

UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. God's Word Admonishes Us To:

1. "Grow in grace and *knowledge...*" (2 Pet. 3:18)
2. "Abound yet more and more in *knowledge and all discernment...*" (Phil. 1:9 cf. Heb. 5:13-14)

B. The Importance Of This Increasing Growth In The Knowledge Of God's Word Is Seen In The Following Passages:

1. "And this is *life eternal*, that they should *know Thee*, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3 cf. Eph. 5:17)
2. "That you may grow thereby *unto salvation.*" (1 Pet. 2:2)

II. AIM.

A. To Learn The Biblical Principles Involved In Analyzing The Word Of God.

1. Analysis - "*To break down into its parts.*"
2. Exposition - "*To explain (understand) the meaning.*"

B. To Be Better Equipped In Obtaining *The Exact Sense And Intended Meaning Of The Author Of God's Holy Word.*

III. OUTLINE.

A. THE BIBLICALLY APPROVED METHOD OF APPROACH IN UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD.

1. Firstly, *the basic approach:* Christ Jesus is to be considered in all. (Read Luke 24:27)

- a. *Christ is the key that unlocks the understanding of the word of God. (Eph. 3:3-4)*
 - b. *Christ is the sum-total of Bible understanding. (Eph. 1:9-10 cf. Col. 1:12-17)*
 - c. *Christ is the basis for and the conclusion to the scriptures; as teacher He offers aid to His disciples in understanding. (John 5:39-40)*
 - 1) *Christ in the scriptures must be considered in relation to the whole Bible; and each scripture must be considered in its relation to Christ. (Luke 24:44)*
 - 2) *Christ's followers can best understand His teaching being in fellowship with Him. (Read carefully 1 Cor. 2:6 - 3:1 and 1 John 1:1-7)*
2. *Secondly, the specific approach: The inductive-deductive method.*
- a. *This method (inductive - Lit. "a leading in" - gathering all the facts, and deductive - Lit. "a leading out") is the true method of Biblical interpretation (or understanding.)*
 - b. *This method (although not called by this designation) is accepted and approved by the Bible itself. (Carefully note Luke 24:44)*
 - c. *This method is used by varied interpreters and expositors in the Bible.*
 - 1) *The Lord Jesus used the inductive-deductive method. (Read Luke 24)*
 - a) *He expounded unto them in all the law and the prophets concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27)*
 - b) *He introduced all the facts from that divinely revealed source that they might understand truth.*
 - c) *Everywhere Jesus made an investigation, He did so by the inductive-deductive approach.*

- 2) *The Jerusalem church used the inductive-deductive method. (Read Acts 15)*
 - a) They heard the testimony of Peter. (*vs. 7-11*)
 - b) They listened to Paul and Barnabas. (*ver. 12*)
 - c) They adhered to James' testimony which was based on the words of Amos the prophet. (*vs. 13-18 cf. Amos 9:11-12*)
 - d) Therefore, when *all the facts* were gathered, *there was but one possible conclusion*: The Gentile converts were under no such obligation to be circumcised to be saved! (*vs. 19-20*)
- 3) The prophet and historian Moses uses the inductive-deductive method. (Read *Deut.*)
 - a) He makes three speeches which make up most of the content of this book.
 - b) He brings before his readers' (hearers') minds *all* their history and all their obligations.
 - c) He therefore *leads in* and gathers all the facts and *leads out* with the conclusion of those facts.
- d. This method's fundamental principle is *to gather from the scriptures themselves the precise meaning which the inspired writer intended to convey.*
 - 1) This means that *all facts* shall be gathered and reported.
 - a) This must be done *before* a conclusion is reached!
 - b) Men have always been ready to deduce before having properly induced!
 - 2) These *facts must be permitted to speak for themselves.*

- 3) *These facts alone* are the guide in forming the conclusion.
 - a) *Guessing and speculation* have no place here.
 - b) *Prejudices and preconceived ideas* are not to be used to reach a conclusion.
- 4) *All facts* of the Bible are complete and sufficient in their teaching. (*Deut. 29:29 cf. John 20:30-31*)
- 5) *One single fact* of inspired statement settles any controversy upon that which it speaks.
- 6) In considering gathered information in regard to *facts* one should ask:
 - a) Are *all* the facts reported?
 - b) Are all the *statements* true?
 - c) Are they only *part* of the truth?

B. FUNDAMENTAL AND ESSENTIAL RULES TO BE USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE BASICALLY APPROVED METHOD OF APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD.

1. Read *the entire Bible*.
 - a. Learn its overall message: *Christ the Key*.
 - b. Remember its one basic theme: *Redemption of Man*.
2. Read the individual book (under consideration) *at one sitting*.
 - a. That you may retain the whole of the book.
 - b. That you may know the scope of the book.
 - c. That you may find important answers to the following questions:
 - 1) *To whom* was the book written? (See *1 Cor.*)

- 2) *Of whom was the book written? (See Philemon)*
 - 3) *Why was the book written? (See John 20:30-31)*
 - 4) *When was it written? (Chronological and historical setting?)*
 - 5) *Where was the author when he wrote the book? (Rev. 1:9)*
 - 6) *Who is speaking, man, God, Jesus, Satan, etc.?*
3. *Make a brief outline of the contents of the book, e.g. Philippians.*
- I. *Christ My Life. (Chapter 1)*
 - II. *Christ My Example. (Chapter 2)*
 - III. *Christ My Goal. (Chapter 3)*
 - IV. *Christ My Strength. (Chapter 4)*
4. *Reread the passage or verses under consideration with the following in mind:*
- a. *Always consider a verse (or passage) in light of its context.*
 - b. *Never interpret a verse to mean something that would conflict with other plain scripture.*
 - c. *Determine whether the words are figurative or literal.*
5. *Reread the chapter a second time with careful meditation.*
6. *Exercise good, plain, common sense.*

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. *Attitudes Helpful For Obtaining A Better Understanding Of God's Word.*
 1. *Pure motives.*

2. Pure life.
3. Patience.
4. Courage.
5. Humility.
6. Prayer.
7. Faith.

B. Application Needed In Order To Obtain The Best Results In Reading And Studying God's Word.

1. I must study in the spirit of a *LEARNER* - ready to receive instruction.
2. I must study in a spirit of *EXPECTANCY* - realizing that the effort will not be in vain.
3. I must study in a spirit of *DETERMINATION* - remembering that great truths are not found by the lazy and indifferent.
4. I must study in a spirit of *OPEN-MINDEDNESS* - ready to receive truth at all costs.
5. I must study in a spirit of *PRAYERFULNESS* - for wisdom and proper understanding.
6. I must study in a spirit of *RESPONSIVENESS* - eager to obey the will of God and apply these great truths in my daily living.