

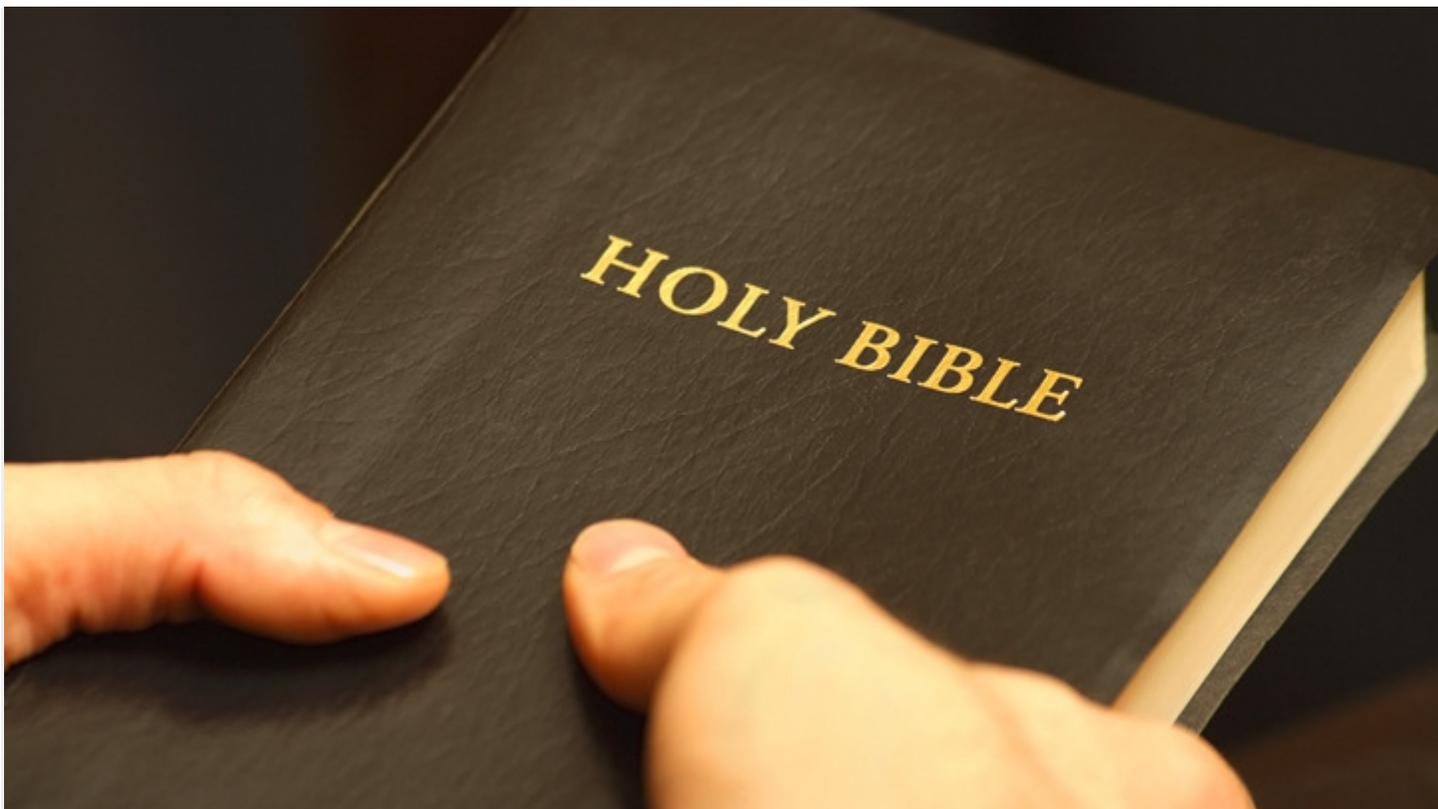
# Why Study The Bible?

[www.HeavensWay2022.org](http://www.HeavensWay2022.org)

Google has only 86,200,000 results to answer this question. Let's try to get into a fraction of it today. If you prefer to LISTEN rather than read I suggest you open this link. <https://www.thetrumpet.com/radio/live-by-every-word/episodes/71-benefits-of-bible-study>

If you prefer to read (as I do) here's a LITTLE bit more. Actually I was overwhelmed. I packed all of this together into separate lessons and then all of the links fell apart! So, I found it all as a Microsoft Word File, made it into this pdf, and here you have it. Christian thought is under attack by the darkest of forces. We MUST preserve these lessons and pass them on to students so long as we can.

God's Loving Regards,  
Stephen Newdell  
[www.HeavensWay2022.org](http://www.HeavensWay2022.org)



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## How To Navigate The Holy Bible

This important and practical Guide shares a method for persons with no experience in reading the Bible to learn how to find things in the Bible and to use those tools in helping to understand how the Bible is organized. These skills, in turn, give a person a better ability to study the Bible with purpose and direction. Following the method will greatly reduce the stress and embarrassment of being in a Bible study group and not knowing how to locate the scriptures presented. Every youth and adult participating in the church will benefit from this plan, regardless of his or her present ability to navigate God's Word.

### **A special note of gratitude:**

Rev. Billy McCauley, United Methodist evangelist, musician, and writer, founded and led Words and Music Ministries until his death in 1997 at the age of 41. He entitled one of his articles "How to Begin Reading the Bible". "The Encourager" magazine published it in January, 1995. The article may be reprinted for non-profit usage. The following "How To:" guide draws considerably on Rev. McCauley's article. A few of the statements below are quotes from his article. We gratefully acknowledge his work from which some of ours was drawn.

The Bible should serve as our source of inspiration, instruction, comfort, and help. It should not provoke frustration, confusion, or other negative thoughts or feelings. Above all, it should not serve as a catalyst for embarrassment when we need to locate particular passages under the stressful situation that a group study can create.

We envy those children who grow up learning early on how to “navigate” the Bible. Such knowledge will serve them all their lives. However, many teens and adults have never experienced a way to be familiar with the format and use of the Bible.

Basic Bible navigation is not difficult. With a few weeks of daily practice in the privacy of one’s home, a person can easily master the skill of understanding how this wonderful composite of books, letters, and poetry is placed together and how one can use this knowledge to learn the wisdom within God’s written word.

We often begin reading a book by looking at the “Table of Contents” and the “Introduction”. A good introduction does exactly what it says. It introduces us to the writer or writers. It tells us how and why the book was written. It presents us with the purpose of the book. And it guides us into an appreciation of the work before we ever begin the journey through the material.

Unfortunately, most Bible publications allow only a list of the sixty six books within the Bible as a “Table of Contents”. And worse, the “Introduction” is little more than the long and confusing explanation of grammar, abbreviations, etc. which we will see in the text(s). People often say they do not read the Bible because they are unsure where to start. And if they start at the first, they are soon bored, lost, and uninterested. So, using Rev. McCauley’s article as our guide, let’s write our own Table of Contents and Introduction. We shall see if you find it helpful.

Begin with this encouraging idea. All Bibles should be used. An unused Bible seldom helps anyone find or draw closer to God. As well, every person should have a Bible that becomes their own by daily use. That Bible, your Bible, should be written (translated) into your common, heart language. That is, it should be a version that, when you read it, speaks to you in clear, easy to understand words and concepts. Finally, and importantly, your Bible should be

highlighted, notated, and written on by you—in colours, pen, pencil, and in every helpful way. It should contain your exclamation points, question marks, underlining, and have personalized comments all over it. This is the very best way for you to become involved with God’s written word—and to grow spiritually every time you look back on your written down thoughts as you delve deep into this precious book of books. This way, God will speak ever more clearly to you each time you study a Bible passage.

### **Learning what the Bible contains:**

Now, let’s begin our “How To:” At the end you will find brief discussions regarding the different languages and literary forms used by the Biblical writers.

Begin by opening your Bible to that list of books in the “Table of Contents”. Take out a pen or pencil. You are about to begin your first “write on it” adventure.

1. At the top, alongside, or around the words “Table of Contents”, write “Textbook of Life”. The Bible consists of 66 books and letters. Each has a name and a purpose. Together, all of them point to God’s reaching out to us to redeem us from sin and bring us back into a perfect relationship with Him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Although not placed into our Bible in the order in which they were written, the order is none-the-less logical and with the purpose of pointing us to Christ.

#### **A. The Old Testament (God’s original covenant or mutual pledge with his people)**

2. Place a bracket around the first five books and label them “Early history and law of Israel”. These are also called the “Pentateuch” and, to Jews, the “Torah” or “Tora”. These books are traditionally accepted as writings of Moses.

3. Bracket the next twelve books together (Joshua through Esther). Label them “Story and more history of Israel”.

4. Bracket Job through the Song of Solomon. Label those “Inspiration and Poetry”. They consist of many kinds of writing but all together can be described as above.

5. Bracket the rest of the Old Testament (from Isaiah to Malachi). Label them “Writings by Prophets”. Prophets are persons who proclaim strongly, and often in the face of great opposition, the potential consequences of not living under the truths and expectations of God. In the Old Testament, God gave them unusual insight into what would happen to the Jewish people unless they returned to their loyalty to God. One or more in the same generation, they spoke over a long period of time in Israel’s history. And their “preaching” proved true. They spoke for God and God spoke through them.

**B. Now we move to the New Testament (God’s new covenant or mutual pledge with his people).**

6. Bracket together the first four books, known as the Gospel according to: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Label these as “The Gospels”. Add the word Kerigma if you wish. The word gospel (from early English “godspel) simply means “good news”. Kerigma is the old Greek reference to “the act of proclaiming” news.

7. Bracket Acts (“The Acts of the Apostles”) by itself. Label it “Early church history”. More than just stories of the apostles, it is actually the story of the beginning and expansion of Christ’s church. When you include with Acts the final chapter in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the final two chapters of John, you have the complete story of the earliest churches from the very beginning by the command of our resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ.

8. Bracket Romans through Jude. Label those books “Letters to churches and Christians”. These are letters written by Paul, Peter, John, and others to various churches, groups of churches, and individuals. They cover many subjects, were written to meet many different needs in the churches, and reflect the individual personality and writing style of each author.

9. Bracket Revelation (“The Revelation to John”) by itself. Label it “The secret letter of love to the churches”. Revelation was such a powerful and dangerous document during the early persecution of Christians and their church groups that God led John to write it using special code language and symbolism that spies of the pagan Roman government would not understand, while the Christians would easily interpret under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It includes great encouragement to them in face of grave danger, wonderful advice and counsel that we need today, and the most indescribable visions of God’s heaven and what awaits us in eternity.

### **Finding your way into the Bible:**

If you truly want to learn to easily navigate the Bible by quickly locating books and passages, we strongly suggest that you obtain a Bible with a hard cover and with a “cloth-bound spine which will relax and open easily. Most importantly, it should not have written notations or a concordance. It should have as few other extra pages as possible. It may not be in your favorite version but that may not be possible. Bibles designed for “Bible drills” should be available in English and several other languages. Inexpensive, these are designed for competitions in rapid selections of scripture and will work well for your training. They are most commonly found in the King James Authorized Version.

1. If practical, stand up and hold the Bible in front of you. Place your hands on either side of the covers with your thumbs coming together over the pages. Practice opening the Bible to the middle. You should

arrive somewhere near Psalms, chapter 90 if your Bible contains only the Biblical text. Do this over and over. Note which books are nearest Psalms so you can simply move a few pages forwards or backwards to locate those books: Job, before and Proverbs, after.

2. Now take the first half of the Bible and open it to the middle (you will be at the end of the first quarter of the Bible. You will be approximately at 1 Samuel, chapter 14, or about in the middle of the books on Jewish history. Practice and look around that area as suggested above.

3. Take the last half of the Bible and open it to the middle. Flip a few pages forward and you will be exactly where the Old Testament ends and the New Testament begins. Note that the two basic parts of the Bible are the Old Testament (first part) and the New Testament (second part). And now notice that the Old Testament occupies the first three quarters of the Bible text. The New Testament occupies only the final quarter of the text. Again, check out those final small books of the prophets that conclude the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament which locates the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

4. Take the final quarter (the New Testament) and open it to the middle. You will find yourself looking in the middle of Acts, about chapter 14. Many of the churches that shook their world so profoundly were home churches, just like yours. Check the surrounding books. Backwards you have the Gospel of John, perhaps the most read and loved book in the Bible. What a writer! On the other side you find Romans, the profound and wonderful book (written by Paul) of the doctrines we believe and the great encouragement to go out and win the world for Christ.

4. Think about what you have learned.

Take the Bible and open it to the middle. (Psalms. Inspiration! Story of Job before and the instruction of Proverbs just after).

Open the first half to the middle. (History, leaders, kings, war and glory!)

Open the last half to the middle. (Small books of the prophets on one side and the stories and teachings of Jesus on the other!)

Open the final quarter, the New Testament, to the middle. (The middle of Acts—the vibrant story of the rise of churches that turned their world upside down!)

5. Now, on your own, find the middle of every quarter and then the middle of those. You will be surprised at how easily you learn to locate sections of the Bible.

### **Annotated or “Study” Bibles**

Annotated Bibles (those that come with notes already added—usually by famous Christians) may be helpful in understanding the scriptures. However, those notes consist of the opinions of whoever wrote them. They contain several disadvantages for your Bible study. One, the notes, however good, are the work of humans and do not form part of the God-inspired Bible. Too often, we forget that fact and begin to see the notes as Biblical text. Second, they are often intrusive in that they keep you focused on the notes to the detriment of your seeking the direct voice of God’s Spirit in your mind and heart. Third, the space that they cover adds much to the bulk of the Bible—thus distorting the location of the books of the Bible. This makes it more difficult for you to become familiar with easily finding Bible books by the mere feel of the location within the whole text. Fourth, the space taken by the printed notations could be space used by you for note taking in your own spiritual journey.

Suggestion? If possible, obtain two or three sets of devotional type commentaries on the Bible. Most are available on the Internet for computer use. And Internet-based stores that sell Christian books now

sell used commentaries at very low prices. Or, check with colleges and seminaries with Christian libraries. They quite often offer duplicate commentary sets to the public for minimal cost. Use the commentaries for studying the insights of several great Bible scholars to help you in your search for Biblical clarity and truth.

## **Biblical Languages**

All of the following comments regarding the topic of languages were derived from *The New BIBLE Dictionary*. J. D. Douglas, ed. Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, pp. 710 – 716.

**The Old Testament:** Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The books of Daniel and Ezra were probably written in Aramaic.

Hebrew belongs to the western group of Semitic languages. It takes its name from the name, Shem, the eldest son of Noah. As in any language, Hebrew gradually changed over the years of Old Testament writing. It also varied from place to place where it was spoken. However, in the forms from which it is translated today, it was uniform enough to not present major translating problems. Translating from any language to another, especially one that relates only in very basic ways, calls for considerable interpretation. Hebrew is written from right to left. In written form it contained only consonants until vowel signs were added in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, A.D.

