

STUDY TO SHOW YOURSELF APPROVED

By Ron Foust

1. WE SELDOM HEAR SERMONS ON USING OUR BRAINS TO MAKE CHOICES, TO MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORDS; PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO WORK FOR SALVATION, WE WOULD RATHER HAVE SOMEONE DO IT FOR US. AT WORK, I WRACKED MY BRAIN TO GIVE ANSWERS TO CONTRACTORS, BUILDING INSPECTORS, ETC. WHEN AFTER A DAY ON THE JOB DOING THIS, I WAS MENTALLY EXHAUSTED. I JUST WANTED TO RELAX DOING A "NO BRAINER" PHYSICAL JOB, USING MY HANDS.

2. SO IT DEFINITELY IS HARD WORK, USING OUR BRAINS. THIS SERMONETTE IS, IN A SENSE, A TAKE-OFF ON a good sermon I once heard, BUT FROM A LITTLE DIFFERENT ANGLE.

3. IN THIS SERM. I WANT YOU TO LISTEN CAREFULLY, AND ACTIVELY FOLLOW ALONG WITH ME. IF YOU REALLY DO THAT, YOU WILL SEE THAT IT CAN BE HARD WORK TO CONCENTRATE EFFECTIVELY. BUT ALSO THAT IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU READ IN THE BIBLE.

4. AFTER YOU READ A VERSE IN THE BIBLE, YOU SHOULD ASK YOURSELF, "DO I UNDERSTAND WHAT I JUST READ"? IN SOME CASES WE READ THE WORDS BUT WE DON'T COMPREHEND WHAT THE WORDS ARE TELLING US. SO LET'S EXPLORE HOW WE CAN GET THE MOST OUT OF WHAT WE READ FROM THE BIBLE.

5. TO BEGIN WITH, THE FIRST STEP TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE IS TO READ IT FROM BEGINNING TO END. IF YOU HAVE NEVER DONE THIS YOU WILL GET SIMILAR RESULTS AS YOU WOULD TRYING TO PUT A PUZZLE TOGETHER WITHOUT HAVING ALL THE PIECES. YOU MAY EVENTUALLY PUT ALL THE PIECES IN THE FRAME, BUT NOT IN THE RIGHT PLACE. YOU WON'T GET A COMPLETE VIEW OF THE WHOLE PICTURE. READING THE BIBLE THROUGH GETS US FAMILAR WITH IT, WE BECOME INTRODUCED TO IT.

6. AFTER WE'VE READ THE BIBLE THROUGH, THEN WE START TO STUDY IT. IN 2TIM.2:15 WE'RE TOLD TO.."STUDY TO SHOW OURSELVES APPROVED UNTO GOD, WORKMEN THAT NEEDS NOT BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH".

IF WE'RE TO BE INVOLVED IN GOD'S WORK, WE'RE COMMANDED TO "STUDY", TO BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO ANY WHO ASKS US WHY WE ARE CHRISTIANS.

7. AT THIS POINT WE MAY NOTICE FROM THIS VERSE: WE ARE TOLD TO PERSONALLY STUDY, TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRUTH, OURSELVES. THIS IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY. WE MUST NOT RELY ON OTHERS TO DO OUR STUDYING AND THINKING FOR US. ONE PLACE IN THE BIBLE WE ARE TOLD, WE EACH HAVE TO WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION. WE CAN'T RELY ON OTHERS TO DO IT FOR US.

8. WHEN WE BEGIN OUR BIBLE STUDY, WE CAN SELECT HOW OR WHAT METHOD WE WANT TO USE: THERE'S 1. STUDY BY WORD, 2. STUDY BY SUBJECT, 3. STUDY BY PROPHECY, 4. STUDY BY HISTORY, OR JUST READ EACH VERSE AND DETERMINE IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT IT IS SAYING. ETC. WHATEVER METHOD IS CHOSEN WE HAVE TO LISTEN TO WHAT WE'RE READING. If it sounds like it is contradicting

another passage you need to study the topic throughout the Bible. This would be a study by subject.

9. SO THE FIRST THING TO DO IS LEARN HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE WORDS WE READ. LET'S USE A COUPLE VERSES FROM THE BIBLE TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT I MEAN. TURN TO 1COR 10:23 AND LET'S READ IT VERY SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY. HOLD YOUR FINGER THERE AND LET'S READ WHAT PETER SAYS ABOUT SOME OF PAUL'S WRITINGS. 2PET.3:16 (READ IT).

