

**Lesson 6:** *Reading the Bible (2)*

**V. The Sections of the Bible**

The entire Bible is divided into two parts. The first part is called the Old Testament and the second part is called the New Testament.

A. THE OLD TESTAMENT

This refers to the first part of the Bible, which is composed of thirty-nine books that are divided into:

1. The Books of Law

These include a total of five books from Genesis to Deuteronomy and are called the books of law because in them are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which form the Law.

2. The Books of History

These include a total of twelve books from Joshua to Esther and record the history of the Israelites from their entrance into Canaan to their return from captivity. Hence, they are called the books of history.

3. The Books of Poetry

These include a total of five books from Job to the Song of Songs, pouring out the different spiritual experiences of the people of God through poetry.

4. The Books of the Prophets

These include a total of seventeen books from Isaiah through Malachi written by the prophets, the contents of which are mainly prophecies concerning the Israelites, the Gentiles, and Christ.

B. THE NEW TESTAMENT

This refers to the second part of the Bible which is composed of twenty-seven books that are divided into:

## 1. The Books of History

These include a total of five books from the Gospel of Matthew to the Acts of the Apostles, the first four being a history of the Lord Jesus and the last being the account of the move of the disciples on the earth after the Lord ascended into the heavens.

## 2. The Epistles

These include a total of twenty-one books from the book of Romans to the book of Jude, which are letters written by the apostles to either the churches or individual saints, especially speaking about the church and the proper condition in the spiritual life and living of the church and the saints.

## 3. The Book of Prophecy

The only book of prophecy in the New Testament is the book of Revelation, the concluding book of the New Testament and the last book of the entire Bible. It contains prophecies related to the church, Israel, the world, Christ's second coming, the destiny of Satan, the ultimate judgment, and the coming age and eternity.

### VI. How to Read the Bible

Since the Bible is the word of God, its nature is divine and spiritual. We must read it with every part of our being.

#### A. FIRST, READING IT WITH UNDERSTANDING

**Luke 24:45 Then He opened their mind [to which understanding belongs] to understand the Scriptures.**

In reading the Bible, we must first use the understanding of our mind to comprehend its text, which was written in human language, and to know its meaning.

#### B. THEN READING IT WITH WISDOM

**Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom...**

**Ephesians 1:17 God...the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him.**

These two verses mean that we need to understand with wisdom the word regarding the divine things revealed by God in the Bible. Ephesians 1:17 also shows us that wisdom is joined to our spirit. This wisdom is not what we have naturally but what we obtain through prayer. Such wisdom in our spirit is deeper and higher than the understanding in our mind. We understand the letter of the Bible with the understanding in our mind, and we apprehend the truth in the Bible by the wisdom in our spirit.

## C. FINALLY, RECEIVING IT WITH THE SPIRIT

**Ephesians 6:17-18** And receive...the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit.

Here we are told to receive the word of God by praying in the spirit. This reveals to us that we also need to exercise our spirit when we read and receive the word of God. This is done, undoubtedly, through prayer. Therefore, in reading the Bible, after we have understood the meaning of the text by our understanding and have apprehended the truth of the text with our wisdom, we should use our spirit by prayer to receive the truths in the Scripture into the deepest part of our being, that is, our spirit. In other words, after we understand the text and receive the truth therein, we still must exercise our spirit to turn what we have understood and realized into prayer that it may be assimilated in our spirit, becoming our life supply and the basis of our spiritual experience.

## D. PRAY-READING

Another simple, spiritual, and most beneficial way to read the Bible is pray-reading. We take the Bible text as prayer and pray-read with it. Not only do we read and pray simultaneously, or pray and read, read and pray; but also we directly turn the text we are reading into the very words of prayer to pray with. At times we may apply the text to ourselves through prayer. The more we repeat this kind of pray-reading, the more uplifted and released our spirit becomes and the greater, deeper, and richer the benefit is which we receive.

## VII. The Time to Read the Bible

We may read the Bible at any time and should do it whenever necessary. However, generally speaking, it is best to read in the morning before we contact any persons or things, and it is especially good to match reading with prayer. Such times should not be too long. The most suitable way is to pray for ten minutes and read for ten minutes. Sometimes reading and prayer can be mingled together.

## *Study Questions*

1. What are the parts of the Bible?
2. How should we read the Bible?
3. When is the right time to read the Bible?

## *Weekly Challenge*

Set a time to read the Bible and pray according to your Bible reading schedule and practice to read it with understanding, with wisdom and receive it with the spirit.

## *Song*

### **1**

Take time to receive Him—the blessing's outpoured,  
And we may obtain it by reading His Word;  
We bask in the splendour of His healing light,  
And light becomes life, as in Him we delight.

### **2**

Take time to absorb Him, to gain the supply,  
That we may be watered and nourished thereby;  
The deeper the roots spread, the deeper the flow,  
And richer and higher within us He'll grow.

### **3**

Take time to inhale Him—His Word we may breathe;  
By breathing it, God's very life we receive—  
He breathes Himself out so that we may breathe in  
The life, the reality, fullness of Him.

### **4**

Take time to enjoy Him, our portion is He:  
Our present, available reality;  
Our practical, real, and enjoyable Lord  
Is everything to us through His living Word.

### **5**

Take time to behold Him, gaze oft on His face,  
Receiving His Person, and grace upon grace.  
By His pleasant shining, infused we will be;  
Our faces will glow with His light, radiantly.