Aramaic is a kindred language to Hebrew (think roughly of French and English). It became more used by the Israelites during and after their exiles to the areas of today's Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

**The New Testament:** Most, if not all, the New Testament was originally written in Greek. By the time of Jesus, the area of Palestine had long been brought into the control of the Roman Empire. As in most areas under that influence, the commercial language and usually

the common language consisted of closely related forms of Greek called "koine". In Jewish Palestine, Hebrew was still taught in the religious schools and used in worship. It was probably also used in many homes and often mixed with Greek. Aramaic was also spoken by some and used in some writing. Over the years, some scholars have tried to make cases for some of the New Testament having originated in either Aramaic or even Latin. Yet, most continue to believe that Greek served as the language for the New Testament. One can easily see throughout the New Testament a strong influence of Jewish thought, habits, and history. Such influence gives those writings a decidedly Hebrew flavour, as we would expect, especially among the writers who were born and educated as Jews.

**The Septuagint:** This is the name given to numerous Greek language translations of the Old Testament. By the fourth or third centuries before Christ, Greek had taken hold of much of the area around the Mediterranean Sea. So, most important books were being translated from Hebrew and other languages into the common Greek.

Unfortunately, no official Greek version was possible. Parts of it were translated into Greek by many different people from all over that part of the world. However, its use in Jesus' time was very common. In fact, when Jesus quoted from the Old Testament, He often quoted from versions of the Septuagint, probably because it might have been more familiar to the common people. They would have likely used the Greek Old Testament passages in their home studies, blessings, and quotations. This is why, when you compare the Old Testament quotations uttered by Jesus to the verses referenced in your own Old Testament, they will often not match up word for word. This is because your Old Testament was probably translated from Hebrew and the quote came from Greek.

### **Literary forms found in the Bible:**

We will not go into detail on all the many types of literature found in God's Word. Simply be aware that much of the richness of the Bible

comes from its full use of styles of writing. In the Old Testament, the books of Jewish law read like law books. They should. Stories of Ruth, Esther, Job, and others are in narrative format. Psalms reads like Jewish poetry because the psalms consist of words to songs that they sang. As well, remember that Hebrew poetry did not rhyme—even in Hebrew. Poetry was formed from the rhythm of saying something and then reinforcing it in the next line by saying it in a different way and changing the focus just a bit. It should be read that way: double line by double line. It is quite beautiful that way—and certainly gives a strong impact to the reader or listener to hear it said twice.

Proverbs were teachings. They, too, often were presented in Hebrew poetic form. However, they were much less linked together into long discussions like the music of the Psalms. You can gain much from them in smaller bites.

The prophets preached. Read their works like sermons (however disjointed some of them seemed to be). However, Isaiah stands alone in the Old Testament in a quality of depth, beauty, and complexity. It contains every aspect and concept of a modern symphonic composition. Many composers have written concert works based on parts or all of Isaiah because it is a natural for that.

The New Testament also contains many forms of writing. We have already mentioned the unique writing of Revelation—which has some connection to the styles found in Ezekiel and portions of a few other Old Testament books of prophecy. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called synoptic gospels because they present the story of Jesus in brief form with special historic emphasis—though each one uniquely. John's gospel is more narrative in style and, as he said, designed to bring the reader to believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord. Acts, again, is the running story of the rise of churches. Written by Luke, it continues where Luke's gospel leaves off. Paul's letters, along with those of Peter and others, are each unique. Yet they are all teaching and encouraging missives to individuals, churches, and groups of

churches. John's three brief letters seem to be of a different style than most of the others. However, they fall into the same category. Hebrews was written in a more complex form of the Greek language than any of the rest of the New Testament. It also bases its teaching on a much deeper pool of Jewish history and theology. It, too, has much to teach us in defense of the Lordship of Christ.

**source:** <https://www.homechurchonline.com/en/how-to/25-how-to-study-and-navigate-the-bible.html>

based on notes from: <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/371-effective-bible-study-an-urgent-need-for-everyone>

# Value of Bible Study-1

**You'll find several articles numbered discussing this important topic.**

based on notes from: "Effective Bible Study -- An Urgent Need For Everyone." *ChristianCourier.com* By [Wayne Jackson](#)

It was never the will of God that direct, supernatural communication — from heaven to earth — be a perpetual phenomenon throughout this planet's history. Rather, "the things of God" (cf. 1 Cor. 2:11) were to be committed to a series of inspired documents. The collection we have of them today are called The Holy Bible. There are other extra Biblical documents which some of us read and find beneficial. The Holy Scriptures were designed to provide men with all things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), and to furnish devout students completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

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**Let me remind you**, this refers to the Old Testament because those who wrote this did not have a New Testament. That came finally into hand written form at the behest of Emperor Constantine after approximately the year 315. Some changes were made to the collection and finally the King James combined Old Testament (Tanach/Torah = 24 books) and New Testament (27-books) in year 1611.

If you visit here: <https://www.biblegateway.com/> you see a listing of Old Testament, New Testament and Apocryphal books which still lacks for the Book of Enoch, Book of Jasher, see this <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocrypha> you can find many more! The Catholic Fathers finally settled on the entire canon of 66 books in 1546. Many of the Apocrypha tell nothing more than what is in your Bible.

The term "Apocrypha" commonly appears in Christian religious contexts concerning disagreements about [biblical canonicity](#). Apocryphal writings are a class of documents rejected by some<sup>[who?]</sup> as being either pseudepigraphical or unworthy to be properly called [Scripture](#), though, as with other writings,<sup>[which?]</sup> they may sometimes be referenced for support, such as the lost [Book of Jasher](#). While writings that are now accepted by Christians as Scripture were recognized as being such by various believers early on,<sup>[when?]</sup> the establishment of a largely settled uniform [canon](#) was a process of centuries, and what the term "canon" (as well as "apocrypha") precisely meant also saw development. The canonical process took place with believers recognizing writings as being inspired by God from known or accepted origins, subsequently being followed by official affirmation of what had become largely established through the study and debate of the writings.<sup>[4]</sup> The [Catholic Church](#) provided its first dogmatic definition of its entire canon in 1546, which put a stop to doubts and disagreements about the status of the Apocrypha.<sup>[5]</sup>

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**If you do not have a Bible** you can download a free copy of my NIV copy with a few of my notes in it. You'll find it and many other books and articles free for you [HERE](#)>

<https://heavensway2022.com/the-major-directory-of-articles-by-topic-copy-updated-daily/>

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the value of the Bible to the human family. The most brilliant minds of history have praised the "Book of books." Our second president, John Adams, called the Bible "the best Book in the world." Lincoln characterized the Scriptures as "the best gift God ever gave man." Sir Isaac Newton thought the Bible to be "the most sublime philosophy" known to humanity. The list of laudatory testimony is almost endless.

### The Value of Bible Study

There are multiple values inherent in a study of the sacred Scriptures. Meditate upon the following.

(1) The Bible is the only source of valid knowledge as to the origin of the human family. The baseless theory of evolution is so riddled with such a vast variety of factual inaccuracies that it assaults the analytical ability of any thinking person (see Mastropaolo). Darwinism stands in bold contrast to the sublime Genesis record of human commencement. My site [HeavensWay2022.com](#) and many others provide articles from the best of many scientific disciplines proving that Darwin's THESIS has been upgraded to a modern fantasy. Good science continue to return to the conclusion that God created the universe and all life before genetic alternations began. (I do occasionally wonder about mosquitoes but there must have been a good reason for the dangerous life forms too.)

(2) The Scriptures provide the only explanation for man's purpose upon the planet. David Hume, the Scottish skeptical philosopher, wrote:

"Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence and to what condition shall I return? . . . I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty" (Smith, 553).

(3) Aside from the illumination of the Bible, man's future would be but a dark, terrifying enigma. When Pierre Curie was killed in a tragic accident, his wife, the renowned Madame Marie Curie, who had abandoned her earlier faith, exclaimed: "Pierre is sleeping his last sleep beneath the earth; it is the end of everything, everything, everything" (Curie, 249). When the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the body, the Lord informed them that their problem, in part at least, was their ignorance of the Scriptures (Mt. 22:29). **It is only through the gospel of Christ that "life and immortality" have been fully revealed (2 Tim. 1:10).**

(4) Without a knowledge of the Bible, human beings are bereft of any religious or moral compass to direct the affairs of life. You can look at modern (year 2018) society and see this in action. Younger people have been given an entirely different schooling compared to mine (I was born in 1950.) They don't study "Civics"—a law course. They have been ordered to leave all Christian study material at home. They can't even wear a pin on their jacket indicating their interest or belief in Christian thought. The society is breaking down. There are more people miserable, using dangerous drugs, even committing suicide, using strangers for lovers like cats! They don't love anyone. Many raid stores en masse, steal a lot of stuff rushing out, society has become such a mess industry has moved abroad, employment is difficult to find, many sleep homeless on the street or in abandoned buildings.

Take a look at this prediction from The Bible:

## Godlessness in the Last Days

3 You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. <sup>2</sup>For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, <sup>4</sup>treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them! 2 Timothy 3 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Does this describe the society we see today? I think it does! The modern western world has lost its ethical foundation. In my older years now I spend most of my life in South East Asia. I feel safer, and find more old fashioned kindness and Judeo-Christian ethics here than in the US!

Evolutionist George G. Simpson of Harvard wrote: “Discovery that the universe apart from man or before his coming lacks and lacked any purpose or plan has the inevitable corollary that the workings of the universe cannot provide any automatic, universal, eternal, or absolutely ethical criteria of right and wrong” (Simpson, 180).

If there is no absolute moral code, every man becomes his own “god,” and may write his own ethical rules. In that event, chaos prevails, because every man entertains a “way” within himself that “seems right” to him (Prov. 14:12).

(5) Without an objective code of conduct, that stands apart from our own conscience, we do not have the sufficient motivation for exalted living. David stored the word of God in his heart that he might not sin against his Maker (Psa. 119:11), because, as Jeremiah observed, “it is not in man that walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23). Moreover, without adequate information concerning “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22), we become the victims of religious confusion.

### Some Procedures for Effective Bible Study

Effective Bible study is not a random process; rather, it is a science. The following suggestions are made for those whose goal is efficiency in their investigation of God's Word.

(1) Sometimes it can be helpful to know something of the *author* of a biblical book or passage. While this is not always necessary (Hebrews was left anonymous purposely), such information can be beneficial.

For instance, the most extended discussion of the virginal birth of Jesus is in Luke's Gospel record (2:7ff). Since a "virgin" birth had never occurred before, it is comforting to know that Luke, a very careful historian (1:1-4), was also a physician (Col. 4:14). If a scientist could be convinced by clear evidence that the virgin birth of the Lord really occurred, one may have firm confidence in the reliability of the historical narrative.

(2) Frequently it is imperative that the student know something of the background of a particular book or passage with which he is dealing, if he is to appreciate the full impact of the text.

Unless one understands, for example, that Jeremiah was attempting to prevent Judah from having to suffer the Babylonian Captivity, or that Ezekiel was warning his people against the false hope of an early return from Chaldea, he scarcely appreciates the thrust of these inspired documents. In studying Psalm 51, which is saturated with tears of penitence, it is helpful to know the background story about David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11 & 12).

(3) One needs to have some familiarity with the nature of the book he is studying. Is the document historical narrative (Genesis)? Is it poetical in form (Psalms)? Is it largely characterized by prophecy (Isaiah)? Is it highly charged with symbolism (Revelation)? A host of errors have resulted from a failure to distinguish between the different styles of biblical writings.

Some, in order to accommodate evolution, have viewed Genesis 1 as poetry; others have attempted to literalize the figures in Revelation (e.g., the 1,000 years in chapter 20). Such approaches have been responsible for significant confusion in the religious community.

(4) One of the most important factors in Bible study is a consideration of the context. Without a knowledge of context, the student can be in a maze of confusion.

For example, why does Paul advise against marriage in First Corinthians, chapter 7 (vv. 8,27,38,40), when elsewhere the Scriptures teach that it is "not good" to be alone (Gen. 2:18), and that marriage is desirable (1 Tim. 5:14)? One must understand that the apostolic counsel provided in the Corinthian narrative was in view of an impending distress (an era of persecution; see vv. 26,29,32,35,38,40). The inspired advice was never intended to apply with equal force, in every place, and at all times.

Here is another example. A consideration of the data in Acts 10 and 11, and the unique circumstances associated with the conversion of Cornelius (and the introduction of the first Gentiles into the church), would correct the common error that "Holy Spirit baptism" is a divine gift to be experienced throughout the entire Christian age. Context makes a world of difference in such a case.

(5) One of the crucial principles of sound Bible study is that of scriptural harmony. The Bible, as the verbally inspired revelation from God, will be consistent in all its instruction. Thus, the sacred narrative must be studied synthetically, i.e., the teaching of the Scriptures on any given subject must be brought together. Various contexts dealing with a particular theme can provide the fullness often required to understand a subject more completely.

For instance it requires a consideration of several contexts to discover that the Lord's supper involves: the eating of bread and fruit of the vine; on Sunday of every week; in memory of the body and blood of the Savior; as a pledge of the Lord's final return (cf. Mt. 26:26ff; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23ff, etc.).

If one does not understand something of the principles of methodical study, he cannot gain the maximum benefit from his endeavors.

## Practical Habits for Bible Study

In addition to the “mechanics” of effective study, it is helpful to think also along the lines of study habits. I would like to offer some suggestions that have been helpful to me across the years.

(1) If at all possible, create for yourself a special “study” in your home. In a spare room, the attic, the basement, etc. — find yourself a “study nook” that can be yours. Furnish it with a comfortable chair, a desk, good lighting, and some book shelves. Make it your special place and plan to visit it regularly on certain days of the week (e.g., an hour each morning before work time).

Early morning is really the most ideal time for study. Discipline yourself to get in the habit of regular study. This is a difficult chore. If one is not preaching, teaching a class, or engaged in some activity that demands research, it is hard to carve out the time — particularly if it is a labor, rather than a love. But if one gets into the study mode, virtually every day, it will pay rich dividends — not only in his personal life, but in qualifying him to help others.

In addition to devotional reading in the Bible itself, for example, one might select a popular (as opposed to technical) commentary that he will read through in the coming year. I try to keep a good book handy to read whenever I have a spare moment away from regular duties. For instance, if I know I am going to have to spend time in the doctor’s waiting room, rather than browsing magazines, I may take a book with me.

(2) Every Christian should build at least a modest library of good books. Handy tools, such as a complete concordance, a Bible atlas, some biblical dictionaries or encyclopedias, a few good commentaries, some volumes on Christian evidences, church history, etc., are vital for a well-rounded range of knowledge. One should subscribe to at least a couple of good brotherhood periodicals — those that teach (as opposed to merely haranguing).

(3) Study the Scriptures from several different vantage points. Survey biblical books. Galatians falls into three natural divisions:

**Personal** – A Defense of Paul’s Credibility (1-2);

**Doctrinal** – Justification through the Gospel (3-4);

**Practical** – Walking by the Spirit (5-6).

Explore the biographical data of great Bible characters. Articles in Bible dictionaries (e.g., *The Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*) on Abraham, Joseph, Jesus, and Paul will enrich your life. Learn to do “word studies.” Words are the vehicles of intelligent communication. Even the non-specialist can learn something of the treasures of the original languages of the Bible.

