

R12.2 July 2022 Blog

Studying and Applying the Bible

Gen 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of Jehovah. (KJV)

The word “found” means to *attain*, that is, *find* or *acquire*. Note that God’s grace was around and played a role since the beginning of time. Grace in the NT means the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life.

Noah in ancient times worshiped God and “found” God’s grace. What was the product of this grace in Noah? Here are some observations from Noah’s life:

1. Noah obeyed God, built the ark for 120 years and finished his work.
2. Noah won his family to God. They supported him in the work on the ark and were the ones God choose to start over.
3. Noah demonstrated his works and faith in God to his neighbors and tried to win them to God, but they turned him down.
4. He stood up to the societal scorn for his lifetime.

We are no different than Noah. We received (found) God’s grace and are called to live out our lives for God. God has a work for all of us. This requires us to train in the Word. To do His work requires a life of ongoing preparation and execution of being God’s person.

Noah believed the voice of God. Like Noah, we have four things to do after we rejoice in salvation and God’s grace:

1. Obey God and build our family ark during our lifetime.
2. Win our families to God.
3. Demonstrate our works to our neighbors and try to win them to God.
4. Stand up to society during our lifetimes.

This calling is for us to study and apply the Bible in our lives. We are to know and obey the Scriptures so that we will become His workers for His plan.

1. What is your plan? Do you have other plans that take priority over God’s Work?
2. Do you know how to study the Bible? There are many good places to go to find help.
 - a. A layman’s study group in your neighborhood.
 - b. Some group like The Navigators, etc.
 - c. Get with a friend who is committed to the study of the Word.
 - d. Use the book “Studying, Interpreting and Applying the Bible” to learn how to do studies?

3. Do you do work on word meaning in your studies? Focus on the vocabulary in English and Greek. Get English and Greek dictionaries. Look up the pivotal words. Remember we think and gain understanding with words.
4. Start with a chapter or book study.
 - a. Take a chapter (or even a verse) to review and better understand; for example, Hebrews 11:1.
 - b. Always keep in mind what the author is trying to say.
 - c. Study in small groups. Exposing your thinking is healthy and desired.
 - d. Always finish a study with a written paragraph of what you are going to do with the scripture “truth” you just learned. **“So what?”** is the question to ask yourself during and after a study. This discovered Word is the “nugget” God has given you. Make application. **“So, what am I going to do with what I just learned?”**

We grow in and with God one step at a time. Some other types of studies include:

- Character studies
- Historical studies
- Who is God
- Who is Jesus
- Prophecies

Noah’s response to God’s grace was to obey God’s command (His Word). Our response to God’s grace should be the same – to obey God’s commands, His Word, found in the Bible. Consider these truths regarding Obedience:

1. Obedience does not save us, but no one goes to heaven without being obedient to God. We only know we believe if we obey.
2. There are eternal consequences for temporal behavior, both in heaven and hell.
3. All people everywhere evaluate whether they will obey authority. This is illustrated when we do not want to obey on the basis of perceived cost: If we believe the cost of obedience is higher than disobedience, we will disobey, and vice versa. We obey because we fear the price of disobedience.
4. Necessary ingredients for obedience:
 - a. authority
 - b. fear (without fear there can be no authority)
 - c. consequences (if there are no consequences, all of us will do what we want, not what our authority wants). There will be consequences and that is what I fear.
 - d. A will
 - e. desire for autonomy (that is, a desire to do what I think is in my best interest)
 - f. temptation (Jesus, God on earth, was tempted)

5. As with Jesus, so also with us, we only learn obedience when we meet the will of God, don't want to do it, but choose to obey God anyway.
6. True obedience requires testing to be authentic.
7. Agreement is not submissive obedience. If we don't perform to our beliefs, they are not beliefs, only opinions for the moment.
8. Love is a very powerful motivator when we are in agreement. It does an inadequate job when we disagree.
9. Do I believe God is good, and in His goodness, He brings pain into my life?
10. The value of a relationship with us, from God's perspective, resides in our willingness to submit to His will when we do not want to do it.
11. If we want a relationship with God, we must do His will. God will not relate to a willful person that disobeys Him. We can't say "no" to God and have a relationship with Him. People who have a relationship with God do so on His terms.
12. God never asks the believer to sacrifice anything without coupling it with a promise of gain. Note, the gain will be mostly in the eternal.
13. I exist for God. God does not exist for me. He made me for His good pleasure.

Application:

1. Develop or find a plan for yourself to review and learn the Bible over the next 5 years.
2. Get an accountability partner to check on you and track your progress and your follow-through on your progress.
3. Select a few gathering groups that you can relate to and learn from them.
4. Go to a Church and find other believers.