

A Few Comments About Understanding God's Word and Growing in Grace

1. As God's grace (undeserved kindness or favor) increases in our lives, so will an understanding of his Word. These two go together, each bearing upon the other.
2. We do not need to approach God's Word with fear and uncertainty, overwhelmed by the possibility of reaching the wrong conclusions and losing all that we strive for. Instead, we can approach our study with the realization that the Word itself will mold our thinking and will enable us to view reality the way we ought. The key is that we must *submit* to what the Word says. We must accept it as it is written, and let it develop our perspective.
3. We *grow* in knowledge of the Word. We do not need to fully understand everything the first time we read or study a Scripture passage. Our understanding is a growing process, increasing as our friendship with God increases.
4. There is no need to panic, if we run into a difficulty in understanding some specific text or verse. Our relationship with God does not hinge on a verse or two, but on the entire message - as a unified message of truth. Our willingness to submit to this over-all message, and to live according to it, is half of the foundation for our relationship. The other half of this foundation is the fact that God, who has called us to salvation, will lead us into the "path of righteousness" - and this part of the foundation provides the guarantee that the other part will be accomplished.
5. Don't ignore or explain-away any "difficult" passage you may come across. You may discover that the same "difficult" concept is mentioned in numerous other passages. In this case, it would suggest that you need to modify *your* perspective - at least a little. But even then, the Bible itself would be the guide to show you the extent of the needed change.
6. "Immerse" yourself in the Word; become familiar with it and let it permeate your thinking. Make it a part of your life - *all* areas of your life. It will influence (and develop) your entire perspective on life, influencing not only how you *think*, but how you *live*. It will form boundaries that will guide you in what you think about. It will direct your steps into the way of wisdom and righteousness, and keep you from the path of evil. It will even restrain you from potential evil that you could have done, but haven't done.
7. Finally, as your mind is influenced by God's Word, your ability to clearly understand his Word will be enhanced. Potential errors will be minimized and many of the "difficulties" you come across in your reading will disappear.