

Studying the Word

Studying, schooling, and learning are interchangeable. I have always yearned to be learned. I have studied the Bible and the Lord's teachings dramatically more in the last 15 plus years and progressively more over the last 7-8 years as well. That includes a multi-pronged approach: i) listen to many different pastors in person, on the radio and online, ii) reading and studying the Bible on specific topics and in general, iii) reading books about faith topics but mostly about Jesus and how we should interpret scriptures and iv) researching biblical and daily life topics to understand different perspectives and interpretations from the bible. How can I do God's work in general and to be worthy of writing if I did not study the meaning and intent of the Bible on as many topics as possible?

Studying is not ways straightforward as many topics can be interpreted differently, let alone too often as the reader sees fit. As an example, societies from two to three thousand years back were very different in how they treated women or in the tolerance of slavery. Too many in America misquote scripture on these topics or otherwise. After all, *Truth Requires Context*.

As I've written, we should ask, *"What Would Jesus Do?"* in all aspects of our lives and the *New Testament in Historical Context*, the New Testament often offers many different Biblical Interpretations from the Old Testament, it is also much more pervasive in putting forgiveness, atonement and love over punishment. Hence, my study has focused on the New Testament.

My study reaffirmed that Jesus continually challenged his disciples. We must challenge ourselves, loved ones and our government to be accountable in meaningful and Biblical ways. We must be willing to shake things up a bit and be willing to be *Comfortable Being Uncomfortable*. From Proverbs 27:17, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another" and from Ephesians 4:25, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."

While it is important to seek understanding of Biblical interpretations from different pastors, online research and/or theological study, it is just as important or more that we treat others in our daily interactions through the lens of *"What Would Jesus Do?"* Mercy, grace, compassion, forgiveness, humbleness, giving to others, thankfulness, serving and most of all loving are the core principles Jesus demonstrated over and over. We must as well.

God loves all. From Hebrews 12:14 "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord" and John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, he gave his one and only son, whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

These verses and so many others are very clear and totally non-exclusive with words like "every effort" and "whoever" as a worthy reminder to *Love All Brothers and Sisters* and act or do for all others in demonstrating that love. May my study spark others to study what is *Right and Righteous* in the Lord.

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