

QUALITIES NEEDED TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE:

FAITH: First there is the necessity of saving faith, i.e., you must be born-again to receive spiritual information. The "natural man" is at a decided disadvantage when approaching any understanding of the Scriptures. Paul says he cannot "know them" ("the things of the Spirit of God") apart from the new birth. (1 Cor. 2:14) This is not to say that he cannot read or understand the historical record of the truth contained in the Bible, but that he is incapable of receiving spiritual understanding or benefit from it.

Next there is faith in the origin of Scripture, namely, that God is its Author. (A careful study of 1 Cor. 2 will demonstrate the Holy Spirit's place in the Authorship and revelation of spiritual truth in the Word of God.) A believer must not only believe that God is the Author of His Word, but that He has protected and preserved His Word (and words) as He promised. (Ps. 12:6,7) With these two prerequisites in faith the believer is motivated to study the Bible to discover its spiritual riches. In order to do so he must be careful to "*rightly divide the Word of truth.*" (2 Tim. 2:15) The term "workman" in this passage implies that mining the riches of Scripture requires diligent study. The Bible is not like any other book – to be read once and then cast aside. It is a living Book and speaks to the believer again and again no matter how many times it is read.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1:23

INTELLIGENCE: It goes without saying that a person must be literate to begin with. A certain level of intelligence is needed to properly understand the Bible. A person must be able to make distinctions in things that differ, and comparisons in things which are similar. He must be able to know definitions (or be capable of looking them up). He has to apply and bring to bear on his study of Scripture all he has learned about nature, science, mathematics, geography, history, etc. The more "well read" a person is, the better equipped he is to engage himself in a rewarding study of the Bible.

ILLUS: It is surely helpful to know the history of Israel and the geography of the land as well as basic concepts of science and nature to get the most out of Bible study. The student needs to understand directions in Scripture since most references are related to the Land of Israel and often especially to Jerusalem. A little smattering of nature will aid in references to plants, animals, etc.

LOGIC: (See introductory notes) The student of God's Word must make a distinction between objects and subjects when the Bible requires it. For example, the New Testament classifies the human race into three basic units: "the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God." 1 Cor. 10:32 These are not to be confused, nor are promises or judgments towards one to be automatically ascribed to another. The Bible further makes distinctions among believers: babes, carnal, spiritual.

SPIRITUALITY: Salvation alone does not confer spirituality nor does it give immediate access to the great truths of Scripture. That is where diligent study comes in even for the spiritual Christian. The closer the believer walks with the Lord, the more likely he will be able to mine the spiritual nuggets that less spiritual believers miss.

ILLUS.: Often when under the teaching or preaching of God's Word we are amazed when the speaker opens our understanding to a passage we have read again and again. We missed the truth he is expounding. There may be several primary reasons for this. 1. He has studied the passage in depth, 2. He is walking closer to the Savior, 3. He has the background and time to study more efficiently.

SINCERITY: The person who truly desires to know the Word of God will not be hypocritical or even critical of the Bible. He will approach it as it is indeed God's holy Word and not man's. He will allow the Bible to correct him instead of him correcting the Bible. He will open his heart and mind to the leadership and illumination of the Holy Spirit and will bend his will to God's will. He will come to the Word of God desiring that God conform him to the Bible and to the image of Christ. He will be not just a hearer of the Word of God, but a doer. The King James Bible translators approached the Bible with the utmost scholarship, intelligence, respect, reverence and sincerity.

"This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book."