

"ESTABLISH YOUR HEART" BY KNOWING HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE
"FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD IS NEAR" JAMES 5:8

- Say - Welcome to Sabbath School class. Let's bow our head as we ask God for understanding in our study today. This is the 7th lesson in a 7-part series from James 5:8 which says, "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts (place firmly your face toward God and His way of life, not our way or the world's way of life)".
- Say - In lesson one, we discussed God's purpose for us, our goal and reward. In lesson two we discussed the importance of developing the character of a Righteous King by learning to love the instructions and laws of God which lead us to Christ. We discussed the patience one must have as God's people live each day with the expectation that His coming is very near.
- Say - In lesson 4, we discussed the importance of "establishing our hearts" by giving God the "reins" of our mind and lesson 5 we discussed choosing the Path of Life or "Strait and Narrow way" to prepare for Christ's coming.
- Say - Lesson 6 we discussed following only The Good Shepherd and today the Bible teaches us another way to "establish our hearts for His coming". Christ said, "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" Acts 17:11. It is important we know how to study the Bible so we too can "search" the scriptures and make it a part of our daily life. Here are some suggestions.
- Say - Always begin our Bible study by praying to God and asking Him for His wisdom in understanding of the scriptures we are studying. There are many successful methods for studying the Bible. I will show you how I study. Also if we are not used to studying daily, I would suggest we start out with just a sentence or two and gradually grow to a verse and then we will be well on our way to the entire chapter, book or topic.
- Say - Remember there are many things in the Bible which can easily be understood without the use of Bible Commentaries or a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance but I always use them. They can be found on-line along with the Bible for free usage. For the Bible, search for Biblegateway.com and we can choose the translation we are used to using. For Strong's Concordance search for "Strong's Concordance" and click on "Strong's Concordance with Hebrew and Greek Lexicon". My favorite Bible Commentary is Jamison,

Fausset and Brown which I have purchased and I have never found one on-line.

Say - The importance of a Bible Commentary is of great value. For instance, if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob came back today, they would need a commentary on how to operate a computer. Take for example, the word "mouse". This word as they knew it meant a small little rodent which is one definition but when it comes to the computer, it takes on an additional definition as we know.

Say - That is how the reading of the Bible is for us, the language and words they used at that time have a very valuable need for us to understand so we can get the picture of what is being taught. Think of the Bible commentary as a fill in the blanks concerning the history and terminology of the language and the setting of their day.

Say - Here is an example of what I mean. In example #1, let's begin with just one sentence.

EXAMPLE #1

Say - "For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee" Luke 4:10.

1. When we read, "For it is written", we ask ourselves, where was it written? If we go to the reference scripture in the Bible we will see this sentence is part of vs. 11 and it will lead us or reference us to Psalms 91:11 where it says the very same verse. Now we know this verse was "written" in what is called the Old Testament or specifically the Psalms/hymns.

2. Upon arriving at Psalms 91:11 and if we read the entire chapter, we will see it is part of a list of God's protection in the time of danger for His people.

3. Moving on in the sentence to, "He shall give his angels charge over thee", by looking in the Strong's Concordance we will see that the word, "angels" means "a messenger from God". The word, "charge" means, "appoint by divine act". Finally the word, "keep" means "carefully guard" who? YOU! Isn't this a wonderful thing to know and "establish our heart and mind" with that if we ask, God will "charge" (appoint by His command) "angels" to "keep" (or guard YOU carefully). I think it is one we should memorize so we can share it with our family, friends and future families.

Say - Now we can see when we put the commentary and Strong's Concordance information together the help they give us with these verses, it takes on a great story, one we can remember.

Say - Also remember in our studying that all verses have a physical meaning as well as a spiritual meaning; always search and look for both. Below is an example. I have underlined the word or group of words I "copied" and then "pasted" into the "search" area of the concordance which I used on-line.

Say - In example #2, we will look at an entire paragraph.

EXAMPLE # 2

Say - "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" Luke 4:18.

Say - Upon first reading it, it is easy to understand the physical meaning. But let's take a closer look for spiritual understanding of this verse by using the Strong's Concordance and Bible Commentary.

