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Silence.

“When we look at this structure,” she continued, “we see intricate, intelligent design. It couldn’t just happen. Do you believe, then, that this universe with its complex, masterful design, just happened?”

Dr. Ryland, with an expression no longer proud and confident, said, “Class dismissed!”

Questions

1. “No one has seen _____ at any time” (John 1:18).
2. Why can’t we examine God under a microscope?
3. “The heavens declare the _____ of _____; and the _____ shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).
4. Who or what causes creation to exhibit a design?
5. Explain the complexity of DNA. Could it have appeared suddenly out of nothing?
6. Explain how man’s moral nature proves God exists.
7. “The fool has said in his _____, ‘There _____ ’” (Psalm 14:1).
8. Have you ever been in a situation where your belief in divine creation was questioned? If so, how did you handle it? List two ways you might answer.
9. Do you believe God exists? Write your answer based on Romans 1.

Faith Builder: Read aloud Job 38–41. How is God's incredible wisdom and power revealed in these verses?



The best heart habit you can develop is daily Bible study. Choosing a method of reading and studying can be overwhelming. A section titled “Resources” in the back of the book will help you with your daily Bible study. We believe that after you invest time each day letting God talk to you, it will be natural for you to respond to Him in prayer.

1. You will need a spiral notebook for class notes and homework. It doesn't have to be fancy, but you can make it fancy if you wish. After all, it's for your notes and records. Take it to every class meeting.
2. On the front of your notebook, write “Bible Study Notebook,” along with your name.
3. Refer to “Resources” on page 125. Turn to “Ways to Study the Bible” on page 127. From the choices, circle “Word study.” See the sample on page 17.
4. Write “Heart” at the top of the first page in your notebook.
5. Now go to “Helpful Tools” in your textbook, page 130.

6. Using one of the tools listed there, define the word “heart.” Then look up three scriptures in Deuteronomy containing the word “heart.”
7. Write your first selection and copy the text beside it. Skip 10 lines and repeat for second and third selections. Underline or circle the word “heart” each time you write it.
8. Read “Principles for Bible Study,” page 125.
9. Apply principles 7 and 8—meditation and application—to the three scriptures: meditate on God’s precept. Write “Application” in the blank lines under each reference. Then write how you can put this verse into practice.
10. Write your thoughts regarding each verse at the bottom of the page.
11. Select three new verses every day until your next class meeting. Use the same word and the same methods. There are forty-six verses in Deuteronomy that contain the word “heart.” At the end, you will have studied twenty-one verses from God’s book. The “sample” on the next page is a guide for structuring your notebook. You must do your own work. A sincere Bible student should consider “heart” in different contexts. What a help that will be in your understanding of “heart”!

You are learning to study the Bible with the method of word study. But “Principles for Bible Study” beginning on page 125 will apply to any method.

Sample Word Study

Heart

Definition: seat of the affections; often including the intellect as well as the affections and will; as conversely the "mind" often includes the feeling and will as well as the intellect.

1. Deuteronomy 6:5: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Application:

Looking at the entire content from verse 4 to verse 16, I see that loving God wholeheartedly involves every moment of the day. How much of my heart does God want? All of it. With this "shall" comes some "shall not's" for my heart too. I must refrain from putting any god before Him. I will love and fear Him.

2. Deuteronomy 8:17: Then you say in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth."

Application:

To get the sense from this, I checked the content on studylight.org and found the word beware in verse 11.

I think the message for me is loud and clear: God already knows my human heart and my tendency to take credit for "this wealth" which clearly comes from Him. The message of the following verse 18 is essential for me to remember daily: It is God who gives me power to get wealth. I'm putting this sentence on my bathroom mirror!

3. Deuteronomy 11:16: Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.

Application:

Knowing me, my feelings could likely be deceived.

Sometimes when my friends behave in a way contrary to the Bible, I want to overlook their actions and even go along with their behavior, because I like my friends.

And they let me know quickly that I'm being silly to believe that what they're doing is wrong. "Turn aside" is a serious phrase. When I'm not "taking heed," I most likely will turn aside, and that turning could take my heart away from God. In case I need fear as a motivation, the next verse gives it: "lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you." I do not want that!

