Personal Qualifications

April 10, 2017 · PM · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2017/personal-qualifications/

WARNING

Do not neglect or underestimate this section. The Bible is a spiritual book, written by the eternal Spirit, Who demands we use it on His terms. While the flesh, the world, Satan, and most Bible students ignore or despise these points, they are more important than any rules of hermeneutics. Young man, crush your impatience, and wait upon the Lord for the liberal wisdom and understanding that only He can give (Ps 119:18). May God bless you!

QUALIFICATION #1: Men must be regenerated with spiritual life to understand the Bible.

1. As a result of Adam's fall in Eden, all men ever since have been born dead to knowing or loving god (Genesis 2:17; Psalm 14:1-4; John 8:42-47; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:3).
2. Natural intelligence remains, but he never even thinks about God (Ps 10:4; Rom 3:11).
3. A man without faith is simply unreasonable and cannot learn (II Thess 3:2; Prov 9:10).
4. He will always reject truth for lies, and he cannot deliver himself (John 8:45; Is 44:20).
5. God blinds such men against the truth (Romans 1:21-22; Eph 4:17-19; II Thess 2:9-12).
6. The natural man cannot know the things of God (John 3:6; Romans 8:5-8; I Cor 2:14).
7. The gospel – very good news – is foolishness to such persons (I Cor 1:18; II Cor 4:3-4).
8. The ability to see, hear, and understand is of God (Proverbs 20:12; John 8:43-47; 17:2-3; Romans 3:11; II Corinthians 4:6; Philippians 2:13; I John 5:20).
9. Before being born again, he cannot see God's kingdom, even in person (John 3:1-8).
10. The mind of Christ – the spiritual mind of discernment – belongs to us (I Cor 2:6-16).
11. Regeneration gives internal knowledge of the truth in the new man (Jeremiah 24:7; John 6:45; Romans 10:8; Ephesians 4:17-24; I Thess 4:9; Hebrews 8:10-11; II Peter 1:1-4).
12. Preaching is verbal instruction from Scripture directed to the consciences of God's elect only, who may hear, understand, and obey the truth (II Cor 2:14-17; 4:1-6; II Tim 2:10).
13. Many Bible students and preachers are not born again, so their ignorance of God and His Word should not surprise us (Matt 7:21-23; 12:1-4; 23:33; Acts 20:29-30; I Cor 11:19; II Cor 11:13-15; I Tim 4:1-3; II Tim 3:6-9; II Peter 2:1-17; I John 2:18-19; 4:1).
14. The Bible, the spiritual book of the Spirit of God, is closed to natural men, regardless of their intelligence, knowledge of hermeneutics, or efforts put into finding spiritual truth.

QUALIFICATION #2: A regenerate man must be illuminated by the Spirit to understand.

1. Though a man is born again, he still has a flesh nature that makes war against the Spirit and the law of his

mind (Romans 7:22-24; 8:5-8; Galatians 5:17; Colossians 3:9-11).

2. The apostles, though born again earlier, received the Spirit to understand (Luke 24:45).
3. Paul prayed for God to give the Spirit for understanding (Eph 1:17-18; II Timothy 2:7).
4. Knowing Christ's love by faith in all dimensions is by the Spirit's might (Eph 3:14-19).
5. The candle of the Lord in every born again person can teach us the truth (Prov 20:27).
6. If the Spirit is quenched or grieved (I Thess 5:19; Eph 4:30), He may remove ability to understand, or even cause deception (Job 12:20; Is 63:10; Eze 14:6-11; John 12:37-41).
7. God may assist our understanding by special communication (Job 32:8; 33:14-18).
8. However, God has chosen more than inspiration for learning (Ep 4:11-14; II Tim 2:15).
9. We have an unction from God that teaches us all things regarding Jesus Christ, which is internal knowledge in our hearts brought by teaching to our minds (I John 2:20,27).
10. God must open the minds of men for them to understand His Word (Isaiah 29:11-12).

QUALIFICATION #3: A man must fear God to even begin understanding Scriptural truth.

