

Attention to Detail

Anyone who has ever given serious effort to constructing a well-built model can tell you the importance of paying attention to detail. The tiny latches on the windows of a building or the chrome mirrors on the side of a model car may seem insignificant on their own, but they add a dimension of reality to the overall model that would not be possible otherwise.

In Bible study, attention to detail is likewise extremely important, for vital doctrines are often upheld by details that are otherwise easily overlooked. For example, Jesus once rebuked the Sadducees for, “Not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God” (Mark 12:24). The Lord said that their error was in ignoring the fact that God used the present tense when describing Himself to Moses: “I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Mark 12:26, cf. Ex. 3:6). According to Jesus, the fact that God said, “I AM” their God instead of saying, “I WAS” their God proves that the dead live on after this life is over. Jesus proved the reality of a resurrection of the dead merely by observing the details of Exodus 3:6. The Lord Himself shows us that good Bible students give appropriate attention to the details of Scripture.

Consider what qualities a Bible student should possess in order to give proper attention to the details of Scripture:

A commitment to accuracy – The modern notion that truth is relative does not inspire men to be committed to accuracy in regard to God’s word. However, if God’s word is truth indeed, then it must be handled carefully (John 8:32; 17:17; 2 Tim. 2:15). There are many who are less than accurate and careless in their handling of God’s word, and by so mishandling God’s truth they bring about their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16). Jesus demonstrated His commitment to accuracy with God’s word when He said, “till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18). Are we like Jesus regarding our desire to accurately handle God’s holy word?

A commitment to hard work – The ability to give proper attention to the details of Scripture demands a commitment to intense study and labor. Ezra the scribe wanted to accurately teach God’s people, and he showed the right spirit when he, “Prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). Paul charged Timothy to, “Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:13). The simple fact is this: nobody ever became a great student of God’s word without first deeply investing himself in the details of Scripture. Jesus showed a commitment to hard work where God’s word is concerned, and so should we.

A patient spirit – A modeler knows that good results do not arise from hasty work. So it is with Bible study as well. There are no short-cuts to becoming a good Bible student. After his conversion, Paul spent 3 years in Arabia (Gal. 1:17-18) followed by several

more years in Tarsus (Acts 9:30) before he really began what we know of his ministry. Considering that Paul already knew so much of the Old Testament, it is somewhat amazing that God still evidently saw fit to give him several years of time to prepare himself for the work that He desired Paul to undertake. Everyone who would be a good student of Scripture must realize that patience is essential (Gal. 5:22-23).

May God help us to give proper attention to the details of Scripture so that He may be honored and glorified more!

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