How To Study The Bible 2 *Bible Class*

Matters To Consider When Studying The Bible.

A. Before We Study The Bible, We Should Pray.

1. As we come to hear what God has to say, we need to talk to Him. David prayed, "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from your law" (Psalm 119:18).

a. This ought to be our prayer as we come to study the Bible.

2. In our prayer we should invite the Holy Spirit to join us in our study.
a. After all, the Holy Spirit according to (John 16:13 "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.") is here to guide us into all truth.

3. In our prayer we should ask for forgiveness of sins. If God used holy men of God to write His book, He wants holy men of God to interpret His book. If one is not in a proper relationship with God, it is not realistic to think he will be able to interpret the Bible correctly.

B. Before We Study The Bible, We Should Clear Our Minds Of Unnecessary Thoughts So That We Will Be Totally Focused On The Bible.

"I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways." (Psalm 119:15).

1. There is no way we can meditate on God's Word unless we clear our minds of worldly concerns.

C. When Studying The Bible, We Need An Open Mind.

ILLUSTRATION:
In Image Magazine, Tim Curtis writes, on the last day of 1944, Hiroo Onoda, a young lieutenant in the Japanese army, arrived on the island of Lubang, about 75 miles southwest of Manila. His assignment was to conduct guerilla warfare against the American forces who were expected to attempt a landing on Lubang and the rest of the Philippines within the coming weeks. When the Americans did mount a successful offensive on Lubang about a month later, something which to them was little more than a "mopping up" operation, Lieutenant Onoda led a small group of soldiers into the jungle and began the mission for which he had been trained: to conduct a covert operation of disruption against American forces for as long as possible.

Onoda was a man of exceptional valor and loyalty. Like many Japanese soldiers in World War II, he was prepared to take his own life rather than surrender, but in his case, specific orders were given not to take his life. He

was to stay alive as long as he could in order to do maximum damage to the enemy.

As he made his way to Lubang, he recalled the promise of his division commander: "Whatever happens, we'll come back for you." Onoda vowed to himself, "I will fight till that day comes." It did indeed finally come...30 years later.

On March 10, 1974, on the orders of his former commander, Hiroo Onoda formally surrendered to the Philippine authorities. For 30 years he had manned his post, unaware that the war had ended just six months after he had gone into the jungle. Two others had been with him for portions of that time.

One died after 10 years, and the other was killed in a gun battle with Philippine police about a year before Onoda surrendered. At the time he was found, Onoda was making plans to survive another 20 years in the jungle.

One of the most remarkable things about Onoda's story was that several attempts had been made to find him and bring him home to Japan. Once Japanese officials learned that Onoda was continuing to fight a war that had long since ended, search parties spent months at a time trying to locate him. Leaflets and newspapers were dropped from helicopters. Loud speakers blared messages from several family members, including his father. Onoda, convinced that Japan would never surrender, misinterpreted these attempts to find him. He even twisted things around to believe that the Japanese army was using these efforts to secretly encourage him to stay in the jungle, the very opposite of what they were trying to do. In his autobiography, No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War, Onoda wrote that he and his two comrades "developed so many fixed ideas that we were unable to understand anything that did not conform with them. If there was anything that did not fit in with them we interpreted it to mean what we wanted it to mean."

1. Too often, people study the Scriptures looking for ideas that support their own interpretation of the Bible. In doing this, they misinterpret God's intended meaning.
a. Baptism for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29 "Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?").

b. Kitchens in church buildings (1 Corinthians 11:34 "if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home--so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.").

2. We must go into Bible study with an open mind and allow God's Word to dictate its own meaning. We must never bring our own theological heritage to the texts as we read them.