

How To Study the Bible



It Is Commanded:

- 2Timothy 2:15, Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
- Hebrews 5:13-14, For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
- Ephesians 4:14, That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive

Basic Premises of Bible Study:

- You will never understand all of God's Word, if you could, you'd be as intelligent as it's author!
 - Isaiah 55:9, For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
- The main theme of the Bible is a King and His Kingdom
 - The word king* in the Bible over 3000 times
- We have the perfect, completed Word of God (Ps 30:5; Re 22:18)
 - If don't understand or doesn't agree with you or what you've been taught, you are wrong and it is right (Ro 3:4)
 - We have all of the Bible God wanted us to have (Jn 21:25)

References To Help (in order of importance):

- **Words:** Strongs, dictionaries, lexicons (*all online now*)
 - computer/phone apps: search capabilities using wildcards (*), multiple (AND OR), proximity (e.g. 7Verses 50Words), by original language (Greek, Hebrew)
 - **Get a Bible app that has “Strongs”** (e.g. <https://www.olivetree.com/>)
- **Cross References:** Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (TSK), also online at <http://www.tsk-online.com/>
- **Topics:** Nave’s <https://www.biblestudytools.com/concordances/naves-topical-bible/>, Torrey’s <https://www.studylight.org/concordances/ttt.html>, Study Bibles
- Chronological Bible
- Encyclopedias, Maps, History
- Doctrine
- Man’s Thoughts By Passage: Commentaries
- Man’s Thoughts: Devotionals, Books, Sermons

Rules for Bible Study

- **Rule #1:** The Holy Spirit must be your interpreter. Prepare your heart first, make sure you are close to Him and He is guiding you. Ps 119:18; John 14:26; 16:13-14 (Example Luke 24:44-45, "opened their understanding").
 - you must be saved, I Co 2:14
- **Rule #2:** You must love the Bible (Ps 119:97) before you can properly study it, and you must believe it (John 17:17, all truth).
 - the key is attitude, not intelligence!

Rules for Bible Study

- **Rule #3:** Determine the context before asking the doctrinal meaning. II Peter 3:15-16, wrest = take out of context.
Example: Col 2:16 seems to contradict Exodus 20:8 - Sabbath a sign for the Jews, Ex 31:13-17, see rule #4.
- **Rule #4:** Determine which group of people (I Cor 10:32) that the passage/book is written to (example: gospels written before New Testament in effect, Heb 9:16-17).

Rules for Bible Study

- **Rule #5:** Every passage has a doctrinal (prophetical), historical, and inspirational (personal) application. II Tim 3:16. Book of Matthew - doctrinal application: Christ presenting the kingdom and Himself as the Jewish Messiah. Inspirational application: good Christian living principles

Rules for Bible Study

- **Rule #6:** The invisible things of God can be understood by studying the things God made (creation). All His creation is a manifestation of Himself.
 - Learn by association, Rom 1:20; Hosea 12:10 (similitudes). Look at Ps 8:3-4; 19:1-6; 104:19-24; Job 12:7-9. Men have three parts as God does. The sun pictures Jesus Christ (Mal 4:2). Rain pictures judgment (Ps 72:6).
 - Examples: Animals, Pr 6:6-11, ant; Pr 30:24-31, ant, coney (rabbit), locust, spider; Is 1:3, ox, ass; Is 53:6, we're like sheep; Jer 8:7, stork, turtle, crane, swallow; Jer 13:23, leopard; Jer 17:11, partridge; Hos 13:8, bear; Mt 6:26-30, birds, lilies; Mt 7:15, wolves, sheep; Mt 23:37, hen; Plants, Mt 13:24-30, tares, wheat; Mt 13:31-32, mustard seed; Jas 1:10-11, flower; Astronomy, Mal 4:2, sun; Job 25:4-5, moon

Rules for Bible Study

- **Rule #7:** All Interpretations Must Be Made By Comparing Scripture With Scripture (I Cor 2:12-13). The Bible is always consistent with itself.
- **Rule #8:** The words "as" and "like" are key words. It uses figures to teach a spiritual truth that can only be understood by comparing to an earthly meaning
 - Examples: Lu 17:26-28; Eph 5:24-25.
- **Rule #9:** The individual words are the key, Pr 30:5. Always Take It Literally When Possible. Don't try to figure out what it means until you understand what it "says".

Rules for Bible Study

- **Rule #10:** The Bible is a picture book, examples: Abraham and Isaac, Passover lamb, serpent on the pole.
- **Rule #11:** The Bible is not open to private interpretation (II Pet 1:20). The Bible only says ONE thing (Rom 3:4), and is not open to many different interpretations. It must be taken literally whenever possible.
- **Rule #12:** The Bible is divided dispensationally, not chronologically, and it must be properly divided when studying it (II Tim 2:15).

Bible Study Methods - Passage (2Ti 3:16)

Passage (whole context)

- read through many times, highlighting key words and phrases
- break down by verses/phrases
- find cross-references for each highlighted item
- Read through until an outline of the key points manifests
- Once outline determined, formulate a title
- What verse speaks most to you personally?
 - Should you memorise it?

Bible Study Methods - Chapter Summary

Devotional Chapter Summary

- Read it 5 times (once aloud), list observations
- Give chapter a small name
- ask and answer questions:
 - What is principal subject?
 - What is the truth most clearly taught?
 - What is the best verse? Do I know it by heart?
 - Who are the principle characters?
 - Is light given on their character?
 - What does the chapter teach about Jesus Christ?
 - What new truth have I learned?
 - What truth I already knew has come to me in new power?
 - What promise can I claim?
 - What sin can I search my heart for?
 - What is the best lesson if I was to teach it?
 - What will I resolve to "do" as a result of studying it?

Bible Study Methods - Topical/Doctrinal

Topical

- trace a subject through the entire Bible
- don't have to ask questions, let Bible speak for itself
- look up all cross references
- group verses by sub-topic
- generate an outline of the topic from the sub-topics

Bible Study Methods - Character Trait

Character Trait Study

- goal is to build a trait in your own life
- name the quality and write it down
- look it up in the English dictionary
- List synonyms and antonyms to help understanding
- look up Bible definition
- find cross references
- study a person with this quality
- find a memory verse(s)
- plan a project for improvement in this area and have a measurable goal

Bible Study Methods - Biographical

Biographical (study of a Bible character)

- look for positive and negative traits in their life
- look for the results of those traits
- ask: which of the good traits do I need more of?
- try to see things from their viewpoint
- make a chronological outline of their life
- show how Bible truths illustrated in their life
- summarise the main lesson
- ask: did I see some of me? did I see some of my weaknesses?

Bible Study Methods - Book Survey

Book Survey

- study the book as a whole
- read the book several times and make observations
- make a descriptive title of the book
- research the background, use Bible maps and atlas; know major personalities, date written, to whom, where written
- learn the purpose and theme of the book
- look for key words and key verse
- note the literary style and emotional tone of the author
- do a detailed outline, showing structure and divisions