

Why Attend Bible Classes?

By Everett Harding

It is a sad, but true, fact that many members of the body of Christ are negligent in attending Bible classes. It is difficult to understand why some feel no compulsion to attend. Sickness or other compelling reasons may cause us to miss, but indifference should never keep us away.

We are commanded to study the Bible. In 2 Tim. 2:15 Paul said, “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” Timothy was to manifest great care, earnestness, and zeal with a view to God’s approval. Peter said, “*And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge...*” 2 Pet. 1:5. The Bible class provides an opportunity to comply with these admonitions. This is not all the study one needs to do, but it will certainly help fulfill your need.

In Hebrews 10:25, the inspired writer said, “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*” This is God’s plan for encouraging His people to love and good works. It is God’s plan for providing the encouragement that His people need in a world which fails to provide such encouragement. The thing being considered is using the assembling of the saints for the exhorting of one another to edification and faithfulness. And every assembly of the saints ought to be to this end. When one misses such an assembly, he not only misses the strength that can be derived from it, but he also misses the opportunity to exhort others. The devil is introducing more and more ways to cause us to stumble, so we need all the strength that can be derived from such assembling.

We need enthusiasm for such good works. Jesus died that He might “*purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works,*” Titus 2:14. “*It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing,*” Gal. 4:18. The people of Berea were considered noble. Why? They “*searched the scriptures daily...*” Acts 17:11. We would attend the Bible classes if we had the same enthusiasm.

Bible classes help us to see ourselves as God sees us (Jas. 1:23-25). The law of Christ is full and complete, containing all that is necessary for us to please God. The word of God is more to be desired than gold, Psa. 19:10. It is a hidden mine of wealth, waiting to be dug out and applied to bring salvation and the happiness of eternal life. If we would spend as much time digging for **spiritual knowledge** as we do in our quest for material things, how rich we would be! The Bible is full of warnings for us who live in this age. God warned Israel, but they gave no heed and fell. If we give no heed to the warnings, we shall fall after the same example of unbelief, Heb. 4:11. Jesus said, “*the truth shall make you free,*” John 8:32. There is a need for zeal in our search for and adherence to the truth. Zeal without knowledge will destroy. “*They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,*” Rom. 10:2. Thus, Paul described the reason the Jews were lost.

In the Bible classes we gain knowledge with which to teach others. In order to be saved, people must be taught, and it is our responsibility to prepare ourselves to teach. “*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again that which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat,*” Heb. 5:12. The mature Christian has grown in knowledge and in the application of that

knowledge.

In I Peter 3:15 we are told, to be “*ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*” To comply with this admonition you are going to have to study. Bible classes are designed to help you gain such knowledge.

In Jude 3 we are exhorted to “*contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*” How can we contend for something we do not understand? The Christian soldier can “*fight the good fight of faith*” only if he knows the word of God.

The Bible classes help us to “*nurture*” our children (cause them to grow and develop) “*in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.*” Eph. 6:4. This is a sadly neglected duty that brings immeasurable injury to Children. Parents commit a great sin against their children when they fail to lead them to love and obey the word of God. What about it friend, is your example worthy of imitation? “*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*” Prov. 22:6.

We are going to be judged by what it is written in God’s book, Rev. 20:12. No man can plead ignorance in that day. Jesus said, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in that last day.*” John 12:48. It behooves all to take advantage of every opportunity to learn more of His will. If you are not attending the Bible classes, do so the next time we assemble. Let us study the Bible and obey it.

What Happens When You Don’t Attend?

I am convinced that if people would soberly reflect on the implications of not faithfully attending, they would intensify their efforts to be at the services. What happens when you don’t attend as you should?

You rob the church of your influence. One of the ways we let our light shine is by showing others our interest in the things which are spiritual in nature. How is it that others see such interest if we don’t attend the services? It is obvious to those who come under our influence what is important to us and what is not and the way we attend is a sure indication of such. The church cannot impress the world if those who are members are not interested enough in that effort to faithfully attend the services. And furthermore, while you may deny it is an indication of interest, the world (yes, even the world!) recognizes your priorities by where you give the greatest amount of your attention.

You rob others of your encouragement. Even if you don’t need to worship God (which you do), and even if you already know all you need to know (which you don’t), and even if your lack of attendance would not in some way help you to be a better Christian (which it would), you must still think of others and what you can do to encourage them. Other Christians draw great strength from being together with those who share their faith, love, and truth, common goals. And if you don’t attend you rob them of this very special kind of encouragement. There are few things that encourage a church more than having all the members present at all the services. And few things that are more discouraging than to know that many who profess to be faithful members are not in attendance.

You rob yourself of personal edification. One of the things God assigned to facilitate our personal growth and advancement is the assembly of the local church. In that assembly we commune together in the Lord’s Supper, sing praises to God, pray, give into the common

treasury, and learn God's will for us. In all of these "exercises" we are built up and strengthened in our spiritual being. This personal strength is then used to glorify God in our lives and to lift up our Savior as the answer to the needs of all men. Furthermore, we need the strength derived from this personal up-building so that we can overcome our adversary, the devil. Failure to attend robs us of this energy.

You rob yourself of the opportunity to glorify God. The person who seeks to glorify God will not be ashamed of His ways, His truth, His people. He will stand with the faithful. And how can he stand with the faithful if he is not even with them? How can a person glorify God when he does not attend the worship services regularly? How can anyone glorify Him, show our devotion to Him when we lay up in bed on Sunday morning, or mow the lawn when others are assembling, or stay home with company, or go fishing at the time of the service? How can we glorify God when we do not attend like we ought?

One of the signs of disinterest is a failure to attend the services of the church. Deny it if you must, but it is a proven fact. Failure to attend is a sure sign of spiritual deterioration, an open admission to spiritual mismanagement. Brethren, let us help one another to remain strong. You need to be in every Bible class because you need the spiritual food that comes from such, and the Lord needs you to be strong in His service. *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in due season; his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper,"* Psa. 1:1-3. To "delight" in the law of the Lord means we accept it as the chief source of joy. Jesus taught the same principle. *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled,"* Matt. 5:6.