10. IN THIS VERSE PETER IS EXPLAINING THAT IT'S EASY FOR SOME PEOPLE TO MISUNDERSTAND PAUL'S WRITINGS, OR EVEN TO TWIST HIS WRITINGS, AND SAY THEY MEAN THINGS THAT THEY REALLY DO NOT MEAN. PETER SAYS IT'S PEOPLE WHO ARE UNLEARNED AND UNSTABLE WHO TWIST SCRIPTURES UNTO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION.

11. SO WE NEED TO BECOME EDUCATED AS TO HOW TO STUDY, SO THAT WE WILL NOT FALL INTO THE SAME SITUATION. LET'S GO BACK TO 1COR 10:23 AND READ PAUL'S WORDS. (READ IT)

FIRST WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WE HAVE JUST READ WELL ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN IT TO A CHILD. IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE PAUL SAYS PLAINLY "ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME" AND THEN HE SAYS, "BUT ALL THINGS ARE NOT EXPEDIENT" WHY? BECAUSE, "ALL THINGS EDIFY NOT."

12. NOW IF WE WERE TO EXPLAIN THIS TO A CHILD WE'D SAY, "PAUL, ONE OF THE APOSTLES, IS SAYING 'EVERYTHING IS LAWFUL FOR HIM TO DO, BUT SOME OF THESE THINGS MAY NOT ACHIEVE THE BEST RESULT.'" THAT'S BASICALLY WHAT THE WORDS OF THIS SCRIPTURE SAYS.

13. AND THIS IS THE WAY WE SHOULD TREAT EACH AND EVERY VERSE WE READ. EXPLAIN TO YOURSELF WHAT THE WORDS SAY. THEN ASK YOURSELF, DOES THIS VERSE, AS I UNDERSTAND IT TO SAY, AGREE WITH THE REST OF THE BIBLE? IF IT DOES, THEN THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE IT DOES MEAN WHAT THE WORDS SEEM TO BE SAYING.

14. THE NEXT STEP IS TO STUDY THIS VERSE. THIS IS WHERE IT'S HELPFUL TO HAVE READ THE BIBLE THROUGH IN ADVANCE. YOU ASK YOURSELF, "IS IT LAWFUL", AS SOME PEOPLE WILL ARGUE, FOR PAUL, OR ANY CHRISTIAN, TO DO ANYTHING THEY WANT, AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T HURT ANYONE?

15. IF YOU HAVE NOT STUDIED INTO THIS, YOU MAY BE EMBARRASSED, IF SOMEONE DEMANDS THIS VERSE PROVES CHRISTIANS ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED TO KEEP GOD'S LAW. AND YOU CAN BE SURE PEOPLE WILL SAY THIS. AFTER ALL, DOESN'T PAUL SAY, "ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME"?

16. WE READ ALMOST THE SAME THING IN 1COR 6:12. READ THIS AND TELL YOURSELF EXACTLY WHAT YOU READ (READ IT). HERE HE SAYS, "ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL, BUT I WON'T BECOME ADDICTED TO ANYTHING." NOW YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF SOME QUESTIONS. IS PAUL SAYING IT'S LAWFUL TO SIN? HE DID SAY, "ALL THINGS are LAWFUL"...YOU READ IT RIGHT OUT OF THE BIBLE IN TWO

DIFFERENT PLACES..., DIDN'T WE?

17. AGAIN SOME MAY USE THESE VERSES TO TRY TO PROVE THAT PAUL IS TEACHING THAT JESUS NAILED THE 10 COMMANDMENTS TO THE CROSS, SO NOW

EVERYTHING IS LAWFUL, BECAUSE WHEN JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED HE PAID THE PENALTY FOR OUR SINS. MANY THINK AS LONG AS THEIR ACTIONS DOESN'T CAUSE ANY HARM, OR CAUSE THEM TO BECOME ADDICTED TO SOMETHING, THERE'S NO LAW

AGAINST DOING WHATEVER THEY CHOOSE TO DO. HOW DO WE EXPLAIN THIS VERSE?

18. I'M GOING TO LEAVE HERE, AND COME BACK WITH THE ANSWER LATER. BUT FIRST I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT THIS: HOW OFTEN HAVE WE BEEN GUILTY OF LISTENING TO A SERMON OR AN EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN SCRIPTURES AND FOLLOW ALONG IN THE VERSES AS THEY'RE BEING READ, AND THINK, "YES, THATS WHAT IT SAYS." YOU MAY NEVER QUESTION WHAT IT REALLY MEANS.

19. ONCE IN A WHILE (IF YOU'RE REALLY PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION) YOU MAY THINK, "THAT'S NOT REAL CLEAR TO ME", OR "DOES THAT REALLY MEAN THAT?" OFTIMES YOU'D LOOSE THE THOUGHT AS THE SPEAKER LEADS YOU ON THROUGH HIS TOPIC. YOU'RE AN EXCEPTION IF YOU HOLD THAT THOUGHT AND GO BACK THROUGH THE SCRIPTURE, AT A LATER TIME, AND CHECK UP ON THE SCRIPTURE YOU WONDERED ABOUT.

