

How To Study The Bible

Figuring out how to study the Bible can be overwhelming. This study seeks to make it as easy and sweet as apple pie. The Word of God is like a seven-layer burrito: the deeper you bite, the better the flavor. No bite is just like the last. Yet, it is made from the same ingredients. The more you eat, the more you'll get. Still, the question remains: "How do we take that first bite?" One of the biggest errors I see in studying the Bible is trying to read it like a novel. While in itself is not wrong and worthy of the effort, over time you are likely to reach a point of stunted growth in your understanding. The Bible is meant to be explored, picked apart, combined, and to compliment all its parts. I have known many God-fearing people who love the Lord that do this. They never progress in their understanding, relative to the amount of effort put into their reading. The Bible must be searched out like a treasure hunt- finding jewels of information and then compiled to make a crown of understanding. This is what we will cover in this study.

Key Concepts For Future Success

***To receive the blessings of the Bible, we must approach it as it stands- the infallible, immutable Word of the creator God of the universe. Meaning, we open its pages to receive and understand truth. Any other approach filled with doubt and skepticism will not yield the same results.**

"All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

"Trust the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths smooth. Do not consider yourself wise. Fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. Then your body will be healed, and your bones will have nourishment." (Proverbs 3:5-8)

We must engage with the intention of increasing our faith/trust in God.

"Then faith is of hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17)

I have found that there are two main ways most people approach reading the Bible:

- 1. To find correction and direction to produce change.**
- 2. To find justification and excuses to not change.**

How we approach our time with God and the Bible is directly related to what we will get out of it. We must flip its pages with the expectation of being exposed in every area of our life- that we will find things that will force correction, helping us along our way to experience God in a deeper and more meaningful way. The price for this intimacy is a willingness to be wrong, and the ability to change. Any resistance to this process will stifle and prevent your growth in God. Ultimately, if left unchecked, it can destroy your relationship with God.

Why is there two groups of receivers and rejecters of the Truth?

The reader must have ears to hear the truth.

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matthew 11:15)

[*See Also: Matthew 13:9+43; Mark 4:9+23; Mark 7:16; Luke 8:8; Luke 14:35]

The Truth Is Revealed In The Power Of The Holy Spirit

“I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, that he may be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, whom the world can’t receive; for it doesn’t see him, neither knows him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17)

“However when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak from himself; but whatever he hears, he will speak. He will declare to you things that are coming. He will glorify me, for he will take from what is mine, and will declare it to you.” (John 16:13-14)

[*See Also: John 4:23-24; John 15:26-27; Ephesians 5:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 John 4:2-6]

Some Reject The Guidance Of The Holy Spirit And Come To Unbiblical Conclusions.

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit! As your fathers did, so you do.” (Acts 7:51)

“For the time will come when they will not listen to the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn away to fables.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

[*See Also: Acts 28:27; 2 Timothy 3:1-8; Jeremiah 17:9-10]

Who Put The Chapter & Verses In The Bible?

The Bible is without error and absolutely correct as it was originally written. That being said, interpretations of the Bible are not divinely inspired- maybe divinely guided. But we must keep in our minds the difference of source material and interpretations of that source material. We will cover later why the original language can be so informative to the original message.

Quick Fact: Since the original books of the Bible were written on scrolls, they were not formatted like modern books. **CHAPTERS:** **Stephen Langton** in the 12th century created the

chapter divisions as we now have them in the Bible. **VERSES:** In 1551, **Robert Estienne** added the verses we now use in the Bible. Needless to say, this is not divinely inspired. As you will notice in the Bible, sometimes chapters end in weird places, so too for the verses. So, be sure to read before and after the area of interest as not to miss important information.

Quick Fact: The shortest verse in the Bible is: “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35)

Gold Standards Of Bible Study

He is God, we are not. Remain teachable!

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:9)

Truth has to be revealed by God!

“At that time, Jesus answered, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in your sight.” (Matthew 11:25-26)

Bible Promises to Claim: Always pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit!

- “As for you, the anointing which you received from him remains in you, and you don’t need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, you will remain in him.” (1 John 2:27)
- “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and will remind you of all that I said to you.” (John 14:26)

How The Bible Says It Should Be Read:

1. “Whom will he teach knowledge? To whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts? For it is precept on precept, precept on precept; line on line, line on line; here a little, there a little.” (Isaiah 28:9-10)
2. “Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. But shun profane, vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.” (2 Timothy 2:15-16)
3. “Search the scriptures every day.” (Acts 17:11)

How I Divide My Bible Studies Up.

***You must love the truth, at all cost, at any price, and you must sacrifice for the truth, invest into the truth, & embrace the truth!**

I treat Bible Study like I’m a lawyer in a court of Law.

- I compile my case- trying in every way to make it bullet proof from contradiction, error, and complaint.

