

Do You Understand the Bible?

David Halbrook

Did you know God expects you to "...understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17)? Many people are frustrated when they read the Bible, so they give up and stop reading. In Acts 8:30-38 a man who did not understand part of the Bible at first, soon understood what he needed to do to become a Christian. Like him, do you want to learn?

If you do not understand the Bible, you need to discover the reason(s) why. Are you more interested in other things (sports, TV)? Have you just read a few paragraphs twice a week and then quit? Have you ignored the parts you understood but did not like? Have you started with the basics, like Genesis? Is it possible that you have been taught error in the past that is causing confusion in the present?

God will judge you based on these words and ignorance will not be an excuse (Acts 17:30-31). If you do not understand, begin today to do whatever is necessary to understand! Next week's article will discuss how to understand the Bible. Read it today at www.QVCOC.com.

Editor's Note: As our society knows less and less about the Bible, they will understand less and less of it. What can you do to help others understand some part of it? Find a way to make our article in *Arkansas Weekly* useful in your private work of spreading the knowledge of the truth.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

Openings remain on two lists on the back bulletin board. We need people to offer a few minutes of their time to aid us in our work as a church.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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Toward More Effective Teaching (2)

Wayne Galloway

Seven Principles For Action (John 4)

1) Contact others socially (4:1-7a). I am afraid that many of us limit our circle of friends to those who are already Christians or limit our association to our immediate family and do not have any friends. If we do not know any non-Christians how can we introduce them to Christ? It is good to be careful not to be influenced by others to do evil, but Jesus associated with taxgatherers and sinners and explained his actions by saying, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick."

2) Establish a common interest (4:7-8). Most likely this common interest will be something physical, flower gardening, children, etc. Jesus' common interest with this Samaritan woman was water. More often than not we would like to skip over this preliminary step and get on with the proclamation of the gospel, but our success will be greater if we establish a mutual interest first and then make a transition from the common interest to spiritual matters.

3) Stimulate the interest (4:9-15). Merely saying something, anything, may stimulate interest. The fact that Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman was unusual. The joy of our lives should spark interest in others. A discussion of world events might lead you to ask, "What do you think is wrong with the world?" After listening to what our friend thinks we might ask, "How do you think religion enters into this situation?"

4) Don't go too far too fast (4:13-19). Jesus did not immediately introduce himself to the Samaritan woman as the Christ. I once watched my Dad walk up behind a bird sitting on a clothes line post and take hold of its tail feathers. The lesson I learned was that the accomplishment of some goals takes patience. Be careful about being too eager.

5) Don't be harsh in your condemnation (4:16-18). Do not encourage sin, but be careful with your condemnations. In conversations with non-Christians they may talk of "the signs of the times" and explain that the end is near for the earthly reign of Christ. But this is probably not a good time for an hour sermon entitled "The Evils of Premillennialism."

6) Stick with the main issue (4:20-26). The Samaritan woman, upon learning that Jesus was a prophet, immediately brought up a controversial issue—where ought men to worship, Jerusalem or Gerizim? Jesus answered her question and brought her back to the main issue, namely the Messiahship. I have had many people try to divert attention away from their need to obey the gospel by bringing up questions on mechanical instruments in worship, the role of women in the church, etc. Having the right answers on these questions will not help me if I refuse to accept Christ and be baptized.

7) Direct confrontation (4:26). We must finally bring the non-Christian to the point that he realizes he must make a decision. Jesus confronted the Samaritan woman with the fact that he was the Messiah. She must either accept him or reject him. We should be equally clear in our teaching. Those that we teach must realize that a decision must be made either to accept Christ or reject him.

Targeting Our Efforts

In order to be most effective in teaching the gospel we need to know where to spend the majority of our time and efforts. We are to teach the gospel to all the world. Great wisdom should be used in the accomplishment of this task. Statistics indicate that 79-90% of all conversions come from friends and relatives of Christians. The use of the media accounts for only .001%. The preacher for only 3-5%. All other means fall into the 1-4% bracket.

This does not mean that we should abandon our work with newspapers, radio and television. What it does mean is that members must be impressed with having their friends and relatives read our newspaper articles, listen to our radio programs, and watch our television programs.

Note the many references to household conversions in the N.T. Let us place our emphasis upon teaching our friends and relatives the gospel. Let preachers, elders, and Bible class teachers impress the congregation with the fact that the individual Christian working among his family and friends is the key to the growth of God's kingdom.

Conclusion

"How can you be more effective in teaching the lost?" Be converted yourself. Put into use the seven principles Jesus used. Center your efforts on your friends and relatives. *(Searching the Scriptures, June 1984)*

Brief Thoughts

John R. Gibson

Few children do not know the story of Daniel and the lions' den, but how many adults have stopped to think about the fact that Daniel had been in Babylon more than 65 years when that event took place? The book opens with young Daniel (15 or so?) refusing to be defiled with the king's food (1:8), and the historical section closes with a man who had probably reached the 80 year mark continuing to faithfully pray to God despite a law against it (6:10).

Though we don't believe Daniel to have been a perfect man (cf. Rom. 3:23), what an inspiration to young and old alike. He took a stand for God at a young age and fell to his knees for God in his advanced years. Whatever our stage of life, let's determine to be more like Daniel in refusing the defilements of our age and have a determination to serve God no matter the opposition.

"For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6). While Saul and his six hundred men were doing nothing about the Philistine threat to Israel, Jonathan, Saul's son, asked his armorbearer to join him in an attack on the Philistines. Jonathan believed if it was God's will that they attack, two men could win as easily as two hundred or two thousand. We today are not engaged in the same kind of battle Jonathan fought (2 Corinthians 10:3, 4), but we are in a great spiritual battle and it is essential that we understand it is only by God's power that the victory can be won. When Jesus left the earth and commissioned His apostles to go into all the world with the gospel message, the odds against these twelve men must have seemed overwhelming. Yet, within a few short years they had "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) and taken the gospel to the world (Colossians 1:23).

We must not become discouraged by our limited numbers, strength, resources, etc.; instead, let us "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10, 11). God is no more restrained today than He was in the days of Jonathan, but we must be willing to be used by Him as humble and obedient spiritual warriors.