

WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS STUDY AND LEARN GOD’S WORD?

Presented by

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As I begin this sermon, I want to do something a little out of the ordinary. As you entered the building today, you were given a small envelope containing a piece of paper and a pencil. I would like you to open the envelope and pull out the pencil and paper. I am going to go sit down for about two minutes. During that time, I would like for you to write the answer to a question on the piece of paper you have in your hands. Here is the question: **“What is most valuable, or most precious, to you?”** Please limit your answer to no more than five entries. I will return to the pulpit after you have had time to compose your lists.

Now that everyone has had time to write down their answers to the question, “What is most valuable, or most precious, to you?,” I would like to ask for a show of hands regarding what you put on your lists. But before I do that, I would like to point out something to you. Did you notice that when I asked each of you to compose your list, I did not ask you to name five **people**? Nor did I ask you to list five **things**. I did not want the way I worded the question to affect how you might answer it. So I simply asked, “What is most valuable, or most precious, to you?” It will be interesting to see how you answered this question. As I mention the following items, please raise your hand if they are on your list—and keep your hand raised long enough for us to count the number of hands.

How many of you included the following answers on your list of what is most valuable, or most precious, to you? [NOTE TO READER: The numbers in parentheses after each item is the number of people who included that particular item on their list when Blake presented this sermon on Sunday afternoon, April 1, 2007.]

- _____ your soul (6)
- _____ fellow Christians (12)
- _____ Jesus (11)
- _____ your health (3)
- _____ God (9)
- _____ your physical blessings (like clothes and food) (3)
- _____ the church (4)
- _____ the name of a wife, husband, son, daughter, or family member (23)
- _____ your friends (11)
- _____ the Bible (1)

As people raised their hands to indicate what they had included on their lists, did you find it as interesting as I did as to how few people did **not** include **the Bible** on their list? Yes, there are some things that we would expect **almost everyone** to put on their list. Surely a person would consider **his soul** to be among his most precious possessions. Jesus Himself said, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world,

but loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). And, yes, we certainly would expect a person to include **God, Jesus, and the church** on his list. After all, as Christ told the people of His generation, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

But how do we know there is a God? How do we know that God is our Creator or what He is like? How do we know that Jesus is God’s Son? How do we know that we have sinned against God? How do we know what we must do to be saved from our sins? How do we know that only by being a member of the church of Christ can we go to heaven?

The only way we could possibly know **any** of these things is by studying God’s Word, the Bible. If we did not have the Bible, we would not know that we were living in sin. We would not know what God has done to save us from sin. And we would not know how to become a member of the church of Christ in which salvation is found. In other words, we would be **lost—totally, completely, forever lost!** In Ephesians 2:12, the apostle Paul described some people who were just like that when he spoke of those who were “without hope and without God in the world.” That would be **us—if we did not have the Bible!**

It seems to me that the Bible must surely be one of our most valuable and precious possessions. After all, it is not the words of mere men. Nor is it the words of angels. It is **God’s Word!** How, then, should we view the Bible? We can find the answer to that question within the pages of the Bible itself. In the Old Testament, one of God’s prophets—a man by the name of Ezra—stood before the Israelites to read God’s Word to them. Nehemiah 8:5-6 says, “Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people. Then all the people said, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.” This shows us that God’s Word is to be honored and respected. We learn the same thing from the New Testament. In Acts 17, Luke wrote about the Christians in Berea, who “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” These Christians were what we today might call “daily Bible readers.” They loved God’s Word, and they wanted to spend time learning it so that they would know how to go to heaven.

And that brings us back to the list you are holding in your hand of what is most valuable and precious to you. If you did not include the Bible on your list (and only one person did!), **why not?** Paul told Timothy, “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not have to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.” God did not just “suggest” that we study His Word. He did not merely “recommend” that we study it. Nor did He just “ask” us to study it if we have time. Rather, He **commanded** us to study it. The title of my sermon today is, “Why Should Christians Study and Learn God’s Word?” The answer to that question is now quite obvious, isn’t it? We should study and learn God’s Word **because God told us to!** And we should study and learn God’s Word **because if we do not, we cannot get to heaven.** I would say that those are two **very good reasons** to study and learn God’s Word, wouldn’t you?