

Lesson No. 7

METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY

References:

El-Keraza, H. G. Bishop Moussa Bishop for Youth.

Notes For Servants:

1. We must feed on God=s word in order to deliver it.
2. **Discipline is a must in order to benefit from God=s guidance through His word.**

Objectives:

General: Reading The Bible.

Specific:

1. Have some time to listen to God.
2. Create a deep relationship with the Lord.
3. Prepare yourself for eternal life.

Instructions:

1. Church occasion.
2. Introduce the topic by talking about how to find your way through the Bible.
3. Through the Bible we hear God=s voice.
4. The Bible is the Map that guide us to the eternal life.
5. Give examples from our daily lives that apply to this.

Bible Verse:

AThy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.@

(Ps 119:105)

Lesson:

Methods Of Bible Study

There are many methods of Bible study, for the Bible is a wide ocean. No matter how deeply we delve into it, we can grasp only a little. There is no doubt that there are highly specialised methods of Bible study. However, we will deal here only with the methods that suit us as beginners.

1- The Practical Method:

This is the most important method and it is convenient for both the educated and the simple-minded. In this method, we simply read the Bible, understand God's commandments mentioned in it, and ask God to give us the grace to fulfill these commandments. For example, when I read the verse, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone" (Matthew 18:15), I hurry to my friend who has sinned against me and tell him his fault with

love, winning him over once more. On reading the verse, "Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation" (Matthew 26:41), I actually organise my life and start to be regular in praying honestly, so as not to enter into temptation. When I hear the Lord say, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28), I ask Him with tears to purify my look so that it may be sacred, and so on.

The practical method is the method that our forefathers used at the time when the Bible was not yet printed and the manuscripts were very few, but through their obedience to the commandments, they became saints. They even became living Bibles, moving among people and winning many to Christ. Saint Anthony, on hearing the deacon read one verse in the church, went and sold everything he had and followed Christ, and consequently became a blessing to the whole world and to all generations.

2- The Contemplative Method:

This method is important and satisfying. In it, one reads some verses and repeats them to oneself calmly and deeply, then starts to talk to God through these verses, expressing his thankfulness if they happen to speak about God's work with us, humility if they convict him for his sins, or his joy in the Lord if they explain to him God's love for the human soul, as in the case of 'The Song of Songs.'

For example, when one reads, "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97), one starts to say to God, 'You are worthy, O Lord, to be loved, because You redeemed me and prepared for me a precious salvation and a happy eternity. Yet, I am poor because my love for the world, the flesh and for people many times deprives me of You. When will You be loved even to the depths? When will Your name be my meditation all day? When will I always say the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me. Lord Jesus Christ help me. Lord Jesus Christ, I praise Thee.@

Thus, the soul is nourished by the words of the Bible, these words turn into prayers, and these prayers turn into satisfaction and power.

3- The Analytical Method:

This method also is important because, when we read the word of God without understanding, it becomes less useful to us, whereas when we understand it and study it deeply it is easy to be satisfied and filled with it. In this method, we study the passage in question with depth and analysis.

For example, one might read the Epistle to the Romans without understanding what is meant by it, because it is necessary to study an introduction to this epistle, talking about its purpose, subject and divisions, as well as its main ideas, and thus, one will start to understand. One can then go deeper into the studies by reading a book that explains this epistle, followed by a different book on the same epistle, and so on. This is an analytical study of the epistle, of a theme or a character in it. In this way, one goes deeply into the study of the satisfying word of God.

The Fathers and commentators have written millions of pages explaining the Holy Bible, and the door is still open for hard-workers.

These three methods are complementary to one another. Thus, it is advisable to apply them in our lives in the following way:

1- Every morning, read one chapter from the Old Testament and meditate upon it, using it in talking to God (the 'contemplative method'). Then, pick up a specific commandment and try to apply it throughout the whole day (the 'practical method').

2- In the evening, read a number of chapters of the Bible, or some commentaries, so as to develop a profound idea of the Holy Bible gradually (the 'analytical method').

How to prepare yourself for Reading the Bible

No matter which method you choose or what reading plan you pick you should maintain the following:

- 1.1.1 You will get the most out of your Bible if you approach it with a HUNGRY attitude: hungry to learn. This attitude comes only when you sincerely humble yourself before God and His Word. He who already feels that he knows, feels that he has no need to learn.
- 1.1.2 Set aside a Quiet Time of about 20 to 30 minutes for yourself every day, or longer if you can!
- 1.1.3 Be strict with yourself about keeping this time. It is as essential to you as your food, and more important than your favourite T.V. programme!
- 1.1.4 Find a quiet, isolated place (usually your room) with no interruptions.
- 1.1.5 Find a time of the day when you still have energy. Get into a routine by using the same time every day.
- 1.1.6 You may put your Bible on your desk so that you cannot miss it every day when you begin studying. Have your 'Quiet Time' just before beginning your study.
- 1.1.7 Begin with a prayer and possibly a hymn. Calm your mind and thoughts.
- 1.1.8 In your prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what you need to learn as you read your Bible.
- 1.1.9 The amount that you read is not crucial, but the amount that you learn from your reading is. Cast your net into the depth.
- 1.1.10 Get a notebook or diary and write down at least one verse, and perhaps some thoughts, about what you read each day.
- 1.1.11 If you have any questions about what you read, remember them or write them down and ask the priest, your servant, or even mom or dad.
- 1.1.12 Bible commentaries can be helpful, but they can never replace your own reading, meditating and praying.
- 1.1.13 Try to think about what you read at every opportunity during the day.
- 1.1.14 You must apply what you learn in your day to day life. This will make what you read really come to life.

Conclusion:

1. Have some time to listen to God.
2. Create a deep relationship with the Lord.
3. Prepare yourself for eternal life.