LESSON

4

A Heart Of Obedience



“Jeff, you seem to know everything about the Bible,” Andy observed. “I don’t know how you do it. There is so much about the Bible I do not understand. I wonder if it will ever make sense to me.”

“Thank you for the compliment, Andy, but there is a lot I don’t know about the Bible. It is a great book; no one has completely mastered it, and I have just barely touched its surface. But the first thing any Bible student must do is to understand God’s overall purpose—His love for all humans and His plan through His Son that will redeem us from sin. Then upon understanding God’s gift of His Son, we develop a heart of obedience and submit ourselves to Him.”

Paul told Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). This verse points out our need to study. Studying the Bible will help us know what to do to be approved of God through obedience to His will. Paul’s words to the young preacher also let us know there is a right

way and a wrong way to divide or understand scripture. We must carefully study the truth so we can divide its teachings in a way that will be acceptable in God's sight.

Before the World Was Formed

God planned for His creation before He spoke things into existence. His plan included the free moral agency of man, which meant that a man could choose to live for God or could choose to sin and fall away from Him. So God prepared for the eventuality of man's fall before He framed the world. In speaking of our redemption by the precious blood of the Savior, Peter says, "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20). Paul agrees with Peter and says God chose for the saved to be in Christ all along but did not send Him until the time was right.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love . . . that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him (Ephesians 1:3–4, 10).

Creation and the Fall

God formed man out of the dust of the ground and made him in the Creator's image. He made a special garden and placed man in it to "tend and keep it" (Genesis 1:26; 2:7–15). Besides these

assigned tasks, God set only one law, so far as the written record reveals. Man was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (2:16–17). Woman was created to be a suitable helper for man (2:18). It appears that Adam told Eve of the command not to eat of the forbidden tree, because she recited it to the deceiving serpent (Genesis 3:2–3).

Satan became the father of liars by adding just one word to that which God had said, “You will *not* surely die” (Genesis 3:4; John 8:44). He told a partial truth that made sin seem attractive (Genesis 3:5, 7, 22). He appealed to fleshly desire by telling Eve that it was good for food. Satan aroused her desire through sight, as she saw that it was “pleasant to the eyes.” He took advantage of wrongful pride by causing her to think it was “to be desired to make one wise” (Genesis 3:6; 1 John 2:15–17). Speaking to the serpent, God presented the first great foreshadowing of His plan to send Christ: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15). In His death on the cross, Jesus suffered a painful bruise like one we might get on the heel, but in His resurrection, He dealt a mortal or head wound to Satan.

While he was in the Garden of Eden, man enjoyed a close relationship with God (Genesis 3:8). Man’s sin placed a barrier between him and God (Isaiah 59:1–2). The long road to the restoration of that relationship, or fellowship, began with the Patriarchal Age. During that age, God spoke to the head of the house, the patriarch.

When God Spoke to the Fathers

Once man sinned, God put into action His plan to bring him back. We call the first step in that plan the Patriarchal Age. In that age, the head of a household directed his family as God directed him. For example, God spoke to Noah and instructed him to build an ark of gopherwood (Genesis 6:12–14). Other families were destroyed for their disobedience, but Noah’s wife, three sons, and their wives were saved because they followed God’s instructions given them by Noah. The writer of Genesis says, “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did” (Genesis 6:22). As the writer of Hebrews reports, “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Hebrews 11:7). As Noah and his family came out of the ark, that great patriarch led his family in worship to God (Genesis 8:15–20). His righteousness prompted God to bless his family and promise never to destroy the world again by water (8:21–9:1).

Abraham was another of the patriarchs to whom God spoke (Genesis 12:1–4). We should notice again that certain blessings accompany obedience. God knew Abraham would be a good spiritual leader for all those in his house, both servants and children (18:18–19). Abraham obeyed God even in the most difficult of circumstances. In doing so, he taught his son Isaac the way of obedience (22:1–13, especially 7–8; Hebrews 11:17–19; Genesis 26:1–3, 6).