(SN: Most Americans speak Amerieze. They don't know English. They learned what they know speaking to mother and friends and watching television. The very idea that they should open a dictionary and learn definitions of words "puts them off" {is repugnant.} If you don't know the word definition you misunderstand sentences, paragraphs, entire chapters, an entire book! You'll fall asleep over your reading because you don't understand what you've read. Make opening the dictionary are regular part of all reading for at least a year.

Every time you get sleepy while reading go back about 5-lines and find a word you know you really cannot define. Look it up, use it in sentences, make it your own. suddenly you'll wake up and as you continue you'll clear away more and more of these definition problems and gain much more from past and future study. Don't try to argue I'm playing semantics games. The truth is, you don't know your language and you must study to understand it! People who brag they never open a dictionary are bragging that they are functionally illiterate! Don't you be one of them anymore!)

(4) In this day of mobility, a good student can take advantage of good Bible lectureships by listening to tapes as he drives about from place-to-place. It is important to utilize every possible opportunity to learn God's word. The Christian who is ever learning will become a valuable resource to the congregation of which he or she is a member.

(YouTube has many lectures from good pastors. Download the Torch browser and learn to copy and save lectures to hear when it's more convenient, or simply click the "watch later" note at YouTube, or copy/paste/save the address of lectures you want to hear later. It's there for you and free. We are in the last days. All too soon these resources will no longer be available to us. Get them while you can!)

### The Preacher and Study

Here's a comment relative to the preacher and his study habits. The man who stands before the congregation to preach to lost souls and to edify his kinsmen in the Lord, should overflow with the riches of Sacred Scripture.

Unfortunately it is the case today that too many preachers desire (or are strongly encouraged) to become proficient in everything but the Bible. They are office efficiency experts, church flunkies, visitation specialists, counselors, education directors, errand-boys for the elders, etc. Some (or all) of these chores may be quite necessary in their place, but they are not the work of a gospel preacher.

Every preacher must engage in his own spiritual activities (e.g., as visiting the sick, helping those in need, etc.), but that is not his principal area of emphasis. As someone has said, "The work of the preacher is threefold: to preach, to preach, and to preach." I would add to that: "To study and preach, to study and preach, to study and preach!"

(Yes! And preach the Bible and the coming Kingdom of God. Do not live to gather in more money. Do not preach a replacement theology or a new "prosperity gospel." Preach God's Truth!)

Elders should encourage their preachers to spend more time in seclusion, studying and storing up great segments of information so that when they mount the pulpit, they are able to draw vast resources from the library of their minds. In such cases, the audience becomes excited about the beauty and value of God's written truth. I have, on occasion, spent hours digging out a golden nugget of truth (which may take only a minute or so to present) in the hope that it will challenge my brethren to deeper study. This is what results when teaching the Mind of God becomes a passion rather than a profession. When the preaching and teaching are stagnant, attendance will eventually decline. Moreover, a studious preacher provides the sort of example that inspires greater Bible study within the congregation.

Do not presume that a huge congregation indicates better preaching. It might indicate an apostate church and a lot of people being entertained. In earlier times the great apostles worked for their

living and preached on off hours. When your church becomes *a business*, it's time to leave and open your own little church!

## Conclusion

We cannot but mention that if the church of today was a more studious body, she would not be plagued with as many problems as she now encounters. Knowledge is a powerful antidote to error. Let us encourage one another to return to the thrilling adventures within the Word of God.

## Related Articles

- [The Preacher's Private Life: Study Habits](#)
- [An Analysis of Romans 14](#)
- [The Study of Biblical Words](#)
- [Are You an Evangelist?](#)
- [Have You Not Read?](#)
- [Paul, the Master Preacher](#)
- [Should Women Function as Translators in the Assembly?](#)
- [The Preacher and His Audience](#)
- [The Heart of the Matter](#)
- [Woman's Role in the Church](#)

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2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 22:29; 2 Timothy 1:10; Proverbs 14:12; Psalm 119:11; Jeremiah 10:23; Acts 9:2, 19:9, 23, 22:4, 24:14, 22; Colossians 4:14; Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 11; Genesis 1; 1 Thessalonians 1; Genesis 2:18; 1 Timothy 5:14; Acts 10; Matthew 26:26; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23

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<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/371-effective-bible-study-an-urgent-need-for-everyone>

**This is #2 and Has been published. Continue to #3.**

# How God Preserved the Bible

DESIGN PICS/THINKSTOCK

**Do we have the complete Bible? Has God's Word been preserved for us accurately? You can prove that it has.**

BY DENNIS LEAP

FROM THE **SEPTEMBER 2005 TRUMPET PRINT EDITION**

**P**arts of the Bible are over 4,000 years old. Has it been handed down to us accurately? Do we have the complete Bible? How do we know? Can our modern sophistication allow us to believe that God preserved His own words as a great gift for all mankind?

Let's look at how God preserved the Bible for us today. Having the Bible *intact* is a miracle far beyond any marvelous invention of current technology.

God saw to the preservation of the Bible through a process called *canonization*. Our English word *canonization* comes from the Greek word *kanon*, which means a *straight edge* or *ruler*. The books of the Bible that we use today have been *canonized*. This means that after a rigorous review, it has been determined that these books are *Holy Scripture*, or the inspired *Word of God*. This could not have been done without the use of explicit rules and standards. Unfortunately, we have lost the records of the specific standards. Yet, we can safely figure out at least four major rules that were used to canonize a book of the Bible as *Scripture*.

## The Rules of Canonization

The *first rule* considers divine inspiration of a book. The Bible records that God specifically directed that certain books be written.

The clearest examples of this rule come from Moses and the other prophets: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua" (Exodus 17:14). "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel" (Exodus 34:27). "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 31:19). God

commanded Isaiah to write down the prophecies given to him. Study Isaiah 30:8. This verse proves that God intended Isaiah to be read and understood far into the future. God also commanded Jeremiah to write down his message into a book (Jeremiah 30:1-2; 36:1-3). The verses in Jeremiah 36 also show that God has a message for all nations today.

The *second rule* looks into internal evidence within a book. Some books assert that they themselves or other books are Scripture. The book of Joshua confirms the first five books of the law are Scripture in Joshua 1:8. The book of Judges, written by the Prophet Samuel, also confirms Moses's books as Scripture in Judges 3:1-4. Daniel confirmed that Moses's and Jeremiah's books were Scripture (Daniel 9:2, 11, 13). Peter confirmed that Paul's writings were Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).

The *third rule* takes into account public action or recognition of the canonization of a book. In Israel and Judah, the priests publicly read and instructed out of the Bible. It was Moses who began the tradition. He *commanded* the Levites to read the Scriptures to the people. "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 31:9-12). This public reading certified the books as Scripture.

Centuries after Moses, Ezra continued this same tradition by dutifully reading the books of the law at the Feast of Trumpets. "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people) and when he opened it, all the people stood up" (Nehemiah 8:5). The public reading of the Scriptures has been a tradition for millennia. Certainly, it was the case in Christ's day. In fact, He personally participated in the custom. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read" (Luke 4:16). You should also study scriptures such as Acts 13:15 and Acts 15:21. The Jews were passionate for their traditions. Paul and the other apostles carried on such customs into the true

Church of God. The point here is that the people knew the Scriptures so well that it would have been nearly impossible to read a non-canonized book in a public service.

The *fourth rule* demands consistency and accuracy in doctrine within the books. The one truly amazing fact about the Bible is there is not one inconsistency or conflict in doctrine. There is one homogeneous doctrinal thread that runs throughout the Bible from Genesis through Revelation. This fact alone demonstrates that one divine mind orchestrated the writing of the Bible.

## **Started With Moses**

Canonization began with Moses and ended with the Apostle John. Others have also played a significant role in canonizing the Scriptures. It is accepted that several of the prophets collected and compiled portions of the Old Testament. Jewish traditions tell us Samuel assembled the book of Judges. It is evident Samuel added to the book of Deuteronomy: 1 Samuel 10:25 shows that God directed Samuel to write into a book the laws concerning the establishment of the monarchy; what we have left of that book is found in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. It is also believed that Isaiah and Jeremiah most likely compiled 1 and 2 Kings. Sections from Isaiah and Jeremiah are repeated verbatim in Kings.

The men most responsible for the canonization of what we know as the Old Testament today were Ezra, Nehemiah and the body of priests and elders known as the Great Assembly. This great assembly consisted of 120 men of whom Ezra was the chief. Among its members are said to have been Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They pulled together all of God's revelation to that point into one complete book. At that time, the Old Testament was preserved on 22 scrolls.

When the King James Old Testament was established, it was separated into 39 books and reorganized into three basic classifications of law, history and poetry. This was not a correct structuring of the true text. Essentially, translators chopped up the Bible, introducing confusion.

Originally, the three divisions into which these scrolls were put were the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, or Writings. These three divisions of the Old Testament

are known as the *tripartite*. Jesus Christ confirmed that the Old Testament was complete in these three divisions. Just after His resurrection He told the disciples, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

Isaiah prophesied that the true Church of God would be used to complete the canon of God’s revelation to all mankind. He wrote: “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples” (Isaiah 8:16). The apostles Peter and Paul had a part in finalizing the New Testament. We know that Paul worked to protect a set of parchments. “The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments” (2 Timothy 4:13). The parchments were obviously the originals of Paul’s letters that we have today. It was Peter that certified Paul’s epistles as Scripture. He wrote this about Paul’s letters: “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16).

It was up to the Apostle John to complete the canonization of the Bible by finalizing the New Testament. His Gospel, letters and the book of Revelation were the last and *final* books to be added to the Bible. John states this at the very end of his Gospel: “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen” (John 21:25). John was very aware of the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus Christ inspired John to write his Gospel in a unique way that gives more depth about Jesus Christ’s message brought from God the Father. Then at the end of his Gospel, John states definitively that there would be no other Gospels in the canon. He adds the word *Amen* to add a ring of finality to that section of the Bible. He makes a similar statement at the end of Revelation. He writes, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18-19).

God the Father and Jesus Christ used John to write the Bible's most comprehensive prophetic book—Revelation. This book coordinates the timing of all Bible prophecy. Here it is clear that John knew that this book completed God's revelation to mankind. He warned that no man was to add to or take away from the prophecy in Revelation: Anyone who did would be cursed. John's statements show that we have the complete Bible.

The New Testament has 27 books, organized into four sections: the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles and Revelation.

## **How the Bible Was Preserved**

The history of how the Bible has been preserved is truly miraculous and inspiring. Many painstaking hours have been employed to ensure that the Scriptures have been preserved accurately. Many men have given their lives to preserve the Bible. No other books from antiquity have been so guarded.

From the Bible's very beginning, God saw to its protection. Although we don't know much about the most ancient times, Jewish tradition tells us that Noah preserved and protected the genealogical records given to us in Genesis 5. The first formal record of the charge to protect the Bible doesn't appear until the time of Moses. He charged the Levites with the task: "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). Moses commanded the Levites to keep the books he had completed under God's inspiration right with the ark of the covenant. The ark was the national symbol of the nation's covenant with God. On the lid of the ark was the mercy seat, a representation of God's throne. Keeping the Scriptures with the ark demonstrated to the people that the books were the very Word of God and should be closely guarded, respected and—even more—obeyed!

Yet, in general, it was the Jewish people who were especially commissioned by God to protect the Bible. Notice what Paul states: "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1-2). God knew

that false prophets, teachers and even writers would come along and claim to be prophesying, teaching or writing for God (Jeremiah 23:32). So God had to inspire His people to preserve what had been given. The Jews have done their job well. A detailed and closely guarded system of copying was developed to preserve the texts as originally written.

Professionals known as scribes were highly trained at writing new copies of the text as the rolls wore out from use. It was the job of the scribes to preserve the Word of God from generation to generation. The Pharisees were responsible for the oral reading of the Scriptures in public services. Jesus Christ recognized that the scribes had authority over the Scriptures (Matthew 23:2-3). He also promised that what had been written would continue to be preserved until His Second Coming (Matthew 5:18).

## The Neglected Scrolls

Unknowingly, King Josiah of Judah played a significant role in the preservation of the Old Testament. His grandfather Manasseh was the most evil king in Judah. He promoted idol worship far worse than any one of the evil kings in Israel—even Ahab. Manasseh turned the people completely away from God and God’s Word. Josiah set about to make major reforms in the land. He eliminated idolatry from Jerusalem and Judah. Yet it was not until the 18th year of his reign that the book of the law was found in the temple (2 Kings 22:8-13). Hilkiah the high priest found the Scriptures during the renovation of the temple. The faithful priest presented and read the books to the king. Josiah was thunderstruck by what he heard. He knew that to spare the nation any more trouble, a great education program had to be instituted. The Word of God had to be taught to every man, woman and child in the nation.

Notice what *Clarke’s Commentary* has to say about Josiah: “And if the king and the high priest, who were both men of eminent piety, were without this part of the Holy Scripture, it can scarcely be thought that anyone else then had it. But so religious a prince as King Josiah could not leave this long unremedied. By his orders copies were written out from this original; and search being made for all the other parts of Holy Scripture ... and thenceforth copies of the whole became multiplied among the people; all those who were desirous of knowing the laws of their God, either writing them out themselves, or procuring others to do it for

them; ... [the sacred writings] were got into private hands, who carried them with them into captivity. That Daniel had a copy with him in Babylon is certain, for he quotes the law, and also makes mention of the prophecies of the Prophet Jeremiah, which he could not do had he never seen them.”

The Babylonian captivity had not only destroyed the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem with the holy temple, it also wiped out the central depository of God’s revelation. By the decree of the Persian King Cyrus, Zerubbabel and a contingent of Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2). Yet, after Zerubbabel’s death, the Jews began degenerating in their zeal for God’s way of life. Even the temple began to fall into disrepair. Ezra was well trained in God’s law. He desired to revive God’s way of life in Jerusalem. God directed Ezra to do just that. In fact, we have Ezra most to thank for the preservation of our Old Testament. “This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. ... For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:6, 10). Ezra returned to Jerusalem, beautified the temple and established the proper order of worship. Nehemiah, as governor, fully supported his reforms. Because Josiah had made sure that multiple copies of the Scripture scrolls existed, Ezra collected all the scattered rolls that could be found and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, worked with the Great Assembly in putting the books into a proper order.

Ezra took on a very important responsibility to make sure we had the properly inspired canon of the Scriptures. He got “together as many copies of the sacred writings as he could, and out of them all to set forth a correct edition ... he took care of the following particulars: First, he corrected all the errors that had crept into these copies .... Secondly, he ... disposed them in their proper order; and settled the canon of Scripture for his time” (*Clarke’s Commentary*). Ezra the priest placed the authorized scrolls in the temple. The priests were again put in charge of the scrolls.

These standard copies remained intact until the buildings were destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70. All the synagogues in the first century maintained the same canon of Scripture. All scrolls agreed with the divine canon deposited in the temple archives.

