 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022
Sunday School: 11.45am, Prayer Meeting: 8pm Wednesday
Pastor Jack Sin at 91160948 and jacksin710@gmail.com
Elder Loke Tat Luen at tloke822@gmail.com

The 2020 Goal of Effectual Bible Study

Introduction

From the very beginning, Christianity is **a religion with a book** (Gresham Machen, *The New Testament, An Introduction to its History and Literature*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1976, 13). It was revered and read by devout men of the day. Upon the Old Testament the Jews based their entire life on it. It was to them the sum and substance of education and the supreme judge in every controversy. Upon the Old and New Testament, the Christians consider it to be the **ultimate and sufficient authority and rule of faith and practice for their daily Christian life**. The cry of the Reformers in the 16th century was Sola Scriptura. The 66 books of the Bible which is also called the canon (the rule) is the inerrant, infallible, verbal and plenary inspired Word of God, and is indestructible (2 Pet 1:20,21; Ps 12:6,7). The uniqueness and coherence of the Scriptures despite its diversity is simply astounding.

The Scriptures was written over a 1,500 year span, over 40 generations written by 40 authors from all walks of life written in different places at different moods on three continents written in three languages; Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic and its subject matter covers many controversial subjects yet it has an amazing harmony and theme "God's Redemption of Man" (Josh McDowell, *Guide to Understanding Your Bible*, Here's Life Publisher, 1982, 4). The veracity and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures is attested by its **internal and external consistency and its amazing accuracy and fulfilment of the prophecies** that are found in this peerless book.

The last book I read in 2019 is "10 Indictments against the church" by Paul Washer. In it he highlighted his concerns and two of them are the Ignorance of God and the Denial of the sufficiency of the scriptures, What then should we focus on in 2020? The good example of Ezra is given clearly for us in Ezra 7:10 (the author's life verse and adopted as the motto of a bible college) says, "*For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.*" The order is important here; to study, then to apply or do and finally to teach. We need to be committed to know God and his Word and to apply it too. Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:15, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" and Jeremiah 15:16 says, "*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.*"

Objectives of Bible Study

What do you consider to be the ultimate objective of Bible Study, either personally or corporately as a Bible Study group, in Neighbourhood Bible Class, Sunday School or Church? The final goal of any Bible Study endeavour should not be just mere intellectual knowledge or fellowship or for the sake of interpretation alone, but a

practical appreciation and experiential application of it in our lives to the glory of God. In other words, the ultimate goal of Bible Study is a changed life in the sovereign will of God to the glory of God. What does this mean to us today? Many of the practical insights that one learns from the Scriptures come from our daily Quiet Time or devotion, a personal Bible Study programme when one meditates on certain passages for a certain period per day are practical and relevant. It must be said here also that a meaningful Bible Study is a laborious and vigorous task. It requires honest hard work to dig, delve and search out the deep gems and treasure of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15). There are no short cuts to a meaningful exercise of the study and application of the word. We have to use the stairs of diligence and then reap and enjoy the delights of understanding the eternal truths of God (Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:105).

Method of Bible Study

The method that we teach here is the literal method, or what is commonly called the **Grammatical-Historical Method**. The Grammatical-Historical method teaches that we should interpret Scripture by taking into consideration the contextual background of the passage, the grammatical rules in the uses of the words, and the historical setting in which they were written. The literal method, therefore, only allows for Scripture to interpret Scripture including its allegories. It is an old method that is time tested and is the sound method in which one can interpret the Scriptures accurately (2 Timothy 2:15).

If a word or words are used in a figure of speech, (i.e. parables, metaphor, similes, riddles, hyperbole, etc.) then that figure needs to be identified and understood. We need to determine the usage, the context and the purpose of its use. As a diligent student of the Word, we are to carefully study and examine the figure of speech for the purpose of discovering and learning the truth that is taught there. The study of figures of speech in the Bible is relevant and important and the Bible is written with it in conjunction with the literal understanding of the study of a passage of Scripture. Some content may require a certain allegorical approach to the Bible to have a correct and proper interpretation of the meaning of the particular text (i.e. often in positions of the poetic or prophetic books or the book of Revelation ie the dragon or the beast with 10 horns in Rev).

The Principles of Effective Bible Study

1. Read the passage objectively and clearly (at least twice).
2. Reflect on your life meditatively.
3. Realise the principle learnt practically.
4. Respond to the message/lesson learnt personally.
5. Resolve to act soberly.
6. Recollect the changes/results joyfully.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

We cannot study the word of God in our own depraved minds without the help and illuminating work of the blessed Holy Spirit. Ron Rhodes and Richard Anthony quip below on the work of the Holy Spirit,

“Scripture tells us that we are to rely on the Holy Spirit's illumination to gain insights into the meaning and application of Scripture (John 16:12-15, 1 Corinthians 2:9-11). It is the Holy Spirit's work to throw light upon the Word of God so that the believer can assent to the meaning intended and act on it. The Holy Spirit, as the "Spirit of truth" (John 16:13), guides us so that "we may understand what God has freely given us" (1 Corinthians 2:12). This is quite logical: full comprehension of the Word of God is impossible without prayerful dependence on the Spirit of God, for He who inspired the Word (2 Peter 1:21) is also its supreme interpreter.”

