



Study 20

THE

STUDYING

THE NEW TESTAMENT COMMANDS

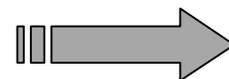
For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

Ezra 7:10

We conclude our study series about the Commands of the New Testament by looking at how we can discover what it is that the New Testament commands and how we can best follow Christ by discovering these commands. For the believer in Christ the desire to follow Christ and obey His commands is a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

1. How does John describe the believer's attitude towards the commands of God in First John 5:3?

The believer regards the commands of the Christ in the New Testament as God's flags in the minefield of life. He has graciously shown us where each of the landmines that ruin us (not only spiritually, but in every way) are to be found. By knowing where



these spiritual landmines are we can better navigate through life. Knowing what the commands of Christ are helps to make life better.

2. According to Second Timothy 2:15, how should the believer present themselves to God as a *diligent* servant?
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3. What the Psalmist, in Psalm 111:2, say that passionate believers would do?
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4. What was it that made the Bereans *noble* according to Acts 17:11?
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WHY THE NEED FOR BIBLE STUDY

Some people argue that believers don't need to *study* the Bible because they should *just read it, believe it and obey it*. These people argue for a "simple" understanding of the Bible. In one sense the Bible is simple. It has a simple message that *God is Creator who created mankind who rebelled but God provided His Son as our Saviour from our sins*. It is very difficult to escape this "simple" message of the Bible. But in another sense, the Bible is not "simple".

Here are 4 reasons why the Bible is not "simple" to understand-

- (i) The events described in the Bible are now ancient history. Unlike the original audience, we are not entirely familiar with these events
- (ii) Unlike the original audience, the original documents of the Bible were not generally written in languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) that we are entirely familiar with.
- (iii) The intent of the original message was conveyed using idioms, metaphors, hyperbole, numbers, symbols, and allegories.
- (iv) The broad language of the Bible is *Biblical*. That is, the Bible (sometimes unknowingly by the various authors) uses literary concepts that another Biblical passage defines. For example, when the Bible described Jesus as "the lamb of God" in John 1:29 it assumes the reader understands that this concept has been defined in such passages as Exodus 12:3.



5. What did Jesus imply would happen if we properly study the Scriptures?
(Note John 5:39)
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STUDYING TO UNDERSTAND?

The goal of our Bible study is not just to understand the text. The goal of our Bible study is *to glorify God*. This is achieved when not only we worship, but when we obey God. As a result of our transformation into greater degrees of obedience to God, people notice and they glorify God (Matthew 5:16). Conversely, the opposite of glorifying God is: *blasphemy*. When we who profess Christ as believers in Him do not reflect His Word, Will or Ways in our lives, we not only blaspheme but we cause others to blaspheme as well (Romans 2:24).

Therefore, like Ezra, our goal in studying the Bible is *to do it*.

6. In what way does Ephesians 5:10 encourage us to study the Bible with this goal in mind?
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To study the Bible means that we are attempting to answer three questions-

- (i) What did the text really intend to say?
- (ii) What does the text really intend to mean?
- (iii) How can I best apply this text to maximise my obedience to Christ?

At Christmas time we often send and receive Christmas cards with the printed text: "*Peace on earth and goodwill towards all men*" often with the reference, Luke 2:14.

7. Is this what this reference says? (Luke 2:14) If not, what does it say?
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People usually base their ideas that Christmas is about being nice to everyone and sending best wishes within Christmas cards to friends, relatives and acquaintances that they've had no contact with all year. But is this what this text (Luke 2:14) was meant to convey? In order to answer the first question of Bible study we need to employ the principle of *Context*.

8. Read the preceding and proceeding verses of Luke 2:14 and determine who is the focus of this passage?
 - (a) The poor shepherds
 - (b) All men
 - (c) The night-sky angels
 - (d) God and His act of grace making peace between God and man possible.

Reading (or referencing) Bible Commentaries, background books, or written sermons can help our Bible study. Regular church attendance in a healthy, well-balanced, Bible-based church will help us to study God's Word. But perhaps the most fundamental way to study the Bible is to commit to a Bible study group where believers meet together to answer the three Bible Study questions and prayerfully support each other in our walk with Christ.

CONCLUSIONS

Building upon the foundation of Christ's commands in beatitudes and the Gospels, we have seen that the New Testament commands us to pray, be a part of a community of believers, adhere to right doctrine, reach out, and conform to His Word. Each of these aspects of following Christ are integrated. That is, to be a follower of Christ requires a commitment to each of these areas- without neglecting any of them. We have concluded by looking at the importance of studying God's Word in order to discover how we can better follow Christ. We have seen that when we read, meditate upon, memorise and study Scripture the Holy Spirit is able to transform our hearts and minds. As a result, our lives stand out. But perhaps more importantly for the believer, when we follow Christ in prayer, community, doctrine, outreach, and Scripture, God's Word not only commands how we are to live, it *empowers* us to live it!

It is my pastoral prayer that we will each find the *joy* of obeying the commands of Christ and live for His glory by obeying these commands.

Amen.