

# Equipping The Saints

“...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service...” ~ Ephesians 4:12

April 17, 2016

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## Let's Get Technical: The Value of In-Depth Bible Study (By Andrew Dow)

Baseball season is a special time of year for baseball fanatics like myself. Hopes are high and predictions are bold. If you were to ask me which team will win the World Series this year, I would begin to wax eloquent regarding certain players BAs, ABs, OBPs, ERAs, and WARs. It wouldn't take long before most people would stop me and say, “*Let's not get too technical!*”

We like to use that phrase—“*Let's not get too technical!*”—when we are faced with an overwhelming amount of seemingly useless information. Whether it's a musician talking pitch and rhythm or a scientist explaining the inner workings of a micro-organism, sometimes things can get too technical for our liking! There are at least a couple of reasons we don't like to get technical: (1) we may not know much about the subject, or (2) we may not *desire* to know much about the subject.

When it comes to the Bible, do we ever think, “*Let's not get too technical!*”? Why do we have that thought? Is it because we don't know much about the Bible? Is it because we don't want to know that much about the Bible? When it comes to Bible study, we should have a desire to “*get technical.*” Allow me to offer a couple of thoughts on in-depth Bible study.

### Meat vs. Milk

God's word is frequently described by inspired authors as food. Jesus said, “**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for**

**righteousness, for they shall be satisfied**” (Matt. 5:6, NASB). True happiness and bliss belongs to those who are hungry and thirsty for what is right. This, like the other beatitudes, seems upside down. We generally think of hunger and thirst as negative qualities; we’d rather be filled and quenched. You see, Jesus is describing a state of spiritual hunger and thirst. Only when we are spiritually starving for what is right, will we be truly satisfied by Christ’s words. As Peter wrote, **“Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation”** (1 Pet. 2:2). We will only be satisfied, nourished, and sustained when we consume God’s Word. We will only consume God’s Word when we intensely desire its contents!

However, it’s not simply enough to snack and sip on the word of God. The Hebrew author wrote, **“Concerning Him [i.e., Christ] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil”** (Heb. 5:11-14). This text teaches that there is a difference between the milk of the word (i.e., **“the elementary principles of the oracles of God”**) and the solid food (i.e., **“the word of righteousness”**). It is necessary to consume and digest the basic teachings of God’s word, but we cannot expect that to be sufficient forever. We eventually must grow up and study more substantial (dare we say, technical) portions of God’s Word. Paul rebuked the Corinthians saying, **“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still**

**fleshly**” (1 Cor. 3:1-3). Brethren, we must hunger for the meat of the word, and then engage in deep study of the word to satisfy our spiritual hunger.

### **Growing in Knowledge**

Peter’s second epistle opens with an instruction to add certain characteristics to our faith (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Why should we add moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to our faith? **“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Pet. 5:8). You see, the addition of these qualities demonstrates that we are growing in knowledge! If we are NOT growing in knowledge, we can be described as useless or unfruitful (cf. vs. 8). Before providing this list of qualities, Peter said, **“Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence”** (2 Pet. 1:3). Only when we grow in the true knowledge of Jesus Christ can we receive **“everything pertaining to life and godliness.”**

It would be a mistake for us to think that when we have obeyed the gospel we have reached the pinnacle of our service to the Lord. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Our initial obedience to the gospel is just the first step. We must continue to grow in our knowledge to the point that we can discuss things on a deeper level. God’s Word is full of passages instructing us to grow. Consider lists such as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24). Paul wrote we are all to **“attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ”** (Eph. 4:13). It should be a delight to us to challenge our thinking by digging into God’s word and technically studying the things that we may find therein.

## Loving God's Word

One of the most beautiful expressions of love is found in Psalm 119:97—“**O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.**” I fear that many Christians today don't truly love God's Word. I fear that many Christians today would rather do other things than meditate on God's Word all day long. Jesus said, “**If you love Me, you will keep My commandments**” (John 14:15). I fear that many Christians today don't love their Savior enough to study what He has commanded them. After all, if we truly love God and His Word, we will desire to study it day and night; we will want to study even when it is deep or technical.

I'm willing to talk technically about baseball anytime of day to anyone who is willing to listen because I love it. Musicians are willing to study the intricacies of music because it's what they love. Scientists will explore their specific field of study in-depth because they love it. Do we love God's Word? Are we willing to challenge our own thinking with ideas and concepts that are deep? Brethren, let's get technical!

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#### AM Lesson:

*What Made Hezekiah Great?*

#### PM Lesson:

*The New Jerusalem*

*“Go therefore and make disciples...” (Matthew 28:19-20)*