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## Devotional Study of the Bible.

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**A** YOUNG lady, asked by her friend to explain what is meant by the devotional reading of the Bible, answered as follows: "Yesterday morning I received a letter from one to whom I have given my heart and devoted my life. I truly confess to you that I have read it at least five times, not because I did not understand it at the first reading, nor because I expected to commit myself to the author by frequent reading of his epistle. It was not with me a question of duty, but simply one of pleasure. I read it because I am devoted to the one who wrote it. To read the Bible with the same motive is to read it devotionally, and to one who reads it in that spirit it is indeed a love letter."

This young Christian's explanation is certainly clear and satisfying, and shows a soul with deep spiritual insight. The heart has not a little to do in rightly interpreting God's Word.

What are some of the elements that enter into the devotional study of God's Word? One is attention. "Most people," says Martin Book, read their Bibles like cows that stand in the thick grass, and trample under their feet the finest flowers and herbs." It is easy to make this mistake. In his helpful little book, "Pleasure and Profit of Bible Study," Mr. Moody says, "I used at one time to read so many chapters a day, and if I did not get through my usual quantity I thought I was getting cold and back-liding. But, mind you, if a man (a) asked me two hours a toward what I had read, I could not tell him; I had forgotten it nearly all. When I was a boy I used, among other things, to hoe corn on a farm; and I used to hoe it so badly, in order to get over so much ground, that at night I had to put down a stake in the ground, so as to know the next morning where I had left off. That was somewhat in the same fashion as running through so many chapters a day." A good many Christians in their devotional reading of the Bible read so hastily and with so much inattention they need to put a mark in order to remind them if they have read a certain distance, and to prevent them from reading the same chapter over and over again without knowing it. We may call that studying the Bible, but it is not.

Another element in the devotional study of God's Word is meditation. Andrew Bonar tells of a simple Christian in a farmhouse who had "mediated the Bible through three times." This is precisely what the Psalmist had done: He had gone past reading into meditation. Like Luther, he "had shaken every tree in God's garden, and gathered fruit therefrom." The idea of meditation is "to get into the middle of a thing." Meditation is to the mind what digestion is to the body. Unless the food be digested, the body receives no benefit from it. If we would derive the fullest benefit from what we read or hear, there must be that mental digestion known as meditation. If we would "buy the truth" we must pay the price which Paul intimates when he wrote to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them." David meditated in God's Word because he loved it, and he loved it the more because he meditated in it. He said, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." He prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Another element in the devotional study of the Bible is a humble desire toward the truth, or teachableness. The Bible cannot reveal its beauties to those who think they know more than God does, and are not willing in a teachable spirit to hear him speak. God hides these things from the self-thought wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes. Some people have so much intellectual pride, or are so pre-

judiced against God's Word, that they never give it even casual attention.

But the main requirement to a devotional study of the Bible is love for the Author. Love for the Author sends us to the Book, and the reading of the Book increases our love for the Author.

The Bible has infinite value in itself; but to reveal its richest treasures it needs love as an interpreter. To those who do not know God personally, it may seem dry and uninteresting; but to those who know and love him, its every page becomes like a casket of jewels glowing with beauty and light; yes, like a letter of love, quickening the heart throbs and filling the soul with fresh and holy resolve.

## WHAT HAVE YOU TO GIVE.

There was a great contrast, says Rev. F. B. Meyer, between the Gate Beautiful and the helpless beggar that lay at its foot. But there was a greater contrast still between the appearance of the two apostles and the resources concealed beneath their humble guise. To the eye of the world they were but two poor peasants; before the gaze of God's angels they stood possessed of a secret that would unlock the measureless stores of eternity.

The world has been enriched more through the poverty of its saints than by the wealth of its millionaires. Francis of Assisi, Xavier, Thomas a Kempis, and Luther; the men whose hymns and words and achievements are the priceless heritage of the ages; the martyrs, confessors, reformers, prophets, teachers, and leaders of men, have all been classed in that noble brotherhood which Peter represented when he became the medium through which the wealth of paradise passed into the common coinage of earth. These men have given blood, tears, spiritual impulses, faith, hope, love. What have you to give?