It is now the responsibility of the true Church of God to protect the Scriptures as handed down to us, just as it was of the Old Testament “church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38).

## A Complete Bible

The Old Testament canon, with its various books and divisions, was the model used for the canonization of the New Testament. God always used men to canonize various books.

When the Jews in the New Testament refused the message of Christ, God raised up the apostles to go into the Greek world to have His New Testament Scriptures preserved for us. Realize that the Old Testament was written basically in Hebrew with some Aramaic, while the New Testament was written in Greek. The Greeks, not the Jews, were given the New Testament to preserve. However, God used the apostles to make the decision as to which books the Greek world would preserve.

When the New Testament is placed side by side with the Old Testament, the Bible is complete with seven divisions: the Law, Prophets, Psalms, Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation. *Seven* is the number of completion throughout the Bible. The number *seven* has made its mark in the canonization of both the Old and New Testaments. Here is how.

The complete Old Testament is actually comprised of 22 scrolls (books), categorized under three divisions.

The Law included five books—Genesis through Deuteronomy.

The Prophets were organized in a special way. The books of Joshua through 2 Kings, excluding Ruth, are known as former prophets and were written on two scrolls. Joshua and Judges shared one scroll. 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings shared one scroll. The 12 minor prophets were also written on one scroll. Adding in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel there are a total of seven books.

The Writings total 10 books. The books included are Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Ezra/Nehemiah (one book) and 1 and 2 Chronicles (one book).

Together with the 27 books of the New Testament, there are actually 49 books of the Bible. The number 49 is a significant number that carries divine meaning. This number is seven times seven, showing absolute completion. The seven divisions of the Bible and the number of books is no accident. They are clearly there by design to show that the revelation of God is complete with 49 books.

## Apocrypha Not Canonized

The 14 books of the Apocrypha have not been canonized. These books should not be considered Scripture. Controversy about these books raged for centuries before they were accepted as a part of the Roman Catholic Bible. Following the example of Rome, many Protestant sects include the Apocrypha in their Bibles. One article about the Bible states: “The addition of Apocryphal books to the Old Testament did not begin until about A.D. 80. Numerous spurious books were gradually introduced into the inspired canon. *No two copies of the earliest Catholic Bibles agree as to which Apocryphal books were to be added.* It was not until A.D. 397, at the council of Carthage, that Augustine, the Canaanite bishop from Hippo in North Africa, led the council of Carthage to generally approve seven Apocryphal books. As late as A.D. 363 at the Council of Laodicea, the Greek Church rejected the Apocryphal books as a whole. And the Roman Catholic scholar Jerome, who translated the Latin Vulgate version, rejected the Apocrypha *and made his translation from the Hebrew Old Testament* directly. It was not until the Council of Trent that the Apocrypha were declared equal to the books of the Bible. At the Council of Trent on April 8, 1546, those who rejected the Apocrypha were declared to be ‘*anathema of Christ!*’ (Herman L. Hoeh, “Do We Have the Complete Bible?,” 1974).

Recognize that these books are inconsistent with Bible doctrine. Jesus Christ and the apostles never quoted from them. The addition of these books to the Bible was based on the authority of men—not of God.

Other ancient books referred to in the Bible are “source documents,” such as the book of Jasher (2 Samuel 1:18), as we wrote in last month’s *Trumpet* (“The Critics Vs. Moses”). Bible writers occasionally cited sources, as we cite the sources of our research in our literature (whether secular or Scripture). This does not mean that these sources should have been canonized. Even Paul quoted poets and

philosophers in his letters, not intending that these be counted as the Word of God (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12-13).

The Bible is truly one of the most valuable things a human being can possess. It is a living miracle that will greatly enrich your life. Although the Bible may have several translation deficiencies, it is not a flawed book. Not one book of the Bible has been lost. Not one book is missing. The books of the Bible are correct as you find them in the King James Version. Paul taught Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is the only true spiritual guide on Earth. Every man, woman and child needs the information contained within its pages.

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I want to keep this "clean" but get into reality before we do more theory so I'll throw in a comment and I hope you'll accept me as I am.

I began studying massage at age 12. Now I'm given complements for my talent and abilities. Naturally I've mixed Chiropractic and massage all of my years in practice.

My older sister was going to marry. My mother couldn't talk to her about sex so she was given a book and when she put it down I devoured it, two or three times. So many people (both genders) are such terrible lovers. They don't have any idea where to begin. I begin with massage of hands and feet and eventually, given time, the rest just becomes part of normal actions of life. For me, making love to my life is like breathing. It's natural and normal. If it were a big "event" there's definitely something wrong. It's no more a big event than washing and eating. It's normal life.

But what is really is for is to express love and it becomes part of prayer. I thank God, and she also does, for our marriage and ask HIM to bring us (she, me, God/Holy Spirit/Jesus) closer together. It's not formal. Pastors who begin with "Let's pray" are too formal. They just killed it.

I sit for dinner and say a quick thank you prayer and we accept that as normal. Likewise I never announce to my wife something incredibly stupid like, "We're gona do it now." If I did that I'd expect her immediately to turn into an ice sculpture. She says, "I love you" and I answer "You know I love you and don't want to live without you and our daughter." and we end up connected until she's lost in satisfaction. That's just normal life like eating

until you've eaten enough, or drinking water or bathing. It's just normal life.

Ultimately the sex play has to morph into prayer and renewed commitment to one another and to God. If that doesn't happen you should question whether what you have is a marriage or just lusting together and working to pay the bills. That's completely insufficient for me.

By this connection a married couple are welded together, will not cheat with another lover, and will stay together for life. None of that happens without The Bible and prayer.

I'm certain a few pastors who have been raised to believe anything connected to sex is evil, filthy, and sinful are wishing they could scream at me. Please do. Write to me. I want to hear your reasoning.... because I think you have none! I think these ideas are run on thoughtless emotions and there are a LOT of people who are non-analytical (that is 85% "emotional" thinkers.) I also think such ideas are emptying churches! Your empty church is evidence you are not doing your job, and maybe you are chasing people away from Jesus and His salvation!

The new modern mega church "Prosperity Gospel Churchy-Message" is NOT what Jesus came to teach. Read a bit more and I'll tell you why He came to us.

We are in the final years before the return of Jesus the Christ. This is not some mythology or theory. This is deadly serious, and the great pity is, the Catholic Priests don't go through the bible with their parishioners line by line discussing, explaining, and showing what is meant by the prophecies in Isaiah, Daniel, Revelation, and several others. Most have no idea that the MISSING Book of Enoch is a monumental work that tells us WHY our world is in such turmoil RIGHT NOW and what's about to happen, and why and who is the cause. Most people have no idea about it.

Jesus warned that we should not be found committing sin. He will "marry" his people and take them with him "to a place of safety." We will be adopted into God's family.

We know God did that for ancient Enoch. We know God has occasionally drawn others suddenly to him for a vision, teaching, and then returned them here to do His work.

Those who will be left behind will suffer such misery as the world has never before known. When you read the prophecies it sounds like someone must have been taking a psychedelic drug. What is he talking about? Weapons

and wars most terrible and the poor population is lost by the hundreds of millions to the ultimate Satanic psychosis.

This entire website is really intended to educate those interested to know. I am asking you to learn what the very small remnant learns. We are that half of 1% who follow the ancient wisdom of God and want to be his subjects in his restored Kingdom on Earth.

Humans tend to want to do it their way. They want to run the show and behave as if they are superior and many want to control everyone and everything. The more they want to be in control, the more they prove their own personal insanity and inability to run their own lives, much less a civilization!

The true Gospel was not the legend and life and times of Jesus. It was the message God gave Jesus to teach. That lesson was, Repent and Believe that God will return connected always to Jesus and the returning Kingdom of God will make peace here, and teach wisdom and God's righteous ways. He will raise you as one of his children and as you mature you shall become Like Him! LIKE HIM. (deep breath. Think about THAT a while.)

People who don't want that will be eliminated! He said it and it will happen!

My bride said she wanted me to support and protect her and her child. The only way for me to do that is through the mind and spirit. It is through getting all three of us "married" to Jesus and adopted into God's family. If there is any true Love and Romance it is to rescue you, your spouse and your children for eternity. *Sex is temporary. THIS is forever!*

Lots of people say, "I think I've been pretty good. I guess I'll go to Heaven." So now they're making up their own religion? It doesn't matter what they think. What matters is what God thinks!

If I am assigned to DO good service for you the most important thing I can do is present some articles with you, be sure you have heard these doctrinal arguments and then leave the decision process to you. I cannot and will not try to force anyone to accept a doctrine. I can only present the information and let You decide what you'll do with it.

In the end only ONE can save you and that, of course, is Jesus Our Christ. In the end only ONE can decide which path you will follow. That one is you.

**This is #3 and has been published**

# So You Want to Understand the Bible?

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Here's what you can do!

BY STEPHEN FLURRY WITH COMMENTARY BY STEPHEN NEWDELL

FROM THE **AUGUST 2012 TRUMPET PRINT EDITION**

**W**hy is it that a group of biology teachers could pretty much agree on the meaning of a biology textbook, but if you assembled a room full of theologians, they would probably all have different interpretations of the Holy Bible?

Why so much disagreement and misunderstanding when it comes to God's inspired Word?

*It's simply because most people are **not** willing to submit to or obey the precepts revealed in the Bible.* The Apostle Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for *reproof*, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

To understand the Bible, we must study it for doctrine *and correction*. In Psalm 119:67, for example, the author declares, "Before I was afflicted *I went astray*: but now have I *kept thy word*." The psalmist had gone astray. He needed to be straightened out. So he *looked to God's Word* to get back on track!

How many people do you know who are willing to be reproved and corrected by the Bible? It's no wonder there is so much confusion when it comes to understanding the Bible!

Herbert W. Armstrong often compared the Bible to a jigsaw puzzle (see Isaiah 28:10-11). But instead of putting the various pieces together properly and sensibly, as Mr. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*, **theologians and preachers "read an already-believed false teaching into each particular scripture, taken out of context."** They interpret the scriptures to say what they have assumed to be true.

But the Bible doesn't need any personal or private interpretation, as it says in 2 Peter 1:20. God's Word interprets itself! If we are willing to humble ourselves and to accept the authority of God's divine precepts, we can understand the plain truth revealed in the Bible. Here then are several important steps you can take on the path to understanding the Bible.

First of all, before you begin your study, pray for a humble attitude and for God to open your mind to understand the Bible. **Jesus Christ set an outstanding example in this regard. He spent many hours with God in prayer every week.** If *Jesus Christ* derived all of His power from *God*, think about how much more *we* need to go to God for help! To understand the Bible, we really need God's power!

Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Reasoning together with God is what it means to be truly educated according to *God's* curriculum.

After asking God for understanding and humility, **make Bible study a daily priority.** Be like the Bereans. In Acts 17, it says they "received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily*, whether those things were so" (verse 11). **They studied with a right attitude, "with all readiness of mind"—and they did it every day. They were constantly studying God's Holy Word, repeating it, reminding themselves of it, praying about it there by to show themselves acceptable so that they could be approved by God, and welcomed into the Heavenly Kingdom.** We have come so far away from that thinking in our modern times, most people haven't the first idea about what scripture says, not even the 10-Commandments handed down to Moses. (check this website for a study about the 10-commandments). Nowadays younger people exchange lovers like bed bugs and think nothing of it! Do they know or care what God said about this through Apostle Paul? Apparently not! We really should study far more than we do! All of us! Fortunately you have the guidance of articles at this website and books available at TheTrumpet.com and at other websites. There is plenty to read if you want to know. Be aware, a day may come when All Christian websites are shut down by the masters of the Internet and then we will have only what is printed in our homes. So, study and collect what you can on your hard drive while you can! Even today, (year 2019) You can't buy a Bible in China. Most Christian Churches are being banned by the

Chinese government. The same could happen worldwide and many have predicted it will.

## **In the Synoptic Gospels** (from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism\\_of\\_Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism_of_Jesus) )

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Mark, Matthew, and Luke depict the baptism in parallel passages. In all three gospels, the [Holy spirit](#) is depicted as descending upon Jesus immediately after his baptism accompanied by a voice from Heaven, but the accounts of Luke and Mark record the voice as addressing Jesus by saying "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased", while in Matthew the voice addresses the crowd "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" ([Matthew 3:13–17](#); [Mark 1:9–11](#); [Luke 3:21–23](#)).<sup>[10][11][12]</sup>

## **The Baptism of Jesus** (Luke 3 Revised Standard Version)

<sup>21</sup> Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son;<sup>[a]</sup> with thee I am well pleased."<sup>[b]</sup>

They few in attendance knew then Jesus was the Messiah! They knew at that moment what John the Baptizer had been prophetically shouting about.

“Study to show yourself approved **unto** God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). We study to show ourselves approved *to God*. This is not something to be casual about. God commands it!

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(SN) Let's consider two points further. Jesus the Messiah (to be) *was* "The Living Word of God" and "lived" with God as His companion for untold Billions of Years. Some Jewish people in his time walking amongst men and women referred to him as "Torah." One might say, "When Torah was here he healed my brother!" He was born into a monastic community in the foothills of Mount Carmel near Qumran and all of his days being raised he was continually educated to understand and read the law, behave in a sober and reverent fashion, speak properly with good manners, and of course read Hebrew and Aramaic as Jewish children are today – particularly amongst the Orthodox communities. From his youth he was in prayer almost all the time even while working and studying. God was imbued into him from His beginning and (my personal thesis) even MORE so after his baptism! It is my thesis that at the moment of rising out of the full emersion baptism those around saw the Holy Spirit in the shape of a Dove, settle upon Him and then they heard God's voice.

## In the Synoptic Gospels

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We have come so far away from that *continual God Centered thinking* in our modern times, most people haven't the first idea about what scripture says, not even the 10-Commandments handed down to Moses. (check this website for a study about the 10-commandments). Nowadays younger people exchange lovers like bed bugs and think nothing of it! Do they know or care what God said about this through Apostle Paul? Apparently not! We really should study far more than we do! All of us! Fortunately you have the guidance of articles at this website and books available at TheTrumpet.com and at other websites. There is plenty to read if you want to know. Be aware, a day may come when All Christian websites are shut down by the masters of the Internet and then we will have only what is printed in our homes. So, study and collect what you can on your hard drive while you can! Even today, (year 2019) You can't buy a Bible in China. Most Christian Churches are being banned by the Chinese government. The same could happen worldwide and many have predicted it will.

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By studying the Bible every day, we will begin to think more like God. We can actually come to know what God's will is for every circumstance (Ephesians 5:17).

(SN) And if we do not, then we have not invested our effort to find and know him as is so strongly implied in the parables and one day we might go to our judgment and be condemned, *You don't know me and I Never Knew You!*

Matthew 7: RSV

<sup>21</sup>“Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ <sup>23</sup>And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.

These Parables teach us that our life is an investment and we are expected to use the time we have wisely. The profit we should gain is wisdom of God's Holy Ways because only those who accept HIS Ways and His cultural behaviors will be welcomed into His Kingdom.

