

Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

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Issue 21

The Importance of Effective Bible Study Cody Westbrook

One of the most tragic statements in scripture is found in Hosea 4:6—"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." God had given His people everything that they needed to know in order to please Him. He had clearly revealed His will in the Law, and sent prophets to them time and again to plead with them to repent of their sins and live righteously. But they continually rejected Him, and consequently He rejected them (Hos. 4:6b). Another tragedy is found in Amos 8:11—

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

How sad it is that God's people had neglected one of God's richest blessings—His revealed will. Unfortunately, there are many people today who fall under the same heart-breaking consequence of these two passages. God's word is absent from their lives and they are, therefore, walking down the path of destruction.

The apostle Paul's desire for the Colossians was that they "be filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col. 1:9). He wanted them to know more and more of God's word because "it is not good" to be without it (Prov. 19:2). To know God's will is to know God (Col. 1:10), and what could be more important? But, being filled with the knowledge of God's word does not happen by accident. It does not come by osmosis or direct action from the Holy Spirit. The only way that I will be able to know God's word is by studying it effec-

tively (2 Tim. 2:15).

Webster's collegiate dictionary defines the word "effective" as "producing a decided, decisive, or desired effect." There are a number of effects that come as a result of bible study. When we study we show ourselves "approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15). We study the bible because it provides us everything we need to know in order to please God and be with Him in eternity (2 Pet. 1:3). Scripture has the ability to make us complete (2 Tim. 3:17). It is "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). The new birth is produced by the word of God (1 Pet. 1:23). Studying God's word will help to strengthen our faith so that we may withstand the attacks of the devil (Ps. 1; Col. 1:9-11). These things are only possible when we study effectively. We must study with the proper attitude. We must understand the nature of what we're studying. We must respect its author, its authority, and its power. We must dedicate ourselves completely to being "filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col. 1:9).

The opposite of effective bible study is, of course, ineffective bible study. Something that is ineffective is "not capable of performing efficiently or as expected." There are many people who study the bible with negative results because they do so for the wrong reasons or in the wrong manner (c.f. Jas. 3:13-4:4). Some completely ignore the things that they do not like; some study only to find justification for the way that they live; and others study only to find reasons to reject God. There are people who believe in God but do not believe that His word is completely inspired. Some believe that the scripture is on-

ly a part of what we need and the Holy Spirit directly provides the rest. Still, there are those who are sincere in their efforts to study God's word but simply do not know how or where to begin. The number of reasons why people study scripture ineffectively is endless. But, the result is always the same.

What about you and your personal bible study habits? Do you prioritize reading *and* studying the scripture? There is a difference. Do you meditate on God's word (Ps. 1)? Do you memorize it and hide it in your heart (Ps. 119:11)? When you read and study, do you do so with a proper attitude? Are you truly hungry and thirsting for righteousness (Matt. 5:6) or looking to justify something you know is wrong? It is tragic to die for lack of knowledge of God's word but no one has to suffer that demise. As long we draw breath we can study God's word. But, we must be careful to do so effectively.

Mostly Christian

When we go to the ballpark, it's almost a requirement to get a burger or hotdog. Sure, the taste might carry an odd resemblance to cardboard (especially if you let it get cold at all). Yeah, you can almost feel the grease instantly transforming into fat around your waist. We even understand that eating this food could set in motion some future tummy issues. But again, getting a burger or dog is a tradition! It's somehow become part of the stadium experience.

It is for these stomach-churning reasons that the "higher quality" options can look so appealing inside the stadium. At the last professional game I attended, a particular hotdog stand did just this. Proudly proclaimed on the stand were the words "Mostly Organic." This immediately raised some questions. What part of this food isn't organic? Could the non-organic part be something bad or harmful? Why even make this claim at all? The only reason a food stand like this is appealing at all is because most of the other stadium food is at

a quality level even some farm animals would turn their noses up to.

The problem is, when we are surrounded by such terrible options, the "higher quality" options stand out dramatically. This is true with stadium food, this is true with morals, and this can even be true with people who claim to be Christians. This isn't good enough.

Imagine if we took this stance with our spiritual lives. Is it going to suffice if we are "Mostly Christian"? Is God going to be happy if we are "Mostly Followers" of His? Would it be good enough for us to be "Mostly Pure"? The answer is a resounding, "No!"

Consider what Christ called the greatest commandment of all, "You shall love the Lord your God with **all** your heart, and with **all** your soul, and with **all** your strength, and with **all** your mind" (Luke 10:27; Matthew 22:36-40). It's impossible to read these words and walk away with a mentality that God expects anything from us except for our **all**.

In a world that continually offers more and more filthy spiritual options, it's becoming harder not to settle morally. The point here is not that we must be perfectly sinless (Romans 3:23), but that in our spiritual lives we must never settle for being something that is "hopefully good enough for God."

We must be willing to ask ourselves some hard, honest questions. Where do I sit right now? Am I content being "Mostly Christian," or am I dedicated to presenting the Lord with my **all**?

Never settle for being "Mostly Christian."

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of May 26, 2019

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading: Kirk FitzSimmons

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Lupe Escojido
Fruit of the Vine: Clifton Rutherford
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: Curtis Scherffius, Pat Gooch, Isaac Jobes

Sunday Evening: Lupe Escojido, Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Ron White
P.M. Closing: Young Men

Ushers: Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Bryce Dolan

Open/Close Building:

Sound System: Will Burleson

Greeters:

Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion: Dolan

To Our Visitors: We welcome you to our service. Perhaps this is the first time you have visited us. It is our desire to have you return often and give us a chance to become better acquainted with you. You will find visitor cards on the back of the pew in front of you. Please fill one out.

The Summer Youth Series will begin Wednesday, June 5th. If you would like to help bring snacks for the youth, there is a sign up sheet on the hallway bulletin board.

Hosts are needed for Youth Devo's. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway!

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Don Blackwell and his wife, Sheri, who are recovering from a four wheeler accident.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2: Graduation Reception for Anthony Scherffius.
June 5: Wednesday Adult Summer Series: The New Testament Church. Speaker is Justin Guess.
July 11: MidTown hosts Area Summer Youth Series

AREA EVENTS

June 9: Camp Hensel begins
June 23-28: Servants Academy @ Southwest
July 21-26: Peach Valley Youth Camp

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Angy Hutt (26); Bryant Siegel (29)

Happy Anniversary: Brant & Anna Jacobs (30); Kevin & Imelda Sheeran (31)

There will be a graduation reception for Anthony Scherffius on Sunday, June 2, after evening worship. There will be a cake and a basket for cards.



KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Mickey Tisue
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Faye Henderson
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of May 19, 2019

Bible Class.....	110
A.M. Worship.....	140
P.M. Worship.....	91
Wednesday Bible Study.....	79

Offering \$4,386

THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Each week will focus on reading a portion of the New Testament, each reading will only take 30 minutes:

Luke 12-Luke 18



SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

GO PAPERLESS!

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MidTown Church of Christ

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