## HONORING HOME.

There are many homes where the parents have no need of the money of their children, or the things which money can buy, because they have themselves abundance of this world's goods, but all the more there should the debt of honor not remain unpaid. The best way in which sons and daughters can honor their parents is by doing all honor to them. Every son when he goes away from home carries with him the honor of the home to which he belongs, and he may either enhance or dissipate it. If he does well his success is doubled, for it is not only an ornament to himself but a crown of honor to his parents. There is nothing in this world more touching than the pride of a father or mother in a son's success. Many a student, in the rivalries of academic life, is thinking about this more than anything else, and on the day when he is being applauded by hundreds he is thinking chiefly of hearts far away that are glorying in this honor. On the field of battle this has often been the inspiration of courage, and in the battles of life in a city like this there are multitudes doing their best, living laborious days, shaking off the tempter, and keeping straight in the middle of the narrow way, for the sake of those far off whose hearts will be cheered by their well-doing, and would be broken by their ill-doing. I do not think there is a sight more touching than when a youth, who has been away in another city or in a foreign land, and bears in his face and demeanor token of his well-doing, comes back on the Sabbath to the church in which his boyhood has been spent, and sits again side by side with the proud hearts that love him. Where is there a disappointment so keen, or a disgrace so poignant as he inflicts who comes not back because he dare not, having in the foreign land, or the distant city, soiled his good name, and rolled the honor of his home in the dust?—Dr. Stalker.

## Love without Service.

Love without service is like a sunbeam without light. The mother must minister to her child. A friend must seek to be helpful to his friend. The first recorded word of Christ was "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" and his last, "It is finished." What lies between these words? Constant ministry. When he said, "Let him that is chiefest among you be the servant of all," he outlined the form the Christ life must take.

"Ah, but," you say, "that was all very well for him who came for the accomplishment of a special work, but it has no meaning to us." No meaning for us? Are there not as great evils today as when he came? Have all men even yet the truth? Do all know that they are the children of God? The very work which faced the Master still remains. He began that which his followers must complete.

## The Immortal in Life.

Around is decay, and death casts its shadow over all. The days come and go, and seem to carry with them almost all of life. We labor and see so little of results. If we accumulate of earthly good, we know how uncertain is our tenure of it. And so much of our labor never assumes tangible form. We seem to be throwing our strength into a flowing stream by which it is swept away. But it is not so. That which is beyond our horizon does not cease to be. Life's greatest powers are those which cannot be measured by visible and accumulated results, they belong to the sphere of the spiritual. Evil or good, they project themselves into the unseen, and do with a power that never exhausts itself. The word spoken lives after the sound dies away. It has entered another life and lives in it. The touch of the hand, expressing warm sympathy, leaves an influence that remains long after the pressure has ceased.

Herein is the great joy and the reward of a faithful minister of the gospel. Weary and discouraged he returns from the pulpit to his study, feeling that he has labored in vain, and yet at a later time he meets that sermon, lifted up and glorified in the Christian life of a person of whom, it may be, he had no knowledge when the sermon was preached. He has his earnest longings, which may not be realized in himself, but they have quickened others to like aspirations and to better living. A minister may burn his sermons, but he cannot his ministry. No fire can consume the love he has awakened. No change of time can obliterate what he has spoken in the name of Christ. As years pass he is permitted to see that, after all, the great part of his life and labor is like his own soul, immortal. And it will be a blessed day when in the spirit world we see the vastness of the circle of our lives, and gather the fruits, imperishable as ourselves.

Lazarus is lying at our door; but we shut our eyes whenever we go out. If we would only go out of doors with our eyes open, we should see Lazarus every time. We blindfold ourselves, and the name of the bandage is selfishness.