The Law Delivered on Mount Sinai

After the Patriarchal Age, God dealt with man through the written law of Moses (John 1:17). That Mosaic law was specifically delivered only to the nation of Israel. Just as the people of the Patriarchal Age died in the flood because of disobedience, the disobedient ones in the Mosaic Age were punished (Leviticus 10:1–2; 1 Corinthians 10:1–10; Judges 2:10–14). The law revealed to man that he could not live a perfect life. It pointed out the great need for a means of overcoming sin. However, it did not make such a means available to the people (Hebrews 10:1–4). Moses' law fulfilled its purpose when it showed man his need for a perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ. "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Galatians 3:24–25). Its people and events serve as an example to us of how God will deal with disobedient man. "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Fellowship with God Restored in Christ

Jesus came to fulfill the law and its many promises of a Savior. Our Lord told His disciples,

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Matthew 5:17–18).

As the prophets foretold, Jesus was born of a virgin in the little town of Bethlehem. He was crucified between two thieves but buried in a rich man's tomb. He carried man's sins to the cross, despite the fact that He was rejected by the very ones He came to save (Isaiah 7:14; 53:1–12; Micah 5:2–3). In His death, Jesus took the old law out of the way and put His law into force. Paul told the Christians at Colossae, "Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:11–17). Christ's resurrection was the final great proof that He was and is God's anointed (Acts 2:22–36). He ascended to heaven and took His rightful seat on the throne of power. Christ's law was established. This era is often called the Christian Age.

When Jesus took away the law at the cross, He tore down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, between man and man. The blood shed on that cross also gave man and woman the means of overcoming sin, which for centuries had stood as a barrier between them and God (Ephesians 2:11–16; Hebrews 9:22). The Gentiles, as well as the Jews, were granted repentance unto life (Acts 10:34–36, 40, 42–43; 11:15–18). In fact, it can be said that all are one in the body of Christ, the church (Ephesians 2:16; Galatians 3:26–28). Peace can be preached to all (Ephesians 2:17–19). We, the church, are built upon the foundation of Christ and are a temple in which God can live (2:20–22; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16). Man walked with God in the Garden of Eden. Now in Christ we can be in fellowship with Him again through the blood of His glorious Son (1 John 1:3–7).



— Growing Heart Habits —

This week we will choose another way to study the Bible from page 127. We will study the book of James for three weeks.

1. On the next clean page in your spiral notebook, write “James” at the top of the page.
2. Read the entire book at one sitting. Then read the first chapter again.
3. From “Principles for Bible Study” beginning on page 125, write in your notebook the four questions under “Context,” one below the other. Using the Bible and resource material, answer those questions.
4. Write “James 1:1–8.”
5. In your own words, explain the meaning of these verses.
6. Define words that are difficult to understand, using “Helpful Tools” on pages 130–131.
7. From “Principles for Bible Study” beginning on page 125, apply meditation and application.
8. Repeat this exercise every day, using at least six verses from James each day. You should be in the second chapter when your class meets next week.
9. Write your thoughts and meditate on the scripture.

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10. Write an application at the end of each section of study.
The “sample” on the next page is a guide for structuring your notebook. You must do your own work.
11. Be sure to bring your notebook with you to class every week. It is your personal Bible study notebook.

Sample Book Study

James

Who wrote it?

When did he write it?

Where was it written?

To whom was it written?

James 1:1–8. Handwrite these verses from your Bible.

In my own words:

When trials come, be glad. They're a test to our faith. That's the only way to get patience. Trials complete us so that we're mature. That's their purpose. Don't just wish for wisdom; ask God. He is not stingy; He will give liberally. When we ask God for wisdom, we must believe that He will give it. A doubter goes any way the wind blows and will not get anything from God.

Sample Word Definitions:

Bondservant

Testing

Patience

Perfect

Reproach

Doubt

Double-minded

Unstable

Application:

My reaction to trials is to whine, but James tells me to welcome them with joy! I'll work on it, because I do want patience and wisdom. But I don't like what I must do to get them. I will also work on my doubting. "No doubting" is very clear in verse 6. I will ask in faith.