

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Searching For The Truth

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Number: 02

Topic: Profitable vs. Unprofitable

Bible Verses:

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The Scriptures are clear that there are some things we should study and some things that we should NOT study. Some intellectual pursuits are profitable and some intellectual pursuits are unprofitable. If people are "ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth..." then clearly something is wrong with what they are learning or how they are learning it.

It is not uncommon to see Christians who have been attending church for ten years or more who cannot pray aloud, cannot share even the simplest gospel outline, and who have little or no knowledge of issues such as salvation by grace. They have barely grown in understanding from the day that they were born-again! Something is wrong! Perhaps they have been learning things that are not profitable for their sanctification, things that are just "straw" and which do not feed the soul!

Here are some things that the Bible cautions us NOT to study:

- The occult and hidden things (Deuteronomy 18:10-14, 29:29)
- Conspiracy theories (Isaiah 8:9-12)
- End Times date predictions (Acts 1:7)
- Strange and "innovative" doctrines (Hebrews 13:9)
- Vain wranglings over words (1 Timothy 6:3-5, 2 Timothy 2:14)
- Disputes over food, drink, festivals, New Moons, sabbaths and minor issues of lifestyle (Romans chapter 14 and Colossians 2)
- Disputes about the Law (Titus 3:9)
- Jewish myths and legends (2 Timothy 4:4, Titus 1:13,14)
- Endless genealogies and legends about the past (1 Timothy 1:3,4; Titus 3:9)
- Human philosophy (Colossians 2:8, 1 Corinthians chapter 1)
- Teaching that has been twisted by greed and materialism (1 Timothy 6:5-10)
- Teaching that denies the power of God (Matthew 22:29, 2 Timothy 3:5)

- Speculative teaching / proud reasoning (1 Timothy 1:4, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
- Self-punishing asceticism, the works of self-made religion (Colossians 2:23)
- Visions of angels and spiritual beings (Colossians 2:18, 1 John 4:1)
- Human traditions (Colossians 2:8, Mark chapter 7)
- Arguments based on nice-sounding rhetoric (Colossians 2:4,18)
- Profane things and "old wife's tales" (1 Timothy 3:7)
- Astrology, religious calendars, observing of special spiritual or propitious days, months, seasons and years. (Galatians 4:10)
- Legalism, religious works and outward shows of religion (Galatians 5:1-11)

Now some of these things have become common even in evangelical circles with many pulpits being full of politics and conspiracy theories and materialism (and to a lesser extent all of the other things above as well).

Also Christians are searching the Internet for information about UFOs and the "Elohim" and the "Nephilim" and the 2012 doomsday scenarios and comets and star alignments and theories about world banking conspiracies and the Rothschilds – when instead they should be focusing on better things, on the things concerning Christ and Him Crucified!

So what are some of the things that the Bible says we should know and even proclaim, what are the core things of the Christian faith that are not distractions, but which instead lead to eternal life?

A sample of them are:

- To know the Father and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3)
- Repentance toward God and faith in Jesus (Acts 20:20,21)
- The mystery of the Church and its place in the Heavens (Ephesians 3)
- The knowledge of the love of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:14-21)
- The teachings of the Sermon On The Mount if we learn and obey them (Matthew chapters 5-7) and build our house upon the Rock (Matt 7:24-29)
- Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14)
- The knowledge of Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2)
- The awareness of Christ in us the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27)
- The Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16,17 and Psalm 119, 1 Timothy 4:13)
- Public reading of the Scriptures (1 Timothy 4:13)
- Sound doctrine (1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 4:3, Titus 1:9)
- The knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13)
- The power of Christ's forgiveness and healing (Matthew 9:6)
- Mercy and compassion (Matthew 9:13, 12:3-8; Hosea 6:6)
- The things concerning salvation and the gospel (1 Peter 1:10-12)

- The prophecies concerning Christ (1 Peter 1:10-12)
- The Kingdom of God and the things concerning Christ (Acts 28:31)
- Holiness and godliness (1 Timothy 4:7,8; Hebrews 12:14)
- How to have a Christian work ethic (1 Timothy 6:1,2; 1 Thessalonians 4:11)
- Exhortations against worldliness (Acts 2:40, Romans 12:1,2)
- Edification, exhortation and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3)
- How to walk worthy of God's Kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2:12)
- How to be sexually pure (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8)
- Prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-4, Matthew 6:5-15)
- Sensible, straightforward, righteous Christian living (Titus 2:1-15)
- Our common salvation (Jude 1:3)

When these two lists (unprofitable vs. profitable) are compared we find:

1. The profitable things "hold fast to the Head" , which is Christ, that is they are either about Him, or are about obeying His commandments.
2. The profitable things start with the "big picture" and then apply that to daily Christian living. There is cohesion not confusion.
3. The profitable things are revealed, not invented as a result of speculation. Truth is revealed from heaven, it is not made up by cobbling together bits of tradition and human knowledge but comes from God through the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:9-16, John 3:1-18, 1 John 2:20,27)
4. However the unprofitable things focus on arguments, philosophy, trivia, details, experiences and anxieties and do not lead to Christians knowing Christ or obeying His commandments.
5. The truly profitable things speak love, peace, holiness and unity.
6. The profitable things are very careful to honor the Bible.
7. The profitable things are at first hard to understand and require a little bit of spiritual insight e.g. the parables of Jesus (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)
8. The profitable things are stable and constant and endure over time.
9. The profitable things deal with the "solid and testable" truths and make a perceptible difference when you obey them and believe them.
10. The profitable things lead to spiritual freedom and away from legalism, guilt, compulsion and servitude to religion.
11. The profitable things involve a solid ethical component, and are not just knowing; but actually 'doing' and living righteously.
12. The profitable things call us to forgiveness, love, mercy and compassion.

This should lead you to consider the content of your own life, study and teaching. Are you teaching that which is true and profitable and edifying? Is your small group growing in God or is it distracted and disputing? Take a few minutes and pray about this now!

Blessings,

John Edmiston
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