

Dear FBC family,

As I guide you through a personal journey through Paul's epistles over the next several months, I would like to emphasize, again, two things:

1. Read the passage/chapter/epistle several times. You can never personally grasp any material unless you read it again, and yet again. The repetition will give you a personal mastery over material that cannot be gained any other way. Nothing can replace personal reading and rereading God's Word. It is one thing to hear even the greatest teacher tell you about the Word, it is quite another for you to get it by reading and studying it yourself. It is a good idea to read the passage in several different versions to facilitate your understanding. The NASB is one of the most literal translations as far as the "words," but the NIV often gives better conceptual translation.

2. The material must be personally digested by you. Much Bible study is of little consequence because the material is not grasped through the ministry of the Holy Spirit because the believer does not remain in fellowship and because the material is not assimilated into personal living. The ultimate transformation through the living and powerful Word of God is primarily in the will, not the mind. The mind is a necessary cause, but it is not the sufficient cause. There is absolutely no spiritual virtue, and hence no progressive sanctification, apart transformation of and works produced in conjunction with the will. Apart from a transformation of the will, the Word of God never has increasing charm and spiritual dynamics. Remember, the will is all about what you see as true, good, and beautiful. Unless it changes, no amount of doctrine or Bible study is going to enable you to see God's beauty so that you will be drawn to it for its own sake. Information alone will never do it. Without the change of the will, God will likely be sought only for utilitarian purposes. Who wants that kind of attitude toward 'Ehyeh?

Blessed,

Pastor Don