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A Couple Questions about the Bible:
Why do we need to memorize the books of the Bible?
How do we study the Bible?

Both great questions that came from one of the students in our 3-4th Grade Sunday School class, Alison Sarsland.

The answer to the first question is a bit easier, so I'll take that one first:

Memorizing 66 books of the Bible can seem a bit overwhelming at first, but once you know them, you will find it is a great help in being able to find passages. For example when someone says, "The Christmas story is in Luke 2," you will know where to find the book of Luke, so you can check it out.

Memorizing the books gets easier as we break them down into smaller groupings like these:

The books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

The Gospels (Good News about Jesus): Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Alison's teacher (Violet) talked about how we need to study the Bible in order to get to know God better. That prompted the great question: "How do we study the Bible?"

It's tempting to answer that question by going into great detail about the four questions to ask of a passage:

- 1) What does it say?
- 2) What does it mean?
- 3) What does it mean for my life?
- 4) What specifically am I going to do about what it means for my life?

But maybe the best way to study the Bible is to read a passage and then simply ask the question: "What is God trying to teach us here?"

On a recent Sunday the confirmation students did a skit that was designed to get us to think of God's Word as being His diary. Just like a person does in their diary, God in His Word tells us what He likes, what He is like, how He feels when different things happen, His innermost thoughts, dreams and frustrations AND what He thinks about us.

Most people keep their diaries locked, because they don't want people to get to know all those things about them. God is the exact opposite. He's given us His Word so that we would get to know all those things.

So, since God really does want us to know Him, a great thing to do before we read is simply ask Him to show us what He wants us to learn from our reading. Then after we read seek to answer the question, "What is God trying to teach us here?"

What are some important things He wants me to know about...

... what He is like?

... what He does like (or doesn't like)?

... what does He hope for?

... what does He think about us?

... what does He want us to do or believe?

I did something similar to that with our confirmation students in their class last week. We read the first chapter in the Bible, Genesis 1. Then I asked them to summarize some basic things God wants us to learn from that chapter. Here are some of their answers:

"God is all-powerful. "

"He has a definite plan."

"We humans are more special to God than all the rest of His creation." "He really wants us to take the seventh day off. "

I'd say they learned a lot by answering that basic Bible study question.

So, thanks Alison for a couple of great questions whose answers we all need to hear.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net