What Parables? Here see this:

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Parable of the Talents** (also the **Parable of the Minas**) is one of the [parables of Jesus](#), which appears in two of the [synoptic, canonical gospels](#) of the [New Testament](#): (Canonical means they were approved by the church fathers because they could trace the source and be sure this was the true message and not a legend.)

- [Matthew 25:14-30](#)
- [Luke 19:12-27](#)

Although the basic story in each of these parables is essentially the same, the differences between the parables as they appear in the [Gospel of Matthew](#) and in the [Gospel of Luke](#) are sufficient to indicate that the parables are not derived from the same source.<sup>[1]</sup> In Matthew, the opening words link the parable to the preceding [Parable of the Ten Virgins](#), which refers to the [Kingdom of Heaven](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The version in Luke is also called the **Parable of the Pounds**.

In both Matthew and Luke, a master puts his servants in charge of his goods while he is away on a trip. Upon his return, the master assesses the stewardship of his servants. He evaluates them according to how faithful each was in making wise investments of his goods to obtain a profit. It is clear that the master sought some profit from the servants' oversight. A gain indicated faithfulness on the part of the servants. The master rewards his servants according to how each has handled his stewardship. He judges two servants as having been "faithful" and gives them a positive reward. To the single unfaithful servant, who "played it safe", a negative compensation is given.

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Another important key is to be *urgent* in studying God's Word! "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor

knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Time is running out on the age of man ruling over man! God’s government will soon be established on Earth, headquartered in Jerusalem. Every one of us must use the minutes, hours, days and years of our temporary existence to prepare us for the world to come.

God is trumpeting the plain truth of Jesus Christ’s gospel message! Make the most of this brief time period and be zealous in your study of God’s Word. Dig into the Bible. Use your time wisely. Don’t allow the cares of this world to crowd out the time we are commanded to spend in prayerful study of God’s truth (Matthew 13:22).

Finally, be sure to *act* on what you learn. King David wrote, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good *understanding* have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever” (Psalm 111:10).

Understanding *follows* the *doing*!

In fact, obedience is a *prerequisite* for understanding (Psalm 119:100). If we sincerely and wholeheartedly try to obey all that God reveals—if we humbly repent of sins that are exposed by the bright light of God’s Word—God will open our minds to the riches and depths of His glorious truth. That is an absolute promise from God.

Our *obedience* to God’s law is the greatest determining factor in how well we grasp and understand spiritual knowledge!

So remember these important points when studying your Bible. Ask God for understanding. Then dig into God’s Word—do it every day. And knowing the times we are living in, be urgent in your study—give it the highest priority. Then, make sure you apply what you learn. Doing this will not only open your mind to understand the simplicity of God’s Word, it will make your daily study sessions the most inspiring, invigorating and spiritually enriching activity of the day!

NEXT 4<sup>TH</sup> IN SERIES

## Why Study the Bible?

Dr. Stephen Newdell, drawing from notes By Robert Velarde

## Part of the [Why Study the Bible](#) Series

1. **Why Study the Bible?**
2. [How to Study the Bible](#)
3. [How to Study the Bible In-Depth](#)
4. [Necessity of Family Bible Time](#)
5. [Devotional Bible Study Is Not an Option](#)

### **Series About:**

[The Study of God](#)

What sort of society would we have without the Bible? Compare what you imagine to what he have.

The Bible is both practical and foundational to society. It is practical in everyday life. The Bible provides real reasons for us to value what it tells us. Bible study is foundational to almost everything we do that holds society together.

While not an exhaustive list, here are eight reasons for studying the Bible:

- Cultural literacy
- To learn what it says firsthand
- Personal edification
- To help others
- Jesus
- Because it is God's Word to us
- To know God better
- Avoiding error

## Cultural Literacy

Bible study makes you culturally literate. It makes us "civilized." E.D. Hirsch writes, "To be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world."<sup>1</sup>

The Bible contains a wealth of cultural literacy. References to the Bible are not only found in religion, but also art, music, drama, philosophy, literature, law, celebrations, weddings, holidays, your first and foreign languages...almost every day you'll hear or read a reference to The Bible in

some way. Knowing what the Bible says is an important part of everyone's knowledge-base. I want to give you some examples.

Let's suppose you're at a movie and you see and hear something including clouds, white doves or dry bones. What do those clouds, doves and bones symbolize? If you don't know an important meaning in the movie means nothing to you.

Suppose you're in the grocery store and see something that says it's Kosher for Passover. Have you any idea what that means?

I lived at one time near Seattle and the Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong spoke in our little village church. At one point he said, *Now of course, Jesus being Jewish....*" and a man in the audience interrupted him and said, "Did you say Jesus was Jewish?" Bishop spong replied, "Well of course he was Jewish!" and that man replied much perturbed, "Well...surely The Mother Mary wasn't Jewish!?" Here was a guy who thought he was a devout Christian believer but had never studied the Bible and was making a display of ignorance and folly before an entire crowd at Easter. He can dress up and drive to work but that doesn't make him civilized. He doesn't know the roots of our civility!

Here are some symbolism snips from:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/dictionary-of-bible-themes/1670-symbols>

## 1670 SYMBOLS

Objects, actions or creatures that have a deeper significance and are so understood by those who see them or use them.

Symbolic objects

**The rainbow: a symbol of God's covenant** See also [Ge 9:13](#); [Eze 1:28](#); [Rev 4:3](#)

**A stairway: a symbol of the way to God** [Ge 28:11-13](#); [Jn 1:51](#)

**Thunder, lightning, cloud and smoke: symbols of God's majesty** [Ex 19:16-18](#); [Ex 24:17](#); [Ps 97:2,4](#); [Rev 4:5](#); [Rev 8:5](#); [Rev 11:19](#)

**Thunder: a symbol of God's voice** [Ps 29:3](#); [Ps 68:33](#)

**Trumpets: a symbol of God speaking** [Ex 19:19](#); [Rev 8:6](#)

**The pillar of cloud and fire: a symbol of guidance** [Ex 13:21](#)

**A throne: a symbol of God's glory** [Isa 6:1](#); [Eze 1:26](#); [Rev 4:2](#); [Rev 22:3](#)

**Dry bones: a symbol of spiritual death** [Eze 37:1-2,11](#)

**White hair: a symbol of wisdom** [Da 7:9](#); [Rev 1:14](#)

**The wind: a symbol of the Holy Spirit** [Jn 3:8](#); [Ac 2:2](#)

**Fire: a symbol of the Holy Spirit** [Ac 2:3](#)

**Stars and lampstands: symbols of God's ministers** [Rev 1:20](#)

**A signet ring: a symbol of authority** [Est 8:10](#); [Hag 2:23](#)

**Arrows: symbols of God's judgments** [Ps 38:2](#); [Ps 120:4](#)

**A sceptre: a symbol of God's rule** [Ps 2:9](#); [Rev 2:27](#); [Rev 19:15](#)

**The capstone: a symbol of pre-eminence** [Mt 21:42](#) pp [Mk 12:10-11](#) pp [Lk 20:17](#); [Ps 118:22](#)

**A rock: a symbol of stability** [Ps 18:2](#); [Ps 40:2](#)

**The human body: a symbol of interdependence** [1Co 12:27](#)

**Grass: a symbol of human frailty** [Ps 90:5-6](#); [1Pe 1:24](#)

I knew a girl who thought her fighter kite near another fighter kite was "symbolic" of something she had made up out of thin air. She only proved (again) that she was a cute creature but certainly not growing up to be a civilized and respectable Lady. She was proving she was a fool. She didn't think there was anything wrong about admitting she had had "more than 50" lovers before age 16. Why would anyone care? Maybe because The Bible tells us it's a sin that (once understood) might preclude us from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Does it seem a bit more important to you now?

How many young men do you know who know nothing of the Bible and nothing of the law and think anytime they want they can beat someone up and they are the law unto themselves....until they wind up in jail? I have known several. I hope I'm extending the viewpoint that we cannot have a civil society without the teachings and precepts of The Holy Scriptures handed to us by Moses, various kings and prophets, and then later the Apostles and The Living Word of God, himself, Jesus the Christ!

Many popular phrases and figures of speech also find their origin in the Bible including being a Good Samaritan, the folly of letting the blind lead the blind, going the extra mile, ethical maxims such as "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," manna from heaven, etc. Hirsch considers the Bible so important to cultural literacy that it appears first in his *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*.

Anyone who aspires to mature to be a respected civilized gentlemen or lady of business, oratory, and world affairs must understand The Bible.

# What Does It Say?

Another reason to study the Bible is to learn what it has to say firsthand. Whether one is a supporter or critic of the Bible, or perhaps just neutral or disinterested in the topic, history has demonstrated that the Bible cannot be ignored. Considering that the Bible is important to three major world religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – it is worthy of study.

In addition, the recent rise of hostile criticism towards the Bible itself and religion in general also makes it worthy of study. Sometimes the critics do not always quote the Bible correctly or in context. Knowing what it says firsthand and having some knowledge of the context is helpful in understanding not only current events, but key ideas the Bible addresses such as the nature and existence of God, the human condition, the biblical pattern of redemption and salvation and ethics.

We live in troubled times of deception. I have several times read short articles and posts by Joel Osteen the pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. He often writes, "the scriptures say" but never gives references and arguments about their meaning. This is not a scholarly pursuit and leaves much doubt about the efficacy of his teachings. The man has a gigantic church taking in over 90-million dollars per year in contributions and no one is certain about his Bible references. I grant he's making a lot of money. As for his Pastoral skills, I think I am not alone saying such non-referenced writing leaves something to be desired. I maintain, God *does not* want to make you rich. God has many more important issues to consider other than your materialistic desires.

## Personal Edification

For thousands of years the Bible has been read not only as history and God's Word, but also for personal edification. This, of course, is a more meaningful reason for studying the Bible for those who believe in God, but the Bible is also surprisingly edifying for those who do not believe. It is full of individuals facing moral choices, life challenges, and, frankly, situations that are applicable to us even today. As Paul wrote about the "Old Testament" scripture, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV).

He might nowadays say that also about the New Testament, but in his day there was none.

The Bible is available for us to learn from not only on an intellectual level, but on a personal and emotional level. People read the intellectual material and consider it, and over time they realize new meanings, new emotional realizations and applications to their personal lives.

## To Help Others

But the Bible is not just for us to keep to ourselves as individuals. It is also useful in helping others. We gain centuries of wisdom and are thus able to help others by studying the Bible. Proverbs, for instance, contain general principles and ideas to assist anyone in living their lives in a way that is helpful and pleasing to God.

Studying the Bible in order to help others is not just for ministers, priests, pastors, and rabbis. It is something everyone can and should do. By knowing what the Bible says on different subjects, we can help others through difficult circumstances, encourage them and sometimes even rescue their lives!

## Jesus

For Christians the New Testament explains the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of course it tells us within the true gospel, the message God sent through Jesus for all of us (available on this website.) Some 2,000 years after the time of Christ, His life and ministry remain relevant even in our contemporary world. Regardless of how one views Christ, like the Bible, He cannot be ignored. Far from being a distant prophet or irrelevant figure in history, Jesus Christ is at Christianity's foundation. Particularly studying the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John will help anyone gain a better understanding of Jesus and His mission.

## God's Word to Us

For people the world over, the Bible is God's Word to us. People inspired by God recorded the words that make up the Bible, thus communicating what theologians call special revelation. In other words, God has chosen to reveal Himself not only through creation and conscience, but also specially through

Jesus and through His Word. Studying the Bible, then, is a matter of course for those who love God and desire to follow Him.

After all, when you consider what the Bible really is, and how intricate and complex are its hidden meanings, and realize that the wisest of men can be confounded by its enormous meanings, and then consider that it is God's Message For YOU, don't you think it would be an insult to God if you ignored it? Do you think it might be the most important piece of literature in the Western World? I do.

## To Know God Better

Since the Bible is God's Word, studying it is a way to know God better. Through His words we come to know not only the nature and attributes of God, but we also come to understand His plan for each of us. In a larger sense, we also come to know God's plan in history, His sovereignty, His providence, His love and more. There is much we can learn about God apart from the Bible, but the Bible is the essential message carrier explaining God and his plans for YOU, to you.

## Avoiding Error

Studying the Bible also helps us avoid theological error. The Bible tells us, "Watch your life and doctrine closely" (1 Timothy 4:16 NIV), adding that we "must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1 NIV). If the Bible is our authority for faith and life, then the inspired words it contains will help us to avoid error. In a pluralistic world with many religious and non-religious ideas competing for attention, studying the Bible provides us with a firm foundation in God's truth rather than the errors of the world. Knowing the Bible also helps us respond to error and answer questions that skeptics and others may have about it.

## What's Next?

As we have seen, studying the Bible is important for a number of reasons. Other articles in this series will explore how to study the Bible, devotional Bible study, family Bible study and in-depth Bible study. The Bible is not just for theologians and scholars. Rather, it is God's Word in plain language

intended for everyone. Together, we will explore the importance of Bible study and its relevance to everyday life. Far from being a stuffy or boring book, the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God, helpful in building us up so that we may serve, love and glorify God and His Son, Jesus Christ, as we are intended to do.

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*Focus on the Family is a donor-supported ministry.*

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1. E.D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), xiii. [↵](#)

Robert Velarde. Used without permission.

Next in this Series: [How to Study the Bible](#) (Recommended.)

Based upon Notes From: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/faith/the-study-of-god/why-study-the-bible/why-study-the-bible>

## Necessity of Family Bible Time 5<sup>th</sup> in series published

By Robert Velarde

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### Part of the [Why Study the Bible](#) Series

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### Series About:

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"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and

when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." – Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV)

When Moses shared these words with the people of Israel, he specifically pointed out the necessity of active and regular parental involvement in the spiritual lives of their children. God has revealed great truths to us, yet often we do not engage as a family in seeking to learn about and understand these truths. Various studies indicate that more than 90 percent of American homes have at least one Bible in them, but there is a difference between owning one and reading one. There's also a difference between owning a Bible and being actively involved in family Bible study.

## Making the Time

In Christian homes it's not so much that parents don't desire to help their children understand God and His truths; rather, it's usually a matter of finding time combined with not knowing how to go about family Bible study. The time problem is symptomatic of our fast-paced culture and resulting lifestyles. We are so used to the hectic pace of our daily lives that it becomes difficult to fit "one more thing" into our schedules. Unfortunately, when it comes to family Bible study, it should not be viewed as one more thing but as a central focus of our devotion to God. It is a parental responsibility commanded by God, and it also provides a wonderful opportunity to help build and strengthen bonds between family members.

One key step, then, in laying the groundwork for edifying family Bible study is making a commitment to set aside specific and regular time to gather together as a family.

## Spiritually Nurturing Children

But how does a family go about studying the Bible together? There are no set rules, however Deuteronomy 6:6-7, quoted above provides some guidance that we can apply to our contemporary lives. We are told that these commandments are to be, first, upon our own hearts. This means that as parents we must strive to know God and His Word better in our own hearts. The Hebrew word translated as *hearts* in the passage is *lebab*. It refers to more than the organ of the heart, meaning also "the inner person, self, the seat of thought and emotion: conscience, courage, mind, understanding."<sup>1</sup> In other words, God's commandments are to infuse our entire being and, as a

result, everything we do. That's easier said than done, but it is the ideal we are to strive for with Christ's help.

