

LEARN AND OBEY GOD'S WORDS

People use many different standards to determine right from wrong and navigate their lives. However, it is only the Bible that reveals God's words and perfectly guides you into the ways that are truly right and pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:14-17). These words contain what is true and will work powerfully to lead you into a new life that pleases God if you allow them to do so (1 Peter 1:22-25). They reveal the faith that identifies what God desires (Jude 1:3-4). Ultimately, if you desire to spend eternity with God in Heaven one day, you must recognize that God's word will be the criteria that will judge your life (Matthew 21:23-27; Revelation 20:11-15). Therefore, as you recognize these things, you must diligently seek to learn and obey God's words so that they direct the course of your life.

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

God has always established the connection between those who desire to be His people and His words. Even in this Old Testament example, those who wanted to live as God's people needed to love God and have His words deeply embedded within them (and pass them on to others). They were to be a significant part of people's thoughts, lives, and conversations. In fact, they were to be in the core of their being (i.e., in their hearts). This continues to be a model for those who want to be God's people today. For it is impossible to truly love God without keeping His commandments (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3), and you must know God's words to keep His commandments in an obedient way. Therefore, you should regularly set God's words in front of your eyes and think about them regularly!

PSALM 119:33-40

This is part of a psalm that often discusses the psalmist's love for God's words. Notice his great desire to learn God's instructions and truly understand God's way! He wanted to avoid looking at worthless things and avoid everything evil and false. He knew that only God's words would lead to experiencing life with God and righteousness! But he did not stop at just wanting to know the words of God. He also committed himself to obeying (keeping) God's words with all his heart

continually! You must develop these same attitudes if you desire to seek God, seeing the connection between doing what is right and knowing God's words. However, you must consider that just knowing God's words is insufficient. Instead, you must desire to obey God's words with all your heart!

ACTS 17:10-12

When the apostle Paul preached in Berea, he found people who were noble-minded and desired to know the truth. Their desire was seen through their eagerness to listen to God's words being taught. They then searched the Scriptures daily for themselves to see whether God's words were being taught accurately. Similarly, you must also determine to be a seeker of truth – one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness (Matthew 5:6)! You should eagerly desire to know what God's word says. This will manifest itself in time spent listening to people teach God's words and in time spent searching the Scriptures for yourself (so you do not blindly follow what others say, 2 Peter 3:14-18). As God's words have been made widely available in many places, you have the tremendous opportunity to search the Scriptures every day by reading and studying the Bible for yourself so that you can be like the Bereans! If you desire a right relationship with God, your efforts to learn and practice God's words will be evident throughout your life!

JAMES 1:19-21

Committing yourself to eagerly learning God's words is critical. However, the way that you hear God's words also matters! Although being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger are good principles for how you should conduct yourself toward other people, I believe the primary application is in relation to hearing God's words (vv. 18, 21). Rather than thinking you already know what's right and wrong for yourself, you must be quick to hear and eager to listen to God's words. Rather than being quick to give your opinion about things, you must be slow to speak and make sure you understand God's words. Rather than getting angry at what God's word teaches, you must desire to bring your life into agreement with whatever it says, no matter what it requires. Ultimately, you must desire to purge your life of all the evil that has been present in it. So, you must meekly (humbly) receive God's word and let it work like seed in your life (Luke 8:5-8, 11-15) by holding your strength under control to let God's word

to do its intended work! For it is only His word that is able to save your soul (Romans 1:16)!

JAMES 1:22-27

As you learn what God desires from your life, you must commit to doing/practicing whatever God teaches. If you do not, you become like someone who looks in a mirror, notices a problem with his/her appearance, and does nothing to correct it! So, you must use God's word as a mirror for your life. As it teaches and rebukes you for whatever flaws it exposes, you must also let it correct and train you in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). This is the only way to live in a way that is blessed in God's sight and to practice a religion that truly pleases God. No matter how challenging God's words may seem, you must commit to doing whatever He says!

LUKE 6:46-49

Jesus teaches how you can have a well-built life that survives the storms. So, think about this well-built life that pleases God as including well-built character, well-built habits, well-built marriages, well-built homes, well-built religion, and well-built everything. To do this, you must not build on any kind of foundation that will fail (e.g., earthly things, Ecclesiastes 1-2). Instead, you must build on the solid foundation of hearing and obeying Jesus's words. Therefore, you must take the time and put in the effort to diligently learn what Jesus teaches in the pages of Scripture. Just hearing them, though, will not be sufficient for this well-built life. You must also be diligent to do whatever He teaches, even when it is difficult (vv. 20-45)! Only this kind of life will result in pleasing God. Anything else will result in destruction.

CONCLUSION

When you live in darkness, you are not focused on learning what God teaches and putting those things into practice in your life. However, if you want to leave the darkness and walk in the light that God provides, His words become essential to this transformation. Therefore, you must make it a matter of priority to seek God by learning the will of God through His words in the Bible. Then, you must commit to doing whatever those words require of you!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What is the connection between being God's people and God's words?

What should your attitude be toward knowing God's words?

Why were the Bereans commended?

How can you demonstrate the same attitude as the Bereans?

What should your efforts to learn God's words look like?

What should your attitude be in how you hear God's words?

What must you do with the words of God you learn?

How can you have a well-built life?