Say - First of all, following some of the suggestions above, we need to find out who is speaking or who or what the subject is. I looked in my Bible and this verse comes from the book of Luke and written by him as a record of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Say - Let's take a look at this verse. "The Spirit of the Lord" (the power from God the Father) "is upon me" (Jesus Christ, is the one speaking in this verse), (next we can ask, why did God's spirit come upon Him?) "because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor (to proclaim the "gospel" or good tidings of the coming kingdom of God and of the salvation through Jesus Christ and how those people listening then and us now can be a part of the Kingdom of God); "he hath sent me" (appointed me) "to heal" (to cure them physically and to free them from sin to bring about their healing spiritually through salvation.) "the brokenhearted" (those in sorrow from being in bondage to Satan and sin), "to preach deliverance" (freeing them by forgiveness of their sins thereby removing the death penalty) "to the captives" (those in living in sin), "and recovering of sight to the blind" (both physically and blind mentally or spiritually to the truth of God lifting the deception), "to set at liberty them that are bruised"

(those that were in a hopeless condition in their sins are now set free of sin and the death penalty),".

Say - Now we know what the verse means physically and spiritually. Don't you think it creates a better mental understanding of what Christ was doing when He was on earth and has done for each of us, removed the spiritual deception and forgiven us of our sins so we can be in His Kingdom if we are patient and continue to follow Him. I think this is another wonderful verse to "establish our hearts and minds" on.

Say - In Example #3, is one you may want to do by yourself or with your family or a small study group. It comes from one of my favorite chapters. Another important step for me in studying is to read before the verse or chapter so we are aware of who is speaking or what the subject is about. This suggestion would apply to example #3. Like I said this entire chapter is one of my favorites but just by reading it you will wonder why but when we use the tools of study, (we will need a Bible Commentary for this one) you will see why it is so good and sad at the same time for it is talking about God's people.

EXAMPLE #3

Ezekiel 16:8-13, Jeremiah 2:5-8

Say - "Now when I passed by (you), and looked upon (you), behold, thy time was the time of love (still in your sins but you had come to the time of maturity when you heard and understood My "call"); and I spread my skirt over thee (I accepted you as in marriage/espousal then the remainder of the verse God explains what He means), and covered thy nakedness (a metaphor used here to cover over sin or pardon): yea, I swear (promise) unto thee, and entered into a covenant(agreement) with (you), saith the Lord God, and (you) becomest mine (Israel, the bride/wife of God's covenant at Sinai, Is. 54:5, Jer. 3:14, Hosea 2:19, 20 and for us His bride/wife, personally, at baptism) Ezekiel 16:8.

Say - Continuing as Christ reminisced, "Then washed I (you) with water (repentance and baptism, purified us)...and I anointed thee with oil (gave us His spirit, His life)", Ez. 16:9. Now we were ready for the wedding garment which only Christ can provide and beautifully describes in Ezekiel 16:10-13.

Say - Here is how He said it. "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin (the outer covering of the

Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God and symbolic of the nuptial tent of God and His bride. Now we are the "tabernacle" where Christ resides when we are His.), and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck (He gives us only the finest and most beautiful).

Say - "And I put a jewel (symbolic of His law) on thy forehead and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God" Ez. 16:10-13.

Say - We can all remember when God called us and we began to walk with Him, no longer contrary to His ways, but for some the cares of the world crept back in once again and the temptations were overpowering and some began to drift away and the "first love" began to fade. God speaks to us about leaving our "First Love".

Say - Here is how He said it, "Thus saith the LORD, what iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me (Christ asks us what have I done wrong that you no longer put Me first, that you despise Me and reject Me and My teachings and Holy laws of love), and have walked after vanity (in contrast as to how you once followed only Me), and are become vain (empty)"?

Say - "Neither said they (no one stopped to think), where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt (and us out of the world of sin), that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits (symbolizing the resistance we went through from friends and family to follow Him), through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death (God redeemed us out of the darkness, of death and deception of false religions and brought us to His light/truth which gives life!!), through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt (you could not have made it without Me but now you've gone back to false, empty worship, false religion, why?)"?

Say - "And I brought you into a plentiful country (as in a beautiful garden, for Israel this was the "Promised Land" but for us the "Promised Land" symbolizes the FUTURE "Kingdom of God" which will be established on this earth when He returns and which will

be restored to the likes of the Garden of Eden in contrast to the spiritual barren wasteland of sin we once lived in before we knew Him), to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land (when you lost your "first love" and turned away from Me and polluted it with sin), and made mine heritage (my possession) an abomination (by false worship, false religion, etc.)".

