

Lesson Outline: Studying God's Word with Patience

Introduction

- This lesson continues the study of Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin.
- Previous lessons focused on studying God's Word with purpose and perspective.
- This lesson focuses on studying God's Word with patience.

Why Patience Matters

- We often want quick answers, immediate results, and fast understanding.
- Spiritual growth does not happen overnight.
- Knowing God through His Word requires slowing down, paying attention, asking questions, and returning to passages again and again.

Psalm 1:1-3

- The person who delights in God's law and meditates on it day and night is compared to a tree planted by streams of water.
- This picture reminds us that growth is slow, steady, and fruitful in season.
- Like a tree or a plant, spiritual growth takes time and consistent care.

Psalm 119:18

- "Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."
- Bible study requires more than simply reading words on a page.
- We need God to help us understand His Word.
- We study by thinking carefully about what the passage means, how it fits into Scripture, and what it teaches us about God.

Patience Is Not Passivity

- Studying patiently does not mean doing nothing while waiting for understanding.
- Patience means doing the work of careful study without demanding immediate results.
- Proverbs 2:1-6 shows that seeking wisdom involves action:
 - Accepting God's words
 - Storing up His commands
 - Turning the ear to wisdom
 - Applying the heart to understanding
 - Calling out for insight
 - Searching as for hidden treasure

The Value of Repetition

- Growth requires repetition, practice, and perseverance.
- The more carefully we study a passage, the more we begin to see.
- Patience helps us notice things we may miss when we rush.
- The goal is not just to collect Bible facts but to grow in our knowledge of God.

Obstacles to Patient Bible Study

1. We want immediate results

- We may expect every Bible reading to bring a powerful feeling or immediate answer.
- Sometimes Scripture brings quick comfort or clarity, but other times understanding takes time.
- We should not measure the value of Bible study only by how we feel afterward.
- Isaiah 55:11 reminds us that God's Word does not return empty.

2. We mistake finishing for understanding

- It is possible to complete a Bible reading plan and still miss the meaning.
- Reading Scripture is an active discipline.
- Helpful questions:
 - What does this passage actually say?
 - What does it teach me about God?
 - What did the original author intend to communicate?
 - How does this passage fit into the larger story of Scripture?

3. We become discouraged by what we do not understand

- Everyone encounters difficult passages.
- Not understanding right away is not a reason to give up or skip the passage.
- Difficult passages are invitations to investigate.
- We can pray, reread, study the context, write down questions, ask trusted teachers, and use reliable study tools.

Spiritual Growth Takes Time

- Hebrews 5:12-14 reminds us that spiritual maturity is expected.
- We are not meant to remain at the same level of understanding.
- Maturity comes through constant practice and discernment.
- 2 Timothy 3:14-17 teaches that Scripture equips us for every good work.
- God's Word teaches, corrects, rebukes, and trains us over time.

Practical Ways to Study with Patience

1. Read the passage more than once

- First reading: focus on the overall message.

- Second reading: look for repeated words, details, contrasts, commands, and questions.
- Third reading: notice how the verses connect to one another.
- It is better to understand a smaller amount of Scripture than to rush through a larger amount.

2. Ask questions before jumping to application

- Before asking, “What does this mean for me?” ask:
 - What does this passage reveal about God?
 - Who is speaking?
 - To whom is it being spoken?
 - What is happening in the passage?
 - What comes before and after it?
 - What is my right response?

3. Learn to sit with difficult passages

- Do not skip ahead just because something is confusing.
- Write down questions.
- Look at the context and cross-references.
- Use a trustworthy study Bible or commentary if needed.
- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.

4. Choose consistency over unrealistic expectations

- Avoid creating routines that lead to guilt or shame.
- Give God the time you have.
- A short, focused time in Scripture can still be meaningful.
- The goal is not perfection but faithfulness.

5. Return to what you have learned

- Keep a notebook or journal.
- Write down:
 - The passage studied
 - What you learned about God
 - Questions you still have
 - Truths you need to remember
 - Ways you can respond
- Looking back helps you see growth over time.

Key Reminders

- We are not trying to master the Bible in a hurry.
- We will not understand every passage immediately.
- We will not become spiritually mature overnight.
- We can choose faithfulness, patience, and consistency.
- Patience is not an excuse for neglect.
- We become patient students by continuing to show up, even when progress feels slow.

Closing Questions

1. What do I need to stop rushing through in my Bible study?
2. What passage or biblical question do I need to spend more time examining?
3. What small, sustainable change can I make this week to become a more patient student of God's Word?