Next the verse tells us to "impress" God's commandments upon our children. Making such an impression on children generally requires a recurrence, meaning repetition. For children to absorb God's truths, regular times of family Bible study, devotion and worship are important. Memorizing portions of Scripture also becomes important in making a godly impression on children. The verse also instructs parents to "talk about them," meaning that we are to engage in conversation with our children that includes God and His commandments. The implication of the rest of the passage is that we are to do this everywhere – at home, when traveling, when resting, when facing each new day, etc. Too often we set aside one day or a portion of a day for church worship then neglect the reality of God in our daily lives the rest of the week. But if we truly believe in God and His truths to the point of committing our lives to His service, then we need to make God a part of everything we do. Again, this is easier said than done. Nevertheless, the broader point here is to include God in our daily lives as an example to our children.

## Tips for Family Bible Study

While there are no definitive techniques or methods to family Bible study that will apply to every family, here are some general principles.

First, remember to set aside a specific day and time for your family Bible study and stick to it as best you can. Young children in particular appreciate regular schedules and routines. If your family can get into a habit of having a regular Bible study time, you'll find that your children will often come to appreciate it and miss it if it doesn't happen as scheduled.

Second, keep your family Bible study times relatively short. This is particularly important if there are young children in your family. Older children in general have better attention spans, while younger children don't.

Third, pick an area, passage or topic of study that is helpful and relevant without being too difficult or challenging for children to grasp. So, for instance, you really don't want to have a family Bible study about the Documentary hypothesis and its implications regarding biblical inerrancy! But a topical study about specific biblical figures might be a good place to start, such as learning about Noah, Moses, David, Jesus, etc. This should be

fairly straightforward and simple, sharing perhaps some key biblical stories about these individuals. You may wish to find a good children's Bible and read some stories from that edition. Pick some short biblical passages to read too. If your children are old enough to read, help them read certain passages aloud so they are actively engaged in your study time. Below are several family Bible study tips offered by Pastor Donald Hoke:

- Keep your family Bible study reasonably short ...
- Have each member read a verse.
- Appoint one family member to lead in worship ...
- After reading the passage, have each member in the family explain one verse or one paragraph.
- After the Bible reading, have each member tell what this verse means or how it can be applied to personal life."<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, you'll also want to include prayer in your family Bible study. Pray as you are moved to before your study time and perhaps during and after.

## Being a Role Model

Finally, don't become legalistic about your family Bible study times or beat yourself up about missing a scheduled time. As a parent, strive to be a role model to your children about the importance and reality of faith in your life, but do so without being a negative example. Making God a genuine reality in your daily life is more important than sticking to a strict schedule. Prior to Moses offering insights regarding parental involvement in the spiritual lives of children, he writes, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5 NIV). Jesus, too, repeated this phrase in the Gospels (see, for instance, Matthew 22:37).

We must first commit our lives to God before we can effectively pass on our legacy of faith to our children. This commitment must begin with our love for God with every aspect of our being.

1. Edward W. Goodrick, John R. Kohlenberger III, and James A. Swanson, *Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Zondervan, 1990), electronic edition ↵
2. Donald Hoke, "How to Study the Bible," in *The New Open Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 1990), p. 21. ↵

based upon notes from: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/faith/the-study-of-god/why-study-the-bible/necessity-of-family-bible-time>

Next in this Series: [Devotional Bible Study Is Not an Option \(Recommended\)](#)

## 1. Devotional Bible Study Is Not an Option 6<sup>th</sup> in a series

"Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God." -1 Chronicles 22:19 (NIV)

For the Christian, devotional Bible study is not an option. In a very real sense, every kind of Bible study we are involved in must, on some level, be devotional. The ultimate goal is to know God better through His Word. That's why devotional Bible study is extremely important. Too often, however, we don't approach Bible study with the knowledge or inclination necessary to get the most out of personal times of devotional study. This article will provide several helpful devotional Bible study tips.

### Consistency, Prayer and Memorization

**Consistency.** One important aspect of devotional Bible study is consistency. Make it a habit to set aside a regular time and place for your devotional reading. If a regular time and place is not possible due to your schedule, strive for consistency anyway by keeping yourself on track with your devotional reading on a regular basis. Don't be legalistic about your devotional reading time, though, as that misses the point of seeking and knowing God better through His Word.

**Prayer.** Another point to keep in mind is to remember to pray about your devotional reading. There is no set formula for how to go about praying for your reading time. You may wish to pray before, during and after, or perhaps a mixture of these options. Ask God to help you understand what you are reading and to apply it to your life without disregarding the meaning and context of the original passage and its intent.

**Memorization.** In our fast-paced contemporary culture, people don't often stop to memorize things anymore. We think it's so easy to just look something up online. But when it comes to devotional Bible study, internalizing God's Word through memorization is important. If you find this daunting, start with short and simple passages that you may already be familiar with, then move on to more extensive

passages. It may be helpful to write your memory verses on index cards, but that's up to you. Proverbs 3:5-6 is a good place to start: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (NIV). Try to understand the context of the passage you are memorizing, such as its historical and cultural context, what comes before and after the passage and what the author originally intended by it.

If you find memorizing Scripture a challenge and a chore, don't be discouraged. Remember, this is not about being legalistic regarding your Bible study time, but about helping you know God better and, as a result, growing in your faith.

## Four Key Aspects

Keep in mind four key aspects of your devotional Bible study time. First, look to be edified. You want to be growing in your faith and maturity level as a Christian, no matter how long or short a period you have been a believer. You are not trying to score "points" with God during any sort of Bible study time. Rather, seek to be edified and also to know the Bible better so you may edify others.

Second, engage the reading. This means you want to be actively involved in what you are reading, looking for what God may want to teach you through your reading time. To this end, try to structure your devotional Bible study time in a quiet area as free from distractions as possible. If you have a cell phone around, turn it off. The same goes for other possible distractions such as radio, television, the Internet, etc. If you are feeling active, you may wish to incorporate your personal Bible study time with a brisk walk or a visit to a park.

Third, devotional Bible study should equip you to face the challenges of your daily life, no matter what they may be. Look to God's Word to nourish you and prepare you to serve Christ throughout your day.

Fourth, devotional Bible study time should also prepare you for evangelism. This does not necessarily mean that God is calling you to be a street preacher, hand out tracts or become a full time pastor. But

it does mean that your personal Bible study time should equip you to share the good news of Christ with others.

## Interpretation

Also keep in mind that devotional Bible study time does not mean that you have a license for loose or shoddy interpretation. Remember to keep in mind the context of the passage and the author's original intent. Don't read into a text what is not there. Instead, seek to draw out from your reading what is intended in the passage.

Basic biblical interpretation skills such as the ones described in the previous paragraph will help you keep your study times rooted in the reality of what God would like to teach you through His Word.

At times you may come across puzzling phrases, ideas or just things that you do not understand at the time you are reading. Try to keep your devotional reading time in mind and not get side-tracked by these distractions. Jot them down in a notebook and research answers to your questions during times of more in-depth Bible study (see the final article in this series). It's fine to have questions as you read biblical passages, but often it's helpful to set aside those questions for a different kind of Bible study time rather than interrupting your devotional time.

## Reflecting on God's Word

You may also wish to set aside some of your devotional Bible study time for personal reflection or meditation. This doesn't refer to non-Christian types of "meditation" that is not Christ-centered, but biblical meditation that has God as its focus. Read Psalm 119 to get a good idea of biblically-based meditation and reflection. Note that the object of meditation is God, His Word, His decrees, His nature, etc.

## It's Not About a Technique

There are a lot of resources about devotional Bible study. In fact, one might say that there are so many that it's hard to know where to start or what to use. As you become active in regular devotional Bible reading, make sure you aren't carried away by any particular

technique. This is not to say that all these sorts of techniques are bad, but if you decide to try one approach and it doesn't seem to work for you, try something else. Keep Christ as your focus, not any technique or approach to Bible study. Christianity is reasonable and relational, so try to maintain a healthy balance in your study time.

As 1 Chronicles 22:19 so aptly puts it, "Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God (NIV)." God has blessed everyone with the ability to know Him better through His Word. This does not mean we are all Bible scholars, but it does mean that God expects us to use the abilities we do have to actively seek and engage His Word on a regular basis. Do your best to remain consistent in your devotional Bible study time, remaining prayerful and seeking to internalize God's Word so that it becomes second nature and part of who you are.

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# Why We Read the Bible

**Article by Tony Reinke** Senior writer, [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org)

Reading the Bible cover-to-cover each year is a resolution that is both noble and realistic. Today we have many apps and guides to help us with the *process* of our Bible reading. But at the start of our new year it's helpful to look at the *aim* of our Bible reading. Why do we read the Bible?

In addressing biblical counselors in 2002, Pastor John explained it this way:

I have a burden for my people right now, just like I do for myself, that we get beyond propositions and Bible verses to Christ. I do not mean "get around" Bible verses, but

“through” Bible verses to Christ, to the person, the living person, to know Him, cherish Him, treasure Him, enjoy Him, trust Him, be at home with Him. I want to count Him more to be desired than all other things — wife, husband, children, success in career, leisure, vacations, health, food, sex, money.

Bible reading is meant to deepen our personal relationship with Christ. He’s more precious.<sup>1</sup>

He is more precious than all our shallow Earthy pleasures and creature comforts. It amazes me that so many people never contemplate God enough, at least, to realize what their future in HIM is, and what they presently lack living here in the mud.

Don't fear going to Hell because, at least in my doctrine, eternal Hell is reserved for the Devil and his fallen angels. The 2<sup>nd</sup> death is for those people who rejected God's offer of salvation. The second death is a blank out. Non-existence. To experience the second death is to be deleted from this magnificent dream called "God's Universe."

Fear the second death at least because of all you'll miss! God wants to raise you to be like one of his children, and finally you will be expected to mature to be like him!

Ideally, reading Scripture in communion with God makes it possible for our objective response to God’s word to merge with our personal response to him, as Pastor John explained in his article on Bible reading published in the back of *The ESV Study Bible*:

**When we seek to enjoy communion with the Lord — and not to be led astray by the ambiguities of religious experience — we read the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, God’s words and God’s deeds reveal God himself for our knowledge and our enjoyment.**

Of course, it is possible to read the Bible without enjoying communion with God. We must seek to understand the Bible's meaning, and we must pause to contemplate what we understand and, by the Spirit, to feel and express the appropriate response of the heart.

This is why Orthodox Rabbi's write so much. They make contemplation part of their constant experience and then write about what they've learned, or realizations they have had, after the time of consideration. If we are not also doing some long term thinking about what message, lessons and thoughts to us God offers, we are glossing over The Bible but not truly studying it!

God communicates with us in many ways through the Bible and seeks the response of our communion with him.

- If God indicts us (2 Cor. 7:8–10), we respond to him with sorrow and repentance.
- If he commends us (Ps. 18:19–20), we respond to him with humble gratitude and joy.
- If he commands us to do something (Matt. 28:19–20), we look to him for strength and resolve to obey with his help.
- If he makes a promise (Heb. 13:5–6), we marvel at his grace and trust him to do what he says.
- If he warns us of some danger (Luke 21:34), we take him seriously and watch with a thankful sense of his presence and protection.
- If he describes something about himself (Isa. 46:9–11), his Son (Mark 1:11), or his Holy Spirit (John 16:13–14), we affirm it and admire it and pray for clearer eyes to see and enjoy his greatness and beauty.<sup>2</sup>

Reading the Bible from cover to cover in 2013 or 2019, 2020, or any future year always is a noble goal.

**It's a goal that positions us well to commune with God.** Keep communion as your aim, and remember the words of Scripture are there for us to know God's heart, to

commune with the Living Christ, and to respond appropriately to his beauty and to his voice.

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<sup>1</sup> John Piper, “God’s Glory Is the Goal of Biblical Counseling,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 20/2 (Winter 2002), 8–21. This article is not online but will be added to the DG archive shortly.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, “Reading the Bible in Prayer and Communion with God,” in *The ESV Study Bible* (Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2570–2572. Bullet points added.  
Tony Reinke (@tonyreinke) is senior writer for Desiring God and author of *12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You* (2017), *John Newton on the Christian Life* (2015), and *Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading Books* (2011). He hosts the Ask Pastor John podcast and lives in the Twin Cities with his wife and three children.

from: <https://bible.org/article/studying-scriptures>

## Studying the Scriptures

**This is a serious study, excellent for pastors or people running a small home study and worship group or Home Schooling/Private School.**

### Related Media

The discipline of study is central to the whole process of renewing the mind in such a way that we can respond in appropriate ways to the truths of God’s Word. Study of Scripture involves not only reading, but active involvement in observation, interpretation, and application of its contents. This discipline also includes devotional reflection on the beauties and intricacies of nature as well as exposure to gifted writers and teachers in the past and in the present.

**Kenneth Boa**

Website: <http://www.kenboa.org>

Commentary: <http://www.kenboa.org/blog>

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The Bible is unique in its production, preservation, proclamations, and product. In its *production*, it is a harmonious and unified message of redemption that has emerged out of diversity of authors, circumstances, and literary forms. In its *preservation*, it has miraculously withstood the ravages of time, persecution, and criticism, and continues to be the best selling book in the world. In its *proclamations*, it stands alone in its revelation of God's plan from eternity to eternity and in its life-giving message. In its *product*, it has changed the course of history, reached more people, and transformed more lives than any other book.

In spite of all this, the Bible is often taken for granted, even by those who vehemently support its inspiration and authority. Many believers associate Bible study with drudgery; limiting themselves to mere samples, they never cultivate a true taste for its contents. There are two basic reasons for this problem: lack of a proper *motivation* and lack of a proper *method*. This booklet is designed to overcome these obstacles to fruitful Bible study.

To own a Bible is a tremendous responsibility—to whom much has been given, much is required ([Luke 12:48](#)). The Scriptures must not merely be owned, but known; not merely known, but believed; and not merely believed, but obeyed. To encourage this, we will look at the purpose, prerequisites, principles, process, and practice of Bible study.

Purpose of Bible Study

## THE DOORWAY TO A NEW DOMAIN

Scripture tells us that there are really two realms: that which is seen and that which is unseen. The first is the realm of apparent reality, the world we know through our minds and our five senses. If it were not for divine revelation, we would be locked into this level without any way of breaking through to the second realm, the world of ultimate reality. Bound to the level of the finite, the relative, and the temporal, we would be unable to find the meaning and purpose we long for that can only come from the level of the infinite, the absolute, and the eternal. There would be no hope of finding answers to the basic questions of life: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?

God gave us His Word to deliver us from this domain of darkness and to transfer us to the domain of light, the kingdom of His beloved Son ([Col. 1:13](#)). The Bible reveals the full scope of the Lord's creative and redemptive plan for His people. Only in its pages can we gain a perspective on our corporate past, present, and future and realize the overwhelming significance of our new identity as the recipients of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" ([Eph. 1:3](#)).

