



Are You Taking Notes?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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We are taught in school that taking notes will be greatly beneficial to us whenever the time comes to study for a test. Rather than just relying on a feeling whenever you try to answer a question, you can prepare to give the right answer by looking over your notes. And, the better notes you take, the better you will be prepared for the test. In a very similar way, we should all be taking mental “notes” during our lives concerning the conduct of other people. These “notes” will help us to avoid sin and to live for the Lord. Consider three types of “notes” we should be taking about others.

1) Note those who oppose the doctrine of Christ. Romans 16:17-18 says, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

There are those who actively work contrary to the true doctrine of Jesus Christ. Perhaps they are false teachers who are working to deceive individuals with regard to the true saving message of the gospel. Or, perhaps they are acting in ways that are causing divisions within the body of Christ and offending those who are attempting to follow Jesus. Such a person must be “noted” for his/her actions and avoided if he/she persists in such activity without repenting. Those who are interested in following Jesus should recognize that such a person is not going to help them accomplish their goal.

2) Note those Christians who do not obey God. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 says, “But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” Verses 14-15 say, “And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

There are those who started to live as Christians, but have went back into sin. Those who backslide in this way and refuse to repent must be “noted” for their wickedness and you must not keep company with them (not even to eat with them, see 1 Corinthians 5). There are at least two good reasons why God expects you to do this. First, it is a way of trying to get the erring brother/sister to repent. The passage quoted said that doing this will cause the erring one to be “ashamed.” Second, it is a way of keeping yourself pure. In talking about the same kind of situation in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul said, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” (verse 6). So, failing to do this can result in your being pulled away from Christ.

3) Note those who are faithful to Christ. Philippians 3:17-18 says, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.”

We should not just take mental “notes” about those who are *not* living for the Lord. It is just as critical that we also take these mental “notes” about those who *are* following the example set forth by Jesus and His apostles in the Bible. This is important, in part, because there are so many who are no longer walking in the way God approves and are now enemies of the cross of Christ. So, making these mental “notes” about those who *are* walking in the ways of the Lord will help us associate with godly people who will help and encourage us to walk as Jesus walked.

Are you taking “notes”? The Scriptures clearly call for us to “note” people. This will help us serve the Lord. Now, be very careful to take accurate “notes” and do not rush to an improper judgment. But, once you have taken the right “notes,” you should remember two things. First, you must act appropriately. For, “notes” are only good if they are put to proper use. Second, you must be willing to revise your “notes” as needed. Sometimes people who once lived contrary to the Lord, taught false doctrine, and contributed to error and division turn to live for the Lord – and those who once lived for the Lord turn away from Him.

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