

## Bible Study

Our mission as God's people at Grace Lutheran Church is to "Know Christ; To Make Christ Known." We do that in many different ways. One of the most important is through a vigorous study of God's Word. Does that characterize your life?

Occasionally members ask, "But why should I study the Bible? Why should I attend a Bible class?" The Bible offers at least ten good reasons why a follower of Jesus Christ would want to study the Bible and attend a Bible class.

1. The Bible provides food for spiritual growth. Jeremiah expressed it: "*When your words came, I ate them, they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty*" (15:16). Because Jeremiah knew he belonged to God, he received God's Word with great joy, for it nourished his faith and life.
2. God's Word shines a light into a dark world. The Psalmist said it so well: "*Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path*" (119:105). Peter, in his second letter added this thought: "*And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*" (1:19)
3. The Good Book is loved by God's people. Do you agree with the psalmist when he wrote, "*The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold*" (119:72)? If you do, I believe you will be in Bible class next Sunday.
4. The Word of God is powerful in its effect. God's Word is described as a devouring flame, a crushing hammer, a life-giving force, a saving power, a defensive weapon, and a probing instrument. Heb. 4:12 teaches us that "the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." However, it can't do its work if we refuse to open the Book and study it carefully.
5. Holy Scripture blesses those who read it. Who can forget the words of Jesus to the women who said to him: "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." He replied, "*Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it.*" (Luke 11:28). Hearing the Word in faith and repenting is the purpose of Bible study.
6. God's Word purifies lives. The Psalmist asked, "*How can a young man keep his way pure?*" He answered: "*By living according to your Word*" (Psalm 119:9). Any better reason to attend Bible class?
7. The Bible is useful for good living. Paul wrote to Timothy in his second letter: "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (3:16-17). If you aren't completely equipped, that is, mature at this point in your life, you are a good prospect for a Bible class.
8. The Scriptures offer hope. St. Paul put it this way: "*For everything that was written in the past was written to encourage us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope*" (Romans 15:4). If we want to increase hope in our lives and in the lives of others, we need to increase the Word in our minds. Bible class is a great setting in which to have our minds met by the Word.

9. The Bible authenticates the divinity of Jesus Christ. The gospel writer John said that Jesus did many miracles which he did not record in his book, but he was quick to add: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31). The study of the Word is intended to help us develop a deeper relationship with Christ. And this leads to the final point.
10. God's Word gives knowledge of eternal life. John wrote in his first letter, "*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life*" (5:13). Do you have the absolute confidence that when you die you will go to heaven? Spending time in God's Word will grant you that great assurance.

Ten great reasons to attend a Bible Class, don't you agree? I mention them because I am concerned that as a congregation we have not grown in our group study of God's Word, especially on Sunday mornings. I want to encourage all of you to spend at least one hour in worship and one hour in Bible study. You have different Bible study options from which to choose on several different days.

If one is not being offered for YOU, let get something organized! If possible, add a ministry to this two-hour commitment. But for God's sake and for yours, don't opt out of worship and Bible study for the sake of a ministry. Jesus' words to Martha speak also to us, "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things but only one thing is needed—my Word. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her*" (Luke 10:41-42).

It is my prayer that the same will be said of us as was said of Mary. The Word needs to be implanted in us so that it will not be taken from us. See you in worship and in Bible class!