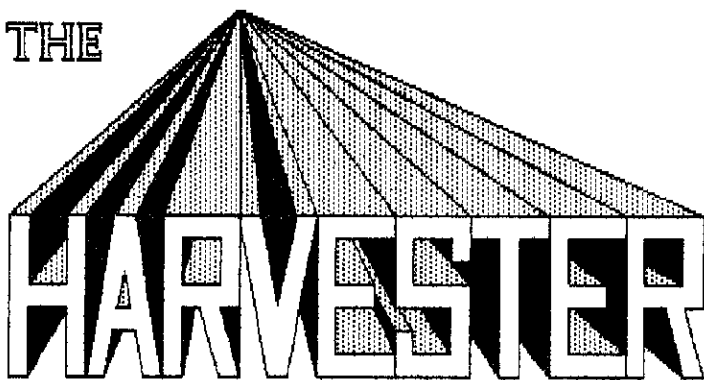


THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

FEBRUARY 1998

No. 146

WHY WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE

The word of God is the greatest treasure on earth, but it benefits only those who will study. David expressed it this way: *"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey*

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and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." (Psa. 19:7-11).

The word of God is the greatest of all treasure. It can do so much more than gold, silver, or precious stones. That is why Jesus said in Matt. 6:19-20, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal*". Many Christian's eyes would light up if you gave them much gold and silver. How many eyes light up when the time comes each day to sit down to a study of God's word? And those of you who do read your Bibles each day, is it really a joy to do it, or is it just another chore or just something I have to do if I hope to get to heaven? Our attitudes are very important. Heaven is a place for those who love God and who count it a joy to serve Him. We should thank God every day for His word in our prayers, for heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

In the Beatitudes Jesus tells us that a person is blessed or made happy when he does the will of God. And the only way we can know what to do in order to be happy is to study the word of God (Rom. 10:17). In fact, the word of God is the only source of true happiness. Many people have put their career first in life and these people have gratified

their worldly desires and have forgotten about the needs of their inner selves. The real person has lost all meaning and purpose. This is why the Psalmist said that the word of God is *"more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold."*

Read from Hebrews 6:17-19 and ask ourselves the question, "Why is it, after we have just buried a loved one, that we go home and read the word of God?" We look to God for solace in that time of trouble. When a relative is in surgery, we look to God. Why? That, my friend, is the only place we can go. At a time like this, that hundred thousand dollar home does not amount to much. For some reason that Cadillac in the garage does not seem so beautiful. Why? Those material things cannot give us hope, and without hope we soon lose all desire to love. If the word of God then is our only source of hope in time of trouble, why do we neglect to search its treasures in times of comparative happiness?

The word of God blesses those who use it, but it also condemns those who don't use it. The Lord says in Hosea 4:6, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."* In 2 Thess. 2:10, *"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."* Notice

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the phrase, "*received not the love of the truth.*" Do you really love the truth, if you don't study it? You answer that. And that is exactly how people are led to believe a lie. They don't investigate and study.

If someone asked us, "What must I do to be saved?", most of us would give the five steps the Gospel preacher gives at the end of his sermon. But how many of us could go to the chapter and verse to prove each step? If someone asked you why you partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday, would you be able to turn to the book, chapter and verse, to prove that what you do is indeed God's will? How does that Christian know that he has the truth if he has never studied it?

I am writing this article that I might impress someone with the importance of following Paul's instruction to Timothy, in 2 Tim. 2:15, to "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

CHARLIE KIRBY (deceased)
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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who was the second judge of Israel who delivered them from Eglon, king of Moab?
2. When is man usually tempted, according to James?
3. According to Isaiah, though your sins be as scarlet, what shall they be?
4. Which gospel account of the Bible is the shortest?
5. What did Abraham carry as he and Isaac ascended the mountain together?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. David became famous after killing how many Edomites in the Valley of Salt? 18,000 (2 Sam. 8:13)
2. What happened to the fig tree cursed by Jesus? IT WITHERED AWAY (Mk. 11:21)
3. What did the Law of Moses command for those committing the sin of adultery? THEY WERE TO BE STONED (Jn. 8:4,5)
4. What does Proverbs say is more precious than rubies? WISDOM (Prov. 3:15)
5. What did Esther request of the king when she went into his court? THAT THE KING AND HAMAN WOULD COME TO A BANQUET (Esth. 5:4)

A LOOK AT 1 JOHN 5:16

The theme of 1 John is Godly Love, which is manifested in all Christians through obedience to God's commandments: *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."* (1 John 5:2-3)

The Christian's communion with God allows us to approach His throne in prayer (Hebrews 4:15-16). It is through prayer that we make known our petitions to God: *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."* (1 John 5:14-15)

The Apostle John then makes a curious statement regarding prayer: *"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."* (1 John 5:16) What is the "sin that we should not pray for" in 1 John 5:16?

Close examination of this passage reveals six important points:

1. The subject of this passage (verses 14-16) is prayer. Verse 16 deals with a particular application of our prayer life in that John provides us with an example

of what we should and should not pray about.

2. The "he" under consideration is the one that has seen a brother sin. Time and again we are encouraged to pray for others. See Eph. 6:18 and James 5:16.

3. The sin that "*is not unto death*" is one that was made unintentionally. John plainly shows us that "*all unrighteousness is sin,*" (1 John 5:17). We are also told that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). How then can we rectify the fact that there is "*a sin which is not unto death?*" Notice what Paul says in Hebrews 10:26, "*For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*". By stating that we can sin willfully, Paul implies that there is a sin which is not willfully committed. This is the sin that "*is not unto death.*"

4. Prayer can and should be made for those that might sin and not realize it. "*And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*" (James 5:15).

5. The sin unto death is un-repentant sin. The Bible is clear that repentance is mandatory for salvation: "*...but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent ...*" (Acts 17:30-31).

6. We should not pray that an un-repentant sin, to be distinguished from a sin unintentionally made, should be forgiven in someone else's life. It is their responsibility to ask for forgiveness (Phil. 2:12). We should pray that they would repent before it is too late.

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A better way to put 1 John 5:16 is:

"If any man see his brother sin unintentionally, the one that saw the sin shall pray and God shall give the brother who sinned forgiveness. There is a sin unto death that consists of unrepented sin. We should not pray for someone else if they are guilty of unrepented sin, that is their responsibility."

John makes it clear that a life of love and devotion to God is what is required for the Christian. Any sin left not repented of will not be tolerated.

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Did you know God has a special plan of salvation for man? He has been using this format since the New Testament age began (almost 2000 years ago!) and it apparently continues to be extremely successful. Just ask any Christian. He will tell you the exact same thing found in the Bible:

1. **Hear** the Word of God (Rom. 10:17; Acts 16:32)
2. **Believe** the Truth (Mk. 16:16; Heb. 11:6)
3. **Repent** of your sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)
4. **Confess** Christ (Rom. 10:9,10; Acts 8:37)
5. Be **baptized** (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3,4; 1 Pet. 3:21)
6. Practice **faithful** Christian living (1 Pet. 2:11,12; Rev. 2:10)