

When Do You Put Your Bible Down?

When do you ever *put your Bible down*?

I suppose your answer depends on how you interpret the question.

A friend of mine once asked why some Christians were always studying their Bible. "How many more Bible studies do we need?" His point was that at some point a person needs to *put the Bible down* and actively do what it teaches. That might not be the way I would say it, but I could not argue. In fact, Scripture teaches this principle:

²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. —James 1:23–25 (NASB95)

Isn't it clear? The one who actually does what he has found in God's word "will be blessed in what he does."

Jesus made the same point using the 'wise man and foolish man' illustration at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. (You can read it in Matthew 7:24-27)

These teachings seem to imply that a person can actually over do it on the 'Bible study' and forget to follow the teaching.

So, while my friend made a good observation that IS taught in scripture, one must be careful not to go to the opposite extreme; that is, the extreme of forgetting to open the Bible.

There are two essential teachings in scripture:

- ◆ Love God with everything you've got; and
- ◆ Love others as you love yourself.

Jesus said as much on one occasion when a man asked Him what to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked him what he had read in Scripture and the man answered with the 'two great commands.' Jesus responded:

You have answered correctly; do this and you will live. —Luke 10:27

Here's the tricky part: What does 'love God' and 'love others' actually look like in practice? What does love look like when life serves me pain and sadness and calamity? How do I love others when times are good? How do I love other when times are bad? How do I love those who are mostly unlovable, or those who hurt me or my family?

How do I keep loving God when the religion I grew up with becomes stale? How does love work when I am unloved and all alone???

To answer these 'life' questions...to really answer these questions...(you already know where this is going)...pick up your Bible.

The Bible is filled with real-life examples of people who got it right and who also blew it. We can learn what 'to do' and what 'not to do.' It also contains practical teachings for day-to-day living. It instructs us in purity and holiness, and in love of God and fellow man.

So, I need to put my Bible down at least once a day...as long as I recognize that I can only put it down if I have already picked it up! YES! Put your Bible down...at least once a day. Just never forget to pick it up...at least once a day.