20. WE MAY TELL OURSELVES THE PERSON SPEAKING IS MORE BIBICALLY EDUCATED, STUDYING MUCH LONGER THAN I, SO THEREFORE HE/SHE MUST KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT. IT'S EASIER TO ACCEPT SOMEONE ELSE'S THOUGHTS THAN TO TAKE THE TIME AND EFFORT TO CHECK IT OUT PERSONALLY.

21. THE SPEAKER MAY EVEN MAKE HIMSELF MORE TRUSTWORTHY AND BELIEVABLE BY SAYING, "DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR THIS, CHECK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF" AFTER ALL, WE REASON, IF THE PERSON WAS TRYING TO MISLEAD ME, WOULD HE ENCOURAGE ME TO CHECK UP ON HIM?

22. THE SPEAKER MAY ACTUALLY BE SINCERE, BUT ALSO INCORRECT. HE MAY BE TAKING ANOTHER'S INTREPATION AND JUST PASSING IT ON. HE MAY HAVE ACCEPTED ERROR, TOO, FOR THE SAME REASONS WE MIGHT. NOT EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN TAUGHT BY MINISTERS, AND ACCEPTED, IS TRUTH.

23. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN LISTENING CLOSELY ENOUGH TO CATCH AN ERROR, OR BOTHER TO QUESTION, "WHAT DOES THAT VERSE REALLY MEAN?" WE DIDN'T TAKE THE TIME TO DIG INTO THE SUBJECT TO FIND THE ANSWER. MAYBE IT'S JUST EASIER TO TAKE SOME ONE ELSE'S EXPLANATION, "IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE AND TIME CONSUMING TO WORRY ABOUT IT." AS WE CONTINUE WE FIND, IT DOES TAKE TIME AND EFFORT TO USE OUR MINDS. IN ADDITION WE MAY HAVE TO MEDITATE AND PRAY ABOUT IT.

24. NOW LETS GO BACK TO 1COR. 10:23. LET'S DO AN INDEPTH STUDY INTO THIS VERSE. FIRST, I NEED TO FIND OUT why PAUL MADE THIS STATEMENT. WHAT POINT IS HE TRYING TO MAKE? IN THE PREVIOUS VERSES HE'S JUST BEEN COMING DOWN ON THIS CHURCH CONGREGATION FOR SOME PRETTY SERIOUS SINS.

IF ALL THINGS WERE LAWFUL, WHY WOULD HE BE 'CHEWING THEM OUT'? IT'S EVIDENT HE DOESN'T CONSIDER ALL THEIR BEHAVIOUR 'LAWFUL'.

25. IN THE FOLLOWING VERSES HE'S DESCRIBING CONDUCT THAT'S NOT ACCEPTABLE, 'LAWFUL' TO GOD. SO NOW WE SHOULD BE SAYING, "WAIT A MINUTE!" DIDN'T PAUL SAY, IN ROM 6:23, THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH?" AND WHAT ABOUT 1JN. 3:4 THAT SAYS "SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW"?

26. IS PAUL CONTRIDICTING HIMSELF? IT'S CLEAR THAT THESE AND MANY OTHER SCRIPTURES CONCLUDE PAUL, AND ANY CHRISTIAN, IS NOT EXEMPT FROM KEEPING GOD'S LAW. THEN WHY DID PAUL SAY, "ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL FOR ME?"

27. I HAVE USED THIS SIMPLE ILLUSTRATION NOT TO DISCLOSE THE ANSWER, BUT TO SHOW HOW EASILY WE CAN BECOME MISLEAD, AND TO SHOW HOW WE SHOULD STUDY EVERY SINGLE VERSE WE READ IN THE BIBLE. WE SHOULD ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT EVERY SUBJECT WE'RE NOT TOTALLY SURE WE UNDERSTAND.

28. SOME ANSWERS ARE VERY SIMPLE AND EASY TO ANSWER, AS IS THIS ONE, OTHERS MAY TAKE A LOT OF DIGGING. WE SHOULD NOT GIVE UP TILL WE FIND ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONS, NOR SHOULD WE JUST OVERLOOK THE VERSE OR NEGLECT TO ASK OURSELVES QUESTIONS.