1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Pr 1:7; 9:10; 15:33).
    1. The foundation for all learning must begin with a deep comprehension of God.
    2. Without a solid foundation, man's mind has no limit to foolish imaginations.
    3. Ignoring the Creator, the Governor, and the Judge of the universe is pure folly.
    4. Learning how God thinks and behaves gives a pattern for our understanding.
    5. Acceptable worship of God requires we do it with godly fear (Heb 12:28-29).
    6. Reasoning requires a starting point, worldview, or First Cause; if this starting point is not the Creator God, no matter how logical and consistent the reasoning, any conclusions are insane; just as mathematical operations on zero are zero.
2. The fear of God is to hate and depart from evil, which is the conceited folly of transgressing the laws of infinite Wisdom (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Prov 8:13; 16:6).
    1. A man coming to the Bible without fear of disobedience is arrogant (Is 66:1-2).
    2. The nature of God is to hate evil, so understanding Him without it is impossible.
3. The fear of man – family, friends, church, denomination – brings a snare (Prov 29:25).
    1. Great men are not always wise, so do not be intimidated by them (Job 32:9).
    2. Compromise due to the fear of man can put you in a bad stead (John 12:42-43).
    3. If you are worried about what others will think of your doctrine or your actions, then you have revealed an idol in your heart – the opinions of foolish men.
    4. The jealous God will not allow any such idolater to have even a small blessing.
4. God Himself will instruct and reveal things to those that fear Him (Psalm 25:12-14).
5. An insincere or ritualistic fear of God may bring confusion of mind (Is 29:13-14).
6. Carnal Christians cannot handle the full interpretation of Scripture (I Corinthians 3:1-2).

QUALIFICATION #4: A man must delight in the Lord to obtain understanding from God.

1. Note the relation of worshipping God and learning Scripture under Ezra (Neh 8:6).
2. God's favor and blessing is upon those who delight in Him (Psalm 37:4; Acts 13:22).
3. The value of God's personal favor cannot be emphasized too highly (Daniel 9:23; II Samuel 12:24), and surely there is no better means for it than delighting in Him.
4. While this point could be considered part of the fear of God above, it is different enough for separate treatment: fear of the Lord is negative; delight is very positive.
5. God is looking for men who will glory in Him rather than anything else (Jer 9:23-24).
6. Is your meditation on the Lord a sweet thing giving gladness to your soul (Ps 104:34)?

QUALIFICATION #5: A man must obey and apply his learning if he is to learn more.

1. David knew more than the ancients, because he kept God's precepts (Psalm 119:100).
2. Daniel understood the need to turn from iniquities to understand truth (Daniel 9:13).
3. Doing the will of God is the condition for sure knowledge of doctrine (John 7:17).
4. Disobedience will bring a loss of understanding previously had (Job 36:12; Luke 8:18).
    1. God cannot stand scorners, and He will judge them (Prov 15:10; 21:16; 29:1).
    2. Disregard of His instruction will bring blindness in judgment (II Thess 2:10-12).
5. Greater knowledge brings greater responsibility (Luke 12:47-48; James 4:17).
6. God's light that shines on our path unto the perfect day follows two laws (Pr 4:18).
    1. It is for the just, therefore obedience to the law of God is necessary for light.
    2. It shines more and more as we proceed. We must walk forward in obedience with the light given. To expect an entire path to be lit at once is foolish.
7. Jesus Christ taught that taking his yoke and learning go hand in hand (Matt 11:29).
8. Scripture shows the importance of growth in understanding, which is achieved by, among other things, the exercise and application of knowledge (Is 28:9; Heb 5:12-14).

QUALIFICATION #6: A man must ask in prayer for wisdom to increase his knowledge.

1. God has purposed to operate in certain areas by request only (Matt 7:7 cp James 4:2).
2. God specifically tells us that wisdom is something we are to ask God for (James 1:5).
3. We must ask in faith, or we should plan on receiving nothing (James 1:6-7; Heb 11:6).
4. God offered and gave wisdom to Solomon, and He offers us the same (II Chr 1:10-12).
5. Daniel prayed for wisdom and knowledge and received it (Da 2:16-19; 9:13; 10:10-14).
6. Consider the proper motives for requesting wisdom (Psalm 119:26-27,34,73,125).
7. Appreciate the psalmist's prayer for God to open his eyes in His law (Psalm 119:18).
8. We must tremble before the LORD, lest He judge us also with blindness (John 9:39).
9. Paul prayed for the Ephesian saints to acquire wisdom by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:17-18).

QUALIFICATION #7: A man must seek understanding and knowledge in order to get it.

1. You must apply yourself as Solomon describes in Proverbs 2:1-9 to learn the truth.
    1. You must "receive" God's words: do not reject knowledge offered (Hos 4:6).
    2. You must "hide" God's words: retain what you learn (Heb 2:1-3; I Cor 15:2).
    3. You must "incline" your ear to wisdom: be ready to hear submissively (Pr 1:5).
    4. You must "apply thine heart" to it: give it your all (Ec 1:13; Pr 18:1; Da 10:12).
    5. You must "cry" for it loudly: beg God to show you the truth (Psalm 119:18).
    6. You must "search" for it diligently: let nothing deter your efforts (Jer 29:13).
    7. By using these rules for learning, you will find knowledge and every good path.
2. You should approach it similar to a minister's diligence (I Tim 4:13-16; II Tim 2:15).
3. You must love and seek wisdom (Pro 2:1-9; 8:17; 15:14; 28:5; Jer 29:13; Ac 17:11-12).
4. Jesus compared it to the efforts of finding a treasure or great pearl (Matthew 13:44-46).