By drinking deeply and regularly from the well of God's Word, our entire value system will be gradually transformed from the temporal to the eternal. The study of Scripture sets our minds on the things above ([Col. 3:2](#)), the source of all biological and spiritual life. It enables us to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" ([2 Cor. 4:18](#)).

This is the heart of wisdom--plugging into the realm of ultimate reality and walking in the light, life, and love of the Lord. By pursuing the precepts and principles of the Bible, we gain the most important skill of all: the ability to live each area of life under the dominion of the King. The Bible does not tell us to live and learn; it exhorts us to learn and live.

## THE PATHWAY TO A BETTER LIFE

There are several reasons for getting into the Word and letting the Word get into us. Here are six:

1. *Nourishment and growth.* The Bible was not merely written for our information, but for our transformation. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" ([2 Tim. 3:16-17](#)). While the Bible is an inspired revelation from the living God, it requires our response before it can have an impact upon our lives. Scripture is indeed "profitable for teaching," but its profit does not stop on the level of doctrine; it must move from the head to the heart to accomplish the purpose for which it was given.

God loves us and desires nothing less than our highest good: conformity to the character of His Son. A dynamic relationship with the truth of His Word provides us with the spiritual nourishment we will need to grow into the maturity of Christlikeness.

*Exercise:* Study [2 Peter 1:2-8](#) to trace the progressive effect that the knowledge of God and His promises has upon the life of a believer.

2. *New priorities and values.* The study of Scripture can deliver us from the bondage of a temporal perspective and provide us with an eternal value system. By frequently renewing our minds with the Word ([Rom. 12:2](#)), our thinking and behavior come more into conformity with God's view of significance, purpose, identity, and success. The pursuit of God's value system leads to fulfillment and joy in contrast to the frustration and unhappiness that result from the pursuit of the world's value system. See [Psalm 5:11; 16:5-8; 105:3-4; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Matthew 6:33; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Philippians 1:21; Colossians 1:10-12](#).

3. *Overcoming temptation.* The study of Scripture provides us with both corrective and preventive medicine. It warns us in advance of the kinds of temptations we can expect (e.g., [Prov. 4:10-27; 5:1-23; 1 John 2:15-16](#)), tells us about the process of temptation (see [Jas. 1:12-17](#)), and shows us how to deal with temptation ([1 Cor. 10:13; Eph. 6:10-18](#)).

4. *Guidance for decision making.* The Scriptures reveal God's moral will for practically every area of life. A working knowledge of the commands, prohibitions, and principles of the Bible

will give us wisdom and guidance in the decisions that shape the course of our earthly existence ([Ps. 119:105](#); [Prov. 1:2-5](#)), and a divine perspective that will enable us to respond in the right way to our circumstances and rise above them ([Jas. 1:5](#)).

5. *Knowledge of God.* The Bible is a progressive revelation of the person, plan, character, mind, love, and will of our Creator. We cannot hope to know Him and His ways apart from time spent in His revealed Word.

*Exercise:* All but three verses in [Psalm 119](#) contain a reference to the Word of God (variously referred to as God's laws, decrees, precepts, promises, testimonies, statutes, judgments, ordinances, commands, and words). Read this psalm and record your observations of the beneficial effects of the Scriptures in cultivating a relationship with God.

6. *Knowledge of ourselves.* "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" ([Heb. 4:12](#)). The Bible cuts below the facade of appearances and lays bare our secret motivations and plans (cf. [1 Sam. 16:7](#)). As we read it, the Word becomes a mirror that exhibits our true character, exposes areas of self-delusion, and exhorts us to change (see [Jas. 1:21-25](#)).

Prerequisites of Bible Study

## THE PREREQUISITE OF A PLAN

Even if a person realizes the tremendous significance of a working knowledge of the Word in his life, the prospect of Bible study may still seem unexciting and unrewarding because of the inadequate procedures he has used in the past. He may be properly motivated, but he could also be a victim of improper methods.

When people grope in the darkness of haphazard approaches to Scripture, it is little wonder that Bible study seems so unsatisfying and has such a minimal place in their lives. The hit-and-miss approach of Bible roulette provides little spiritual nourishment. Without an ability to understand and apply the truths of Scripture in a practical and meaningful way, believers miss out on the benefits of exploring and discovering biblical truths for themselves. This is why so many Christians have only a secondhand knowledge of the Bible and rely almost exclusively on the input of teachers and preachers.

The sections on the process and practice of Bible study later in this booklet will provide you with a plan that will make your time in the Word more rewarding.

## THE PREREQUISITE OF DISCIPLINE

While we need a plan or method of getting into Scripture for ourselves, no approach to the study of the Bible will be effective without a measure of discipline and consistency. If we are convinced of the value of time spent in the Word (the problem of motivation) and realize that

fruitful approaches are available (the problem of method), the only remaining obstacle is the inertia that keeps us from beginning and tempts us to stop. There is no shortcut to extracting the deeper spiritual truths from the mine of Scripture. Even though they are available to all, we must be willing to expend the effort to find them. The dividends are well worth the effort: consistent time in the Word will shape the way we see the world and the way we live our lives. But this consistency cannot be won without commitment.

## THE PREREQUISITE OF DEPENDENCE

We need a plan for Bible study, and we need the discipline to follow through with that plan so that it will become a habitual part of our lives. But these will do us little good if they are not pursued with a conscious sense of dependence upon the teaching and illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit ([John 16:13-15](#)). We must combine discipline (human responsibility) with dependence (divine sovereignty) as we approach the Scriptures. We cannot properly comprehend or respond to biblical truths in our own power; this requires the grace of God.

*Exercise:* What does [1 Corinthians 2:6-16](#) say about the role of the Holy Spirit in our understanding of God's revelation?

## THE PREREQUISITE OF RESPONSIVENESS

We must not only open God's Word—we must also *be* open to His Word. James tells us that we must prove ourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves ([Jas. 1:22](#)). This requires responsiveness to the truth we receive *as we receive it*. If we are disobedient to the light we have been given, we will not receive further illumination (cf. [Mark 4:23-25](#)). The old couplet is true:

Light obeyed increaseth light,  
Light rejected bringeth night.

Salvation begins with a response to the person and work of Christ as revealed in Scripture. The sacred writings "are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" ([2 Tim. 3:15](#)). Non-Christians cannot "accept the things of the Spirit of God" ([1 Cor. 2:14](#)) because they do not have the Spirit. Unless a person has a relationship with God, he cannot understand His Word. Similarly, one must grow in this relationship to increase his capacity to understand Scripture. Our fellowship with the Lord is dependent upon obedience (see [John 15:14-15](#)), and disobedient Christians cannot accept the solid food of the Word (see [1 Cor. 3:1-3](#)). As G. Campbell Morgan observed, "if we persist in the things against which we are warned, the Bible becomes a sealed book, and we can neither know it, nor teach it."

## THE PREREQUISITE OF HONESTY

"Holy Scripture is the unchangeable word of God to which man must bend himself, and not something which he can bend to his own personal ideas" (Jean Danielou). The truth of the Bible is radical, and we will often be tempted to twist it to fit our preconceived opinions and tone down

its message so that we will be more comfortable. We must be honest before the Word, and this means openness to new insights and willingness to give up cherished notions. "Unless we carefully examine the hidden assumptions that constitute our perspective, and seek to discover God's unique perspective on issues critical to understanding Scripture, we are bound to misunderstand. And, misunderstanding, we will find the Bible a disappointing book" (Lawrence O. Richards).

## THE PREREQUISITE OF EXPOSURE

"For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" ([Acts 20:27](#)). We must expose ourselves and others to the full counsel of God, and this requires a comprehensive view of the entire spectrum of the Bible. There are five basic categories of Scripture: Old Testament historical books, poetical books, and prophetic books; New Testament historical books (Gospels and Acts), and epistles. If we limit ourselves to any one of these categories (e.g., the Gospels or the epistles) and avoid the others, we will suffer from an imbalanced diet and our perspective will be distorted.

Principles of Bible Study

## RULES

1. Treat the Bible as a complete book; it is a unity in diversity. Try to relate each book you study to the central theme of Scripture: God's loving plan to redeem and restore imperfect people through the perfect work of His Son.
2. The Bible is a unified book, but as we study its pages, we should also remember that it is a progressive revelation. Over the fifteen or more centuries during which it was written, its portrait of God and His redemptive program was gradually enriched and clarified. It has been said that, "The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed."
3. Do not regard the Bible as a textbook; it is not merely an object to be observed but an oracle to be obeyed. Approach it with a proper attitude of reverence, care, and receptivity. It is alive with the Spirit of God, and it has the power to change the lives of those who respond to it. It is trustworthy and inexhaustible. There are always fresh truths within its pages, and the more deeply we mine, the more insight we will gain. It can transform our thinking and gradually move us from a human to a divine perspective.

*Exercise:* Inspiration has been defined as "God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs" (Charles C. Ryrie). Read the following passages and briefly describe how each aids your understanding of inspiration: [Jeremiah](#)

[30:2](#); [Matthew 5:17-18](#); [15:4](#); [John 10:35](#); [17:17](#); [Acts 28:25](#); [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#); [1 Peter 1:10-12](#); [2 Peter 1:20-21](#); [3:15-16](#); [Revelation 22:19](#).

4. Let the Bible speak for itself. Scripture is its own best interpreter and commentator. This means:

a. Interpret unclear passages in the light of those which are clear. When wrestling with a difficult passage, use cross references to consult other verses which deal with the same subject in a simpler way. Then bring the unclear into conformity with the clear.

b. To be truly biblical, a specific doctrine must incorporate everything the Word has to say about it. We build up our understanding of theology by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

5. Interpret every passage in light of its immediate context (preceding and following verses, paragraph, chapter) and broad context (book, testament, Bible). A verse lifted out of its context can become a pretext. It is not as easy to twist the meaning of a verse when it is observed in its setting.

6. Take the text at face value and interpret it in its plain or literal sense. Do not interpret it in a spiritual, symbolic, or allegorical way unless the context tells you that parables, symbols, or figures of speech are being used. A passage normally has only interpretation, though it may have a number of applications.

7. Be sure to consider the cultural and historical setting. This, along with customs and geography, provides the proper backdrop to assist you in understanding the portion of Scripture you are studying. Ask yourself the question, "What did this passage mean to the people of that time and culture?"

## RESEARCH

1. In Bible study as well as prayer, it is crucial to choose the right time and place so that we can be consistent. This discipline of consistency is essential to a growing theoretical and practical knowledge of the Word of God. Listen to this statement by D. L. Moody:

A man stood up in one of our meetings and said he hoped for enough out of the series of meetings to last him all his life. I told him he might as well try to eat enough breakfast at one time to last him his lifetime. This is a mistake that people are making; they are running to religious meetings and they think that the meetings are going to do the work. But, if this doesn't bring you into closer contact with the Word of God, the whole impression will be gone in three months.

2. Don't be haphazard in selecting a passage for study. Try to be systematic in your choice of topics, chapters, and books so that your input will come from all parts of Scripture and touch upon every aspect of your life. Design your study sessions so that you will not sacrifice quality for quantity by overburdening yourself with unmanageable portions. Work with sections you can thoroughly digest.

3. Avoid getting bogged down in one translation. Use a primary version for in-depth study, memorization, and meditation, but work with others from time to time. Some versions are better for broad reading, while others are more suited to detailed study.

4. Gather information from the text by bombarding it with as many questions as you can and doing the necessary research to answer them. This will force you to delve into the Word instead of skimming over it.

5. Using the information you have collected, determine what the author means and try to glean insights. State your conclusions in the form of principles.

## RESPONSE

Even if we observe all the rules, engage in conscientious and thorough research, and develop dazzling principles, we can still miss the whole point of Bible study. God did not inspire Scripture so that we could accumulate a great wealth of information, but "that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" ([2 Tim. 3:17](#)). As Irving L. Jensen noted, "The important thing is not how many times you've gone through the Bible, but whether the Bible has gone through you." We must respond to what we learn through our study by allowing God to transform our attitudes, feelings, and actions. Only then will our study of the Word be glorifying to God.

### Process of Bible Study

Now that we have looked at the purpose, prerequisites, and principles of Bible study, it is time to begin the process. To do this, you should familiarize yourself with four basic steps that will enrich your time in the Word regardless of what specific method you use: *ask*, *answer*, *accumulate*, and *apply*. With them, Bible study will be productive and meaningful; without them, it will be dry and empty. Use these four steps until they become second nature to you. When you begin to saturate your study with them, your time in the Word will never be the same.

### ASK

Ask key questions that when answered will provide insight into the meaning of the text. Perhaps the most important skill in Bible study lies in asking the right questions. Here are the questions you should use:

<b>ASK</b>	<b>IS THERE</b>
WHO? -- The persons	A key word? — Important to meaning
WHAT? -- The problem, plot	A comparison? — Often introduced by "like"
WHEN? -- The time	A contrast? — Often introduced by “but”
WHERE? -- The place	A repetition? — Indicates emphasis
WHY? -- The purpose, reason	An atmosphere? — Joy, anger, fear, etc.
HOW? -- The solution, resources	A clear literary form? — Poetry, prophecy, narrative, etc.
	A progression? — Events, ideas
	A climax? — Lesser to greater
	A significant point of grammar? —Tense, sentence structure, number (singular or plural)

## ANSWER

Good questions demand accurate answers. There are two primary sources for these answers: the text and the tools of the trade.

## TEXT AND CONTEXT

We have already noted that Scripture best explains Scripture. You will find that many of your questions will be answered in the immediate and broad context of the passage you are studying. Always look here first, and you will experience the joy of creative discovery.

## TOOLS

Begin to collect and use the tools of the trade. These will give you great help in finding the answers you need for any method of Bible study. Just as a carpenter would never go to work without his hammer and saw, the serious student of Scripture would be ill-equipped if the tools of Bible study are not within arm's reach.

Here are some basic study tools you should consider adding to your library:

### *Modern Translation:*

New International Version

New American Standard Version

New English Translation (NET Bible) [On line NETBible](#)

### *Study Bible:*

The Open Bible

The Ryrie Study Bible

### *Topical Bible:*

Nave's Topical Bible

### *Concordance:*

Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible

### *Bible Survey:*

Talk Thru the Bible

Explore the Book

### *Bible Handbook:*

Unger's Bible Handbook

### *Bible Dictionary:*

New Bible Dictionary

### *Bible Commentary:*

Wycliffe Bible Commentary

New Bible Commentary

## *Bible Encyclopedia:*

Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible

At the end of his life, the Apostle Paul gave this exhortation to Timothy, his child in the faith: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" ([2 Tim. 2:15](#)). A careful and consistent use of the text and the tools will help us fulfill this mandate.

