





## The Discipline of Study

In 1977, the worst airline disaster in commercial aviation history occurred when a Pan-Am 747 collided with another plane on the runway of a Canary Island airport. During the investigation, it was discovered that a major cause of the accident was a breakdown in communication. Since then, several changes have been made in aviation policies, one of which is the establishment of English as the official language of communication between the cockpit and the tower.

This unfortunate tragedy demonstrates the importance of good communication to foster proper understanding. In the same way, establishing a clear line of communication with God is essential to understanding His will and His commands. In times past, God communicated with His people in various ways. Today, the primary way God speaks to us is through His Word, wonderfully inscripturated in the Holy Bible. This means that if we are to know what God has for us, it is important for us to be committed to the discipline of studying Scripture.

The Apostle Paul most certainly agreed with this contention as seen in his letter to Timothy, his young apprentice:

*But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know from childhood that you trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

According to Paul, there are at least four reasons for studying Scripture:

**1. To know the truth** (v. 14). Truth is the foundation for everything. Without it nothing else makes sense. For truth cannot be self-determined because it renders it nothing more than mere personal preference. Most people have heard the phrase, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Many don't realize that these words were spoken by Jesus. Even worse, they don't know that what Jesus really said was, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. . . And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." You cannot know the truth until you first learn to study the Word of Christ.

**2. To find salvation** (v. 15). The concepts of human depravity and the reality of evil are amazingly universal. One of the biggest puzzles people is the answer to the question, "How then shall we be saved." While many offer their own answers to this question, Jesus said that salvation is a result of truly knowing God. Knowing God is not simply a matter of believing in Him, rather, it means having a personal, loving relationship with Him. This relationship is only possible through the redemptive work of Christ as revealed in God's Word.

**3. To be transformed** (v. 16). That which has the power to save must also have the power to transform. The Christian experience is only the beginning of our faith journey. The step of faith must be followed by the walk of faith. In our journey we experience the life-changing power of the Gospel as God, through the Word and the Spirit, makes us more and more like Jesus each day. As Paul put it, the Word of God is able to "teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives" and it "corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."

**4. To do God's will** (v. 17). A disciple of Christ lives for the will of God. But we first must know what the will of God is. Very often we live in confusion as we ask ourselves, "What is God's will for me?" This is not the best way to determine God's will as it puts too much focus on the self. Instead we should simply ask, "What is God's will?" Once we know what God's will is, then we simply need to align our lives to the answer. The will of God, or as Paul puts it—the good work of God—~~only be discovered when we take time to listen, read, and study the Word of God.~~

