

To the Teacher

The information below is to help you in teaching the lesson. DO NOT read this page to the students. Instead, teach the information in your own words. Be sure to finish the student's lesson as well. The Scripture references in parentheses are for additional study, to round out the information given in the lesson. Become familiar with these passages as well, to provide additional Scriptures to your students.

Lesson 28 – Spiritual Preparation (Teacher's Lesson)

Opening: Answer the opening question. Explain that with some tasks, whether easy or difficult, certain things should be done before others for the task to be done correctly (for example, dishes must be washed before they are dried.) Studying the Bible is one of those tasks. Spiritual preparation must come first.

Study Notes:

John 16:13

The Holy Spirit guides us to all truth.

1 Corinthians 2:10b-14

Verse 11 – Who knows the thoughts of God? The Holy Spirit.

Verse 12 – What does the Holy Spirit help us do? To understand what God has given us.

Verse 14 – Why does the person without the Spirit not accept what comes from God? Because it is foolishness to him, he cannot understand it.

This passage speaks specifically about those who are not Christians. They cannot understand spiritual things until God allows them to. However, we can apply this to Christians as well. If a Christian does not have a close fellowship with God, he will not be able to hear God's voice clearly, and his understanding of God's Word will not be led by the Spirit, but by his own reasoning (and affected by his own biases).

John 5:39-40

Explain that this does not make studying the Bible a bad thing. To the contrary, it is essential for the growth as a Christian. The problem with the Pharisees was that they pursued "zeal without knowledge" (Romans 10:2). They had a great desire to study God's Word, but they did not have a personal relationship with God. They refused to accept Christ, and so the good act of studying the Bible became a block of spiritual pride that hindered them.

Summary: To correctly understand God's Word, we must be spiritually prepared for Him to teach us.

Application: Many students can be reluctant to admit that there are things they do not understand. Explain that studying the Bible is a lifelong experience. The word “disciple” means “one who learns” and if you admit that you do not understand it means that you are admitting that you are still a learner.

Lesson 28 – Spiritual Preparation

Beginning

When you have to complete a large task to do, do you do the easy part first, or the hard part?

Studying the Bible can be intimidating. People often feel inadequate in their knowledge or training before it begins. But God wants His people to read and understand His Word; So, studying the Bible is an important skill for any Christian to learn. The good news is that every Christian always has the most important resource available to them – the Holy Spirit. Read John 16:13 and fill in the blanks below.

The Holy Spirit guides us into _____ .

If we believe in what Jesus said in this passage, then we must agree that the most important tool in Bible Study is a spiritually prepared heart. In fact, it is impossible to understand the truth of Scripture without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 and answer the following questions.

Verse 11 – Who knows the thoughts of God?

Verse 12 – What does the Holy Spirit help us to do?

Verse 14 – Why does the person without the Spirit not accept what comes from God?

As you can see, the Holy Spirit is the one who teaches us truth, and apart from His leadership, we cannot understand God's truth. Being in a right relationship with the Spirit is essential to correctly understanding God's Word. The Pharisees were religious leaders in Jesus' time and they were experts in Scripture. They had memorized many of the Scriptures, but look what Jesus said:

“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

Juan 5:39-40

Steps to Spiritual Preparation

To be prepared spiritually in the study of the Bible, there are some important things to remember.

1. Do not grieve the Spirit (*Ephesians 4:30*) – This verse is in the middle of a group of teachings about proper behavior for Christians. When we continue in sin, God’s heart is grieved and we will have difficulty hearing His voice. If we are sure that there is no sin we have not confessed and for which we have not repented within our hearts, it will help our relationship with the Lord to be strong.

2. Begin with Prayer (*James 1:5*) – This verse says that we need to ask God for wisdom when we are lacking. This is especially important when we study His word, as we desire God’s point of view on His Word, not our point of view. We must always pray. A praying heart will be well adapted to God.

3. Let Scripture Interpret Scripture – For example, the verse above (*Ephesians 4:30*) relates to another verse (*Isaiah 63:10*), which says, “Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.” Reading both verses together makes it clear that grieving the Holy Spirit happens when we are disobedient to God, which agrees with the rest of the Ephesians passage. So, the more you know Scripture, the more you can understand what you read. Reading the Bible on a daily basis will help you be more spiritually prepared in your study of the Bible.

I don’t understand...

Some things in the Bible can be difficult to understand. In the next few weeks, we will learn about how to study your Bible. What are three issues or themes in the Bible that you have difficulty understanding or explaining?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Scripture to memorize:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16-17