QUALIFICATION #8: A man must be able to take reproof, correction, and instruction.

1. The Scriptures were given for profit through reproof and correction (II Timothy 3:16).
2. The ability to receive and profit from reproof is essential to learning (Proverbs 1:5; 6:23; 9:7-9; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1; 14:6; 15:5,10,31-32; 17:10; 19:25; Psalm 141:5).
3. Progress means change; change means correction; and this applies well to learning.
4. He must be willing to open doors to his strongholds and embrace truth (II Cor 10:4-6).
5. He cannot despise prophesyings – or Bible preaching, as Paul warns (I Thess 5:20).
6. A man must have the humility necessary to forsake his own wisdom and learning.
    1. Humility is the grace that God will reward (Matt 11:25; James 4:6; I Pet 5:5-6).
    2. Man's wisdom caused God to design the gospel against it (I Cor 1:17-29).
    3. If you think yourself wise, you tempt God to blind you (I Cor 3:18-19; Ro 1:22).
    4. The LORD will look upon the man who is poor, of a contrite spirit, and trembles at His word (Isaiah 66:1-2; Psalm 51:17; Matthew 5:3; I Kings 3:7).
    5. David told the Lord plainly of his humility regarding high matters (Ps 131:1).

QUALIFICATION #9: A man must have godly and noble motives for learning Scripture.

1. Such as knowing God and how He operates in the earth (Jeremiah 9:23-24; Ps 37:4).
2. Such as seeking to know the Jesus (Luke 10:38-42; John 5:39; 12:21; 20:31; Gal 6:14).
3. Such as learning the law of God in order to keep it (Psalm 1:1-2; 19:7-14; 119:11,34).
4. Such as being able to teach others (Psalm 71:17; 119:27; I Peter 3:15; Prov 22:17-21).
5. Such as searching the Scriptures to confirm teachers (Ps 17:11; I Thes 5:21; I Jn 4:1-6).
6. Such as agree with the high standard of love and charity (I Corinthians 8:1-2; 13:1-3).
7. We do not approach Scripture looking for God's endorsement of our thoughts (Pr 18:2).

QUALIFICATION #10: Use your God-given teacher as much as possible to learn more.

1. God has given gifts to men for the New Testament ministry (Psalm 68:18; Eph 4:8-13).
    1. Even under the Old Testament, men were to seek to such men (Malachi 2:7).
    2. He promised to give pastors to teach knowledge and understanding (Jer 3:15).
    3. With the Scriptures, the man of God can be perfect for you (II Tim 3:16-17).
    4. See how God called Bezaleel to his job of building the tabernacle, for he had the existing ability to excel at the hard task (Ex 31:1-11; 35:30-35; 36:1-3; 38:22).
    5. If God does not give special ability to understand and teach the Scriptures, what do the qualifications and gifts of the ministry mean (Romans 12:6-8; I Tim 3:2; 4:5,14; II Timothy 1:6; Titus 1:9; I Peter 4:10-11)?
    6. If a minister does not have a greater measure of the Spirit than his hearers, he doesn't belong in the office (II Timothy 1:7; 2:7; I Corinthians 2:4; Micah 3:8; Zech 4:6; Acts 6:3; II Kings 2:9-12; Numbers 11:17-30; 27:15-23; Deut 34:9).
    7. They spend their time and energy in reading and studying the Word of Truth, while their hearers labor in carnal things, which ought to put them far ahead when it comes to understanding the Bible (I Timothy 4:13-16; II Tim 2:2-4,15).
    8. Therefore, they must be highly esteemed for their work for you (I Thes 5:12-13).
2. Consider carefully that the providence of God is sufficient to bring the right teacher at the right time to the right hearers for maximum understanding (Acts 8:26-31).
    1. Here is the fundamental application of God's sovereign omniscience to every aspect of our lives – there are no mistakes or chance events without His wisdom.
    2. There are no coincidences in the works of God; there are only providences!
    3. God prepared a widow for Elijah, and He prepared him for her (I Kgs 17:8-24).
    4. Elihu wasn't with Job and three friends by chance; God sent him (Job 32:1-22).
    5. Philip didn't chance upon the eunuch without special providence (Acts 8:26-40).
    6. If you believe God called your pastor, then God called him specifically for you; and if God called him for you, then even his present line of teaching is for you.
    7. You should consider his leading in Scripture to direct your thoughts and reading, for the Lord is leading his mind and studies in the Scriptures for your benefit.
    8. You are called to obey and remember him and follow his faith, by considering the purpose of his ministry and God's ultimate enforcement (Hebrews 13:7,17).