29. THE ANSWER TO 1COR. 10:23 IS EASILY UNDERSTOOD WHEN WE READ THE WHOLE CHAPTER. VERSE 14 IS THE KEY TO THE WHOLE SUBJECT: IDOLATRY. OR EATING SUCH THINGS THAT WERE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN OFFERED TO IDOLS IN RELIGIOUS CEREMONY. PAUL'S SIMPLY SAYING, IF YOU KNOW THIS FOOD HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN OFFERED IN THIS WAY, AVOID EATING IT. A POTENTIAL BELIEVER MAY BE WATCHING AND THINK YOU'RE STILL PAGAN (IDOLITARS). IN VERSE 23 HE'S STILL ON THIS SUBJECT.

30. BUT WE STILL HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE WORD, "ALL" OR "ALL THINGS" BEING LAWFUL. TO CLEAR THIS UP, WE NEED A LITTLE OUTSIDE HELP. WHEN WE GO INTO STRONG'S CONCORDANCE. THE ORIGINAL GREEK WORD PAUL USED IS: "PAS". WE FIND THIS WORD COULD HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED, "WHAT-SO-EVER", OR "AS MANY AS" AS WELL AS "ALL".

31. NOW WE SEE A DIFFERENT LIGHT ON THESE WORDS. WHEN WE USE THE ORIGINAL MEANING, PAUL SAYS, "AS MANY AS THINGS ARE LAWFUL, OR WHAT SO EVER THINGS ARE LAWFUL" IN OTHER WORDS, "THERE'S MANY THINGS LAWFUL FOR ME, BUT NOT ALWAYS THE BEST TO DO, IF IT'S GOING TO OFFEND SOMEONE."

32. HE'S EXPLAINING TO THIS GENTILE CHURCH, WHO ARE BEING EXPOSED TO A LOT OF IDOL WORSHIPPERS, WHO OFFER FOOD TO THEIR IDOLS, THEN SELL IT ON THE MARKETS, THAT THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THE FOOD ITSELF, BUT JUST BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT IT'S LAWFUL FOR THEM TO EAT IT, THEY MUST, IF THEY KNOW THAT IT'S BEEN OFFERED TO IDOLS, NOT USE IT. THE REASON BEING IT MAY CAUSE A NEW BELIEVER TO BE DAMAGED SPIRITUALLY, BY THEIR FREEDOM.

33. WHEN YOU READ ON DOWN THIS WILL BECOME VERY CLEAR. SOME PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND THIS CHAPTER TO SAY THAT IT'S OK TO EAT UNCLEAN MEATS. BUT THIS IS ANOTHER STUDY. IN THIS STUDY, WE SEE THAT PAUL'S NOT TALKING ABOUT HIS LIBERTY TO DO ANYTHING UNLAWFUL. (SPECIFICALLY BREAK GOD'S LAW). IF WE WASN'T USING OUR BRAIN WE MIGHT ACCEPT THE VERSE MEANING PAUL WAS FREE FROM "ALL" LAW, AND WE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'VE JUST LEARNED, IF WE HADN'T ASKED OURSELVES SEVERAL QUESTIONS, AND FOUND THE ANSWERS, WE VERY WELL COULD HAVE AGREED, AND ACCEPTED SOME SERIOUS ERROR.

35. We NEED TO SERIOUSLY THINK ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE TELLS US. WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT SOME SPEAKERS MAY BE ACCURATELY INTREPETING THE BIBLE. BUT SOME MAY NOT! IT'S OUR

RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE. THE BIBLE WARNS US

AGAINST ACCEPTING A MINISTER, JUST BECAUSE HE CLAIMS TO BE DOING GOD'S WORK. TURN TO: 2COR. 11:13-15 (READ IT)

36. THIS VERSE WARNS US AGAINST ACCEPTING JUST ANYONE AS A MINISTER OF GOD. IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DILIGENTLY DETERMINE, OR CONTEND, FOR THE TRUTH. WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES TO MAKE SURE WE KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS. IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING THE 1ST OR 2ND TIME WE READ IT,

OR IT SEEMS TO CONTRIDICT WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS SOMEWHERE ELSE, LETS ASK OURSELVES A LOT OF QUESTIONS, AND THEN DIG UNTIL WE FIND THE ANSWERS. OUR ETERNAL LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.

37. REMEMBER, MOST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS ARE FROM PAUL. HIS WRITINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS CLEAR, AS PETER SAID. BECAUSE OF THIS VERY FACT, WE ARE FORCED TO DIG, AND MEDITATE, IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING SAID. THESE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS WE CAN GET THE MOST OUT OF THE BIBLE. LET'S NOT LET OTHER PEOPLE DO OUR THINKING FOR US!!

This was a sermonett Ronny gave in 198? to the congregation where we attended church meetings. It was typed in bold letters so he could glance at the subject easier.