### ACCUMULATE

Once you have asked the right questions and arrived at clear answers, you are ready to accumulate practical principles. The easiest way to accomplish this is to put on the SPECS that were given to you in "Searching the Scriptures," the fourth lesson of the Search BASIC DISCIPLESHIP booklet:

- Sins to Forsake
- Promises to Claim
- Examples to Follow
- Commands to Obey
- Summary Thought for Today

### APPLY

"The end result of all Bible study should be the application to life. Remember, the Word of God is 'seed' to be planted in your heart, to take root and bear fruit" (Lloyd M. Perry). Because biblical truth touches upon all areas and relationships of life, it is important that we maximize its impact by being very specific in the way we apply it. In this fourth stage, the SPECS you have accumulated throughout your study should now be prayerfully applied to these eight vital relationships:

1. God and You
2. You and Yourself
3. Husband and Wife
4. Parent and Child
5. Employer and Employee
6. Christian and Christian
7. Christian and World System

- Non-Christians
  - Satan
8. Christian and Creation

## Practice of Bible Study

The practice of Bible study involves a variety of methods that will enable you to uncover the treasures of Scripture in different ways. Each is designed to provide its own particular benefit, and it is a good idea to try using all of them to find the ones that help you the most. After becoming familiar with them, you may want to switch methods from time to time to avoid getting caught in the rut of routine. Some of them compliment each other and can be used concurrently. The process of ask, answer, accumulate, and apply can be successfully plugged into any of these methods.

## PLANNED READING

### DEFINITION

This method is the broadest approach to Scripture because it involves the systematic reading of book after book according to a predetermined plan. There are many variations, but most of them relate to daily readings derived from a yearly goal (e.g., reading the whole Bible in a year).

### BENEFITS

1. There is no better way to get a comprehensive overview of the Word. Reading large segments of Scripture will give you an increasing familiarity with the flow of the people, places, events, and concepts in the Old and New Testaments.
2. Long-term use of planned reading will take you beyond favorite portions and expose you to the whole counsel of Scripture.
3. You will begin to think creatively across books and Testaments as you discover connections between concepts in different passages.

### STEPS

1. Set a goal for what you want to read and target a realistic completion date. If you decide to read the Bible in a year, you can choose one of the available reading schemes or formulate your own. It is usually desirable to include daily input from more than one portion of Scripture in your reading plan.

2. In *Enjoy Your Bible*, Irving L. Jensen has suggested a method that will help you actively interact with the text as you go along:

a. *Read*

(1) Read aloud. This is especially helpful in devotional literature like the Psalms.

(2) Read carefully. Don't be mechanical; try to be alert and observant.

(3) Read repeatedly. Additional readings will give you greater insight into a passage.

(4) Read peripherally. As you read a text, think about its context.

b. *Reflect*

(1) Reflect purposefully. As you reflect upon the passage you are reading or have just completed, do it with the clear purpose of knowing God better and

becoming more conformed to the image of His Son.

(2) Reflect imaginatively. Actively use your mind's eye to visualize the situation and put yourself in it.

(3) Reflect humbly. Never take the Bible for granted; remember that you are privileged to reflect upon the revelation of the living God.

(4) Reflect prayerfully. Personalize your reading by communicating with God about the truth you derive from it.

(5) Reflect patiently. Reflection takes time and concentration. Include this in the time you have allotted for your reading.

c. *Record*

When an important verse, thought, or application emerges from the text, jot it down so that you can retain it and refer to it in the future.

d. *Respond*

(1) Respond with confession. When the Word exposes an area of sin in your attitudes or actions, quickly respond by acknowledging it so that you will continue to walk in the light.

(2) Respond with faith. Stand upon the truth of what you are reading.

(3) Respond with obedience. Resolve to take the truth you have just seen and put it into practice during the remainder of the day.

## MEMORIZATION

### DEFINITION

In this method, the student of the Word selects portions of Scripture according to a definite plan, commits them to memory, and keeps them memorized by means of periodic review.

### BENEFITS

1. This is the most effective way of making Scripture a part of your thought patterns. The discipline and repetition necessary to memorize a text will plant it deep within your consciousness.
2. Memorization places Scripture at your fingertips, always at your disposal for use on unexpected occasions. It will also enhance your teaching, counseling, and witnessing.
3. "Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee" ([Ps. 119:11](#)). The passages you have memorized will assist you in times of temptation.

### STEPS

1. Start with the Scripture memory cards in the Search basic and advanced discipleship booklets. This will give you a good variety of passages that you can use in many situations. After you have memorized these verses, you may want to consider using the Navigators Topical Memory System to build your mental library of verses.
2. Carry your cards with you and use them during the "dead times" of the day (waiting for an appointment, waiting on line, waiting on hold, waiting in traffic). The key to memorization is repetition, so expose yourself to your new verses briefly but often.
3. Set specific and realistic goals. Try to learn one or two verses a week. Periodically evaluate your progress and make the necessary adjustments.
4. Be sure to review what you have memorized so that it will not gradually slip away from you. The more you have learned, the more important a methodical program of review will become. Otherwise, you will suffer the frustration of losing faster than you learn.
5. Consider the possibility of memorizing a larger portion of Scripture, perhaps a chapter like [John 15](#) or [Romans 8](#), or even a small book like Philippians or Colossians. Memorization is a skill that improves with practice, and after you have mastered a good number of verses, you may be ready to tackle something bigger. One of the advantages of this is that you learn a

passage in its context and force yourself to think according to an inspired sequence of concepts. Perhaps the easiest way of memorizing large portions of the Word is to work with it a chapter at a time. Read the chapter several times a week while using a 3x5 card to uncover a each line as you go through it. After a while, you will find yourself guessing more and more of the lines before you reveal them. Once you have learned a chapter, review it regularly to keep it with you.

## MEDITATION

### DEFINITION

Meditation is the process of ruminating or chewing on a passage to absorb its life-giving contents. In this method, we focus our attention on a verse or phrase of Scripture or on a biblical concept and reflect upon it one or more times during the day.

### BENEFITS

1. Scripture tells us to meditate on God's revealed truth day and night (see [Josh. 1:8](#); [Ps. 1:2; 119:97,148](#)). Meditation directs the conscious mind during the day, and before retiring, programs the subconscious mind during the night. It is an excellent way to practice the presence of God.
2. This method integrates the Word of God into our minds, affections, and wills so that our thinking, emotions, and choices throughout each day are brought into increasing conformity with the truth. In Bible study, we master the Word; in meditation, the Word masters us.
3. Meditation enables us to ponder a passage in depth and so that we can gain meaningful personal insights that we would otherwise have overlooked.
4. This approach to biblical truth is an indispensable part of the process of abiding in Christ. As we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we bear spiritual fruit (see [John 15:7-8](#)).

### STEPS

1. Follow a plan to find appropriate texts for meditation. One way is to meditate on the verses you have already memorized. Gradually go through them by letting each become the theme of one day's meditation. Jim Downing in his book on *Meditation*, suggests another plan which involves the daily reading of every thirtieth psalm, the first corresponding to the day of the month. Five minutes before going to bed, read through the next day's psalms until you find a verse that particularly speaks to you. Then close your Bible, and be sure to make that your last waking thought. If you wake up during the night, think about the verse. In the morning, read through the five psalms with your verse in mind and let it be the theme of your meditation that day.
2. Select specific times for brief interludes of meditation on the verse you have chosen for the day. These could be before meals and coffee breaks or you could use a watch with an alarm to remind you at regular intervals through the day (when the alarm sounds, immediately set it for the next brief meditation break).

3. If you are not working with a verse you have previously memorized, read your verse several times (try doing this aloud) until it becomes easy for you to think through it.
4. Use your imagination and begin to visualize the concepts in the verse in as many ways as you can. Put yourself into the words and into the historical context of the verse.
5. Ponder each word and phrase of the text and try to gain as many insights as you can. Creatively approach it from different angles, and ask the Spirit of God to minister to you through this process.
6. Personalize the passage and make it your own by putting it in the first person and praying it back to God. Commit yourself to pursue and apply the truths you have found in it.
7. Offer praise and worship to God on the basis of your day's meditation.

## THE SYNTHETIC METHOD

### DEFINITION

In the synthetic method, we study an entire book of the Bible by moving from the parts (verses, paragraphs, major divisions) to the whole in order to discover the flow of thought and the central theme of the book.

### BENEFITS

1. This method gives you a bird's eye view of Scripture and enables you to understand a book as a unit.
2. You will be able to think through the historical and/or logical sequence of the book.
3. Synthetic study gives you a comprehensive picture that will help you see how the pieces of the puzzle fit together. It provides a structure that will organize and integrate the details, so that you will be able to visualize the context of each verse and paragraph.
4. With this method, you will know what is in each paragraph of the book.

### STEPS

1. Select a book--begin with short and easily outlined books like Ephesians and Colossians.
2. Plan to work with the book at a convenient time and in a consistent way.

3. With a pen and paper ready for your notes and observations, read through the book in one sitting. In this reading, look for the central theme of the book and how it is developed.
4. Read the book a second time and use the questions found in "The Process of Bible Study" above. In the synthetic method, don't get too detailed in your use of these questions. Note problem passages and use the tools to find answers.
5. Read the book a third time and create a title for each paragraph. Follow the ROSE guidelines to make your titles crisp and useful:
  - a. **R**etainable--easy to memorize.
  - b. **O**riginal--your very own.
  - c. **S**hort--three or four words.
  - d. **E**xact--suited to the paragraph.Be sure to memorize your paragraph titles so that it will be easy for you to think your way through the book.
6. During the fourth reading, go through the book with your SPECS on (sins to forsake, promises to claim, examples to follow, commands to obey, summary thought for today), so that you will accumulate practical principles to apply in your life. Record these principles or you will lose them.
7. Now you are ready to develop an original outline of the book. Create titles for the major sections of the book, and use your paragraph titles as well.
8. Finally, write a paragraph to summarize the main theme of the book. Show how each of the book's paragraphs contributes to the development of this theme.

## THE ANALYTICAL METHOD

### DEFINITION

The analytical method of Bible study focuses on the details and particulars of a passage and engages the student in an in-depth analysis of the Word. In contrast to the bird's eye view provided by the synthetic method, the analytical method offers a worm's eye view by getting us immersed in the soil of Scripture.

### BENEFITS

1. God inspired not only the broad themes of Scripture, but all the details as well. Using this method, we will gain an appreciation for the words, nuances, figures of speech, and other particulars of a passage.

2. This method will give us skill in observing and interpreting Scripture as we break it down into its separate components and see how they fit together.

3. Systematic analysis will help us mine the inexhaustible treasures of the Word. We will more clearly see that each time we approach a passage, we can gain new meaning, depth, and insight.

## STEPS

1. Select a passage for study. Note the paragraph divisions in your translation of the Bible--it is best to analyze one paragraph at a time as you go through the text.

2. Carefully read the paragraph several times.

3. Probe each verse of the paragraph in depth by making observations and *asking* as many of the questions found in "The Process of Bible Study" as you can. Unlike the synthetic method where you asked broad questions of the passage, in the analytical method you should stop to ask questions on the level of words, phrases, and verses. Record your questions because you will need them for the next step.

4. Use the text and context to find the *answers* to your questions. For some of them (e.g., historical background, chronology, word meanings), you will need to draw upon the recommended Bible study tools.

5. *Accumulate* principles from each verse by putting on your SPECS.

6. *Apply* these principles to the eight vital relationships of your life listed in "The Process of Bible Study."

This booklet includes an analytical Bible study worksheet which you can duplicate and use to record your results in steps 3 through 6.

## OTHER METHODS

### OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, CORRELATION, AND APPLICATION

This method is similar to the ask, answer, accumulate, and apply process described above. It has been said that "A wise man will learn more in a walk around the block than a fool will learn on a trip around the world." In observation, we ask basic questions of the text, look for key words, phrases, and verses, find connecting words and progressions of thought, and discover contrasts and comparisons. In interpretation, we seek to understand the things we have observed to discern the meaning and purpose that the author had in mind. In correlation, we relate the passage we are studying to the overall context and coordinate it with other sections of Scripture. In application, we derive specific principles from what we have learned and seek to implement them in our lives. See Walter A. Henrichsen's *A Layman's Guide to Interpreting the Bible* for a more detailed description of this method.

## THE TOPICAL METHOD

This can be a very fruitful method because it helps us discover the development of a theme through the pages of Scripture. Choose a specific topic and decide whether you wish to trace it from Genesis to Revelation or limit yourself to its use in a section or book of the Bible or in a series of selected verses. You may want to choose a theme like sin, redemption, forgiveness, love, or wisdom. Or you may study a concept like speech, the family, stewardship, or work. Use a concordance (*Nave's Topical Bible* is also helpful) to find the passages you will work with. Make your observations, ask questions, look for the answers, and then formulate an outline of the topic to organize your key thoughts. Check and supplement your results by using a Bible encyclopedia. Summarize your findings and be sure to end with a set of specific life applications.

## THE BIOGRAPHICAL METHOD

A study of the failures and successes of Bible personalities is an excellent way to uncover spiritual principles and discover insights into the way God works in people's lives. If the person you want to study is a major figure in Scripture, you may want to confine your study to a particular book or a portion of his or her life. Use a concordance to find the relevant passages. As you work with these verses, create a list of the events in the person's life and then arrange them in a chronological sequence. Use this list to create a biographical outline with the associated verses. With this outline, move through the character's life and make a set of observations, interpretations, and applications.

There are a variety of other Bible study methods which could prove useful after you become familiar with those outlined in this booklet. *Effective Bible Study* by Howard F. Vos, for example, describes seventeen approaches, including the theological, literary, geographical, sociological, political, cultural, and psychological methods.

### Reflections

1. Write down the six purposes of Bible study that were given earlier in this booklet.

Think about this list and use it as a motivation builder that will help you overcome the barriers to your own study of God's Word.

2. What are the six prerequisites of Bible study?

3. In the spaces at the right, rank these prerequisites from 1 (the prerequisite you have best fulfilled in the past) to 6 (the prerequisite you have least fulfilled in the past). 3. What do you think are the two most important rules of interpretation?

Why did you choose these rules?

4. What are the four A's in the process of Bible study?

Can these be used in any Bible study method? When do you plan to start putting them into practice?

5. Look over the list of recommended Bible study tools and select the first six you would like to have in your library. Try to purchase them over the next six or twelve months. As you do, familiarize yourself with these tools so that you will know how each one can assist you in your study program.

6. What are the SPECS of Bible study?

Be sure to memorize this list and use them until they become habitual.

7. Memorize the eight vital relationships so that they will come to mind when you seek to apply the biblical principles that surface in your study.

8. The only way to discover the benefits of each of these methods is to put them into practice. Plan to do this by using a different method each month until you have gone through them all. Then select the ones you found most beneficial and formulate a future plan to implement them so that you will enjoy a variety of useful study methods.

9. Consider the possibility of forming or joining a group that studies the Bible together. Bible study is best when it is done individually and corporately, because each person can share the insights he or she learned so that others will benefit from them. This adds the dimension of mutual encouragement, exhortation, and accountability, and enables us to gain perspectives on Scripture we would otherwise have missed (see [1 Cor. 14:26](#); [Heb. 10:24-25](#)).

Scripture Memory Cards

Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2; [119:105](#); John 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; [3:16-17](#); Hebrews 4:12; James 1:22.

Related Topics: [Bible Study Methods](#)

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