



The Parable Of The Lamp (Mk. 4:21-25)

Jesus compared the Word of God to a lamp. It would be useless to buy a lamp, and then stick it under a bed. After all, a lamp's purpose is to illuminate --if you can't see it, it does no good at all. The Bible is a light. But it is useless if it remains closed on the bookshelf. In order to receive profit, we must open it up and read it.

Although studying the Scriptures is essential, many read the Bible in vain, because they don't read it correctly. It is significant that in the middle of a text stressing the importance of hearing the word, Jesus emphasized the need to be careful how we hear (4:24). The fact that people come to markedly different conclusions about what the Bible means shows that many are not understanding it properly. Some are careless and simply don't put much effort into their study. Others twist the Scriptures intentionally, misinterpreting them to try to confirm the beliefs and practices they have already determined to follow.

Note: How to study the Bible. There are some common sense principles that can help you understand as you study. First, learn to study in context. The Bible has two main divisions: the Old Testament (first 39 books) and the New Testament (last 27 books). The New Testament is the part that directly relates to us today since it contains the teachings of Christ and the apostles. The Old Testament gives the background of God's preparation of the Jewish nation for the coming of Christ. These Testaments are subdivided into books. It is probably best to study book by book. While several popular religions primarily teach by using a verse here, a verse there, and a verse somewhere else, one will understand better by trying to see each book as a whole rather than mixing and matching from all over.

You need to concentrate on what you read to be able to understand it. Since each book is divided into chapters, it is helpful to approach your Bible study by working with a chapter at a time. Read through the chapter 2 or 3 times. On the first reading, work to simply discover what the chapter contains, but on the second reading, you can begin to try to analyze the main points. Keep a notebook handy to jot down a note or two about the main ideas or events of the chapter, as well as questions that arise as you study. Later, you can search for the answers to these questions yourself, or ask someone to help you. We will be glad to help you answer your Bible questions and study with you!

Adapted from Gary Fisher