Illumination is necessary because man's mind has been darkened through sin (Romans 1:21), preventing him from properly understanding God's Word. Human beings cannot understand God's Word apart from God's divine power (Ephesians 4:18). This aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry operates within the sphere of man's rational capacity, which God Himself gave man (Genesis 2-3). Illumination comes to the 'minds' of God's people - not to some non-rational faculty like our 'emotions' or our 'feelings'.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in interpretation does not mean interpreters can ignore common sense and logic. Since the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), He does not teach concepts that fail to meet the tests of truth. In other words, **“the Holy Spirit doesn’t guide into interpretations that contradict each other or fail to have logical, internal consistency.”**

(See <http://www.ecclesia.org/truth/8-rules.html>)

It is instructive to note here that the Bible, as the infallible Word of God, cannot contradict itself. There may be apparent contradictions and with the deeper and clear teaching of other relevant corroborating scriptures, the matter will be clearer and resolved with the help of God. There are no mistakes nor contradictions in the veritable Word of God, and we are to study it carefully by the wisdom of God and to continue to work at it until we understand for the Word of God fits together coherently. Patience, prayer, humble and diligent research and study of the Word are needful here

Invest in Good Reformed Books

Be prepared to invest in some of these resources (see Fide Vitae Resources) if you are serious about studying the Bible. A good study Bible like the Reformation Heritage or the Defender's bible or the Geneva study bible can be a great help for a start (and use it for life). I have more than 4,000 books in my personal library for my reference on all the major themes of the bible and beyond. The better half of knowledge is knowing where to find it. You never know when you will need that book and have the library properly organised as well along different themes or genres. Always study the Bible with a pen or pencil to jot down salient points learnt along the way on the borders of the Bible. Remember short notes are better than long memories (Acts 17:11). Someone once quipped 'Dirty Bible, Clean Christian'. There is some truth in it

Conclusion

Paul says in 2 Tim 3:16,17 that there is one thing that will equip us for every good work and that is the inspired sacred Scriptures. In another section he told Timothy to be diligent to study the Scriptures as a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim 2:15). Ezra in Ezra 7:10 has the right principles in Bible Study and in the right order and sequence as well. "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). The Psalmist calls this a Lamp unto his feet and a Light unto his path (Ps 119:105). The Word of God is likened to a Sword (Heb 5:12,13). Jesus says in John 8:31, if we continue in His Word, we are His disciples indeed

Many Christians are malnourished today from a superficial intake of the word of God daily .Many are indifferent to the Word and will of God .Let us make a conscious effort to seek God in attending the Sunday services, SHF meetings ,monthly NBC, Prayer meeting, Sunday School, WCF or catechism class or the Monday Bible Study this year to deepen your knowledge of the Word of God in 2020. Let us seek to meditate on the Word faithfully and respectfully In the new year.

Jack Sin

1 January 2020 (Wednesday) New Year Day Dinner and Prayers Meeting

I attended the New Year Day Dinner/fellowship/prayer at Angie and Pastor, Dr. Jack Sin's residence at Simei. After dinner, the pastor preached from Deuteronomy 10:8-22.

Verse 12: And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

The teaching and encouragement:

1. Serve God,
2. Do, (ie not just hear)
3. Focus of 2020, God
4. Put your time and energy on something eternal,
5. Minister to God,
6. How to minister to God,
7. Bless people in God's name, pray for them,
8. Goal setting and plan for God, without terms and conditions,
9. Salvation is free, but discipleship is costly and has divine requirement,
10. Do the things, God's way.

Do not compartmentalise our lives, i.e. only good behavior at a certain place or time ie on Sunday only.

Conclusion:

1. Fear God,
2. Love God,
3. Walk in God's way,
4. Serve God.

Interesting examples during preaching:

(1) Daughter/father relationship: Father confiscated a Harry Potter storybook, the daughter stopped talking to father.

(2) A child pray for his father: a child prayed about the concern of his or her father's whole day playing computer games.

(3) God didn't answer a member's prayer, he stopped going to worship service: Prayed for a boy, get 3rd daughter again, stopped going to church in anger. Need to pray and examine ourselves.

Bro Kam Weng



The New Year challenge cum dinner prayer fellowship and sharing around the throne of grace



SHF meeting on studying the Bible profitably



Applying the lessons learnt in interpreting the passages of the Bible

Memory Verse

Jos 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Announcements

1. Rev Jack Sin speaks next Sunday on “The Transformation of a Harlot” (Joshua 2:1-24)
2. Prayer meeting continues on Wed at 8pm at the home sister Han Kin Kheng
3. The second anniversary of the church will be on 2 February 2020 and Rev Philip Heng of Galilee BPC will be the speaker