Say - "The priests (pastors, ministers, etc who were and are to be feeding My sheep) said not (were not talking either because they were making their own religion and laws and changing Mine), Where is the LORD? And they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed (disobeyed Me) against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal (used their authority over My flock), and walked after things that do not profit (promising life but in actuality will bring death as in the "broadway")" Jeremiah 2:5-8.

Say - In another place, God speaks to us through Timothy about leaving our "First love". He says, "Having damnation (a punishment for which one is sentenced), because they have cast off their "first faith". For some have already turned (gone back to the ways of the world) aside after Satan (the broad way which leads to death)" I Tim. 5:12, 15.

Say - How do we get back on track and renew our "First Love"? God tells us how. "O Israel (My wife, My bride), return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity (sinfulness). Take with you words (empty words), and turn to the LORD: say unto him, take away all iniquity (lawlessness), and receive us graciously (sincere repentance is the only way He is saying): I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

Say - "I will be as the dew unto Israel (He will surround us as the dew showing the "constancy" of His great love): he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon (produce fruits of God's spirit once again, Gal. 5)" Hosea 1.

Say - Also, through Isaiah, God tells us how to renew our "First Love". "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near (there is a time coming called the "famine of the word" when we won't be able to): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the

unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" Isaiah 55:6-7.

Say - Through Jeremiah, God tells us, "Turn, O backsliding children (repent and return to the relationship we once had), saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family (one convert here, one convert there), and I will bring you to Zion (Jerusalem when He returns for His bride at the reward time or Day of the Lord). And I will give you pastors (shepherds over my flock) according to mine heart (which teach according to my laws of love, my ways), which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" Jer. 3:14, 15.

Say - Yes, God wants us to return to our "FIRST LOVE" and the "...joy of our salvation", Ps. 51:12. He wants us to restore, re-commit our lives to Him and renew our covenant/agreement which we made with Him at baptism. God wants us to return unto Him and worship HIM only with praise and thanksgiving for delivering and redeeming us, rescuing us out of darkness/death and bringing us into the light/truth/"Path of Life" revealed to us by His Holy Days! "Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness", Ps. 30:4

Say - I hope this study will encourage us to never forget our calling and treasure it and guard it daily by staying close to God. I hope you liked this group of scriptures and that it will become a favorite for you as it is for me.

MEMORY VERSE

They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so
Acts 17:11

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON FOR TOTS BELOW

BIBLE STORY
HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE DAY

There is a story in the Bible in Acts chapter 17 about two groups of people. One group was from the Greek territory of Thessalonica. Paul, an apostle of God, was sent by God to go into the Synagogue and teach the Jews on the Sabbath day.

Paul taught this first group of people from the scriptures of the Old Testament. He taught them about a prophesied Messiah, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who was to come, suffer and die and would be resurrected the third day. While some from this group in Thessalonica believed, many of the Jews were envious and angry because they saw their influence being undermined by this stranger.

Quickly they reasoned among themselves and soon they had gathered a large mob and started an uproar because they did not like what Paul was saying. But Christ had told His apostles, when you run into trouble, move on, do not linger and that is what Paul did.

On he went to the next group of Jews in Berea. They were nobler than those in Thessalonica for they "received Paul's message of the coming Messiah with all readiness of mind" the Bible tells us. The Bereans listened without prejudice; they were eager to hear the word of God and listened with interest with an honest and good heart. They had a teachable mind. The kind of mind we all must have.

The Berean Jews searched the scriptures daily, the Psalms, the prophets and the Law of God to see if what Paul was teaching them from the Old Testament was true. Because of them "proving all things", the Bible tells us, "many believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior and many were converted. That's good news!

Which group are we? Do we study the scriptures daily and "prove all things"? Do we have a teachable mind and heart like the Bereans as we learn God's way for each of us? If not, today is a good time to start.

PLEASE FIND AN APPROPRIATE PICTURE TO COMPLEMENT THE
MEMORY VERSE OR STORY AND BELOW ARE THE MEMORY VERSES
TO BE CUT OUT AND PLACED WITH THE APPROPRIATE PICTURE FOR
THEIR SABBATH SCHOOL NOTEBOOKS.

MEMORY VERSE

They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the
scriptures daily, whether those things were so
Acts 17:11

MEMORY VERSE FOR TOTS

...They searched the scriptures daily...
Acts 17:11