- I layout all the verses in a word document, and as I read, I put them in appropriate groups.
- I will make it compete against itself using point/counter point. To work out any point of tension between my current understanding and the verses I have.
- I will double check my own intentions to make sure I'm not forcing it to say something it is not saying.
- When a clear consensus of thought has been arrived upon, I will make sure that the verses have remained in their context and applied properly.
- If I'm going to share the study, I will then organize the study to build upon itself. Allow the reader to come upon the conclusion of truth as easily as possible.

***For example, I wanted to know what the Bible said about the "Spirit." I spent about ten hours looking up every single verse in the Bible on the topic of the "Spirit." I came to a complete and accurate understanding of what the Bible has to say about the Spirit.**

As we read above, the Holy Spirit can bring all things to our remembrance. The more you study, you will experience this guidance of God. As it sits now, when I want to study a topic in the Bible, the Holy Spirit will give me verses by speaking to my spirit. Example: I once made a Bible study on the Ten Commandments, basically all from memory. I made another multi-page study on Israel in about 20-30 minutes, again basically from memory. This is the power of God guiding you in the study of the Bible - Impossible without the Holy Spirit!

>The Four-Step Process to Understanding<

1) Pray: *Claim the Bible promises at the top. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and help you understand!*

2) Observation: *What does the Passage say?*

When you first read the Bible text: consider all the surrounding Bible verses, consider in what book of the Bible it is found, and how it relates to the entire Word of God. This is called "reading it in context".

*Taken out of context:

"Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (Matthew 19:21)

3) Interpretation: *What does the passage mean?*

- ✓ **Who:** Who wrote it? Who said it? Who are the major characters? Who are the people mentioned? To whom is the author speaking? About whom are they speaking?
- ✓ **What:** What are the main events? What are the major ideas? What are the major teachings? What are these people like? What does he talk about the most? What is his purpose in saying that? What is the main theme?

- ✓ **When:** When was it written? When did this event take place? When will it happen? (When did he say it?) (When did he do it?)
- ✓ **Where:** Where was this done? Where was this said? Where will it happen?
- ✓ **Why:** Why did this need to be written? Why, in the context of the Bible passages, was this mentioned?
- ✓ **How:** How is it done? How did it happen? How is this truth illustrated? How does it relate to other Bible verses?

4) Application: *How do I apply the passage to my life?*

- When you read the Bible verse in context, consider what this meant then (to the people at that time)?
- What does this mean now (to us)?

The Following list will help you understand how to apply it to your life:

1. Is there a **command to obey**?
2. Is there a **promise to claim**?
3. Is there a **sin to avoid**?
4. Is there a **lesson to learn**?
5. Is there a **new truth to apply**?

Tips & Techniques Sheet

A) The Law Of Opposites.

If the Bible tells you not to do something, it is implying that there is also something to be done.

Example: If the Bible says you are not to lust after the opposite sex, it is intended for you to understand that you should practice keeping your eyes from looking at things that make you lust. Also, if it tells you to do something like “honor your mother and father”, it is intended for you to understand that it means not to disobey them.

B) The Language Of Love & Relationship.

The basis of Bible study is not meant to be a struggle to memorize every single Bible verse, like Satan has. The true accomplishment is to understand and know the author (God) and the Spirit in which it is written. This way when you hear anything based upon the Bible, your intimacy with God will tip you off if it's a truth or a lie.

C) Lots Of Research Materials Help.

- **Concordance:** This book relates every word in the Bible to its original language; then it gives a definition. (We will show an example of this below.)
- **Commentaries:** These books are mostly written by Bible experts and they comment on all the Bible has to say. (We will show an example of this below.)

- **Bible Encyclopedia/Dictionary:** Just like a regular Encyclopedia, but all about the Bible.
- **Topical Bibles:** These books are just made from Bible verses, organized into groups based on topics.
- **Manners and Customs:** These books deal with just the way they lived during the Bible times.
- **Subject Books:** If you're interested in just one thing, you can find an author who wrote a book about it.
- You can find a lot of these resources online: Like BlueLetterBible.org & BibleStudytools.com
- My favorite is E-Sword. I use it to make all my studies and I wrote my book using it. You can get it for free at: www.e-sword.net

D) Reword To Relearn.

Try to come up with your own wording meaning the same thing, just simplified, to help you understand.

E) Let The Author Speak For Himself.

Always let the Bible interpret the Bible. In 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 and Jeremiah 17:9, we are warned against coming up with our own ideas. Always remember that the Bible never contradicts itself. If it appears to, pray and ask God to reveal to you the deeper meaning.

F) Unless Otherwise Stated.

Also, remember to interpret Scripture literally, unless it is a Parable (a picture story with hidden meaning), or if it is prophetic (symbols representing a particular point within the context).

G) It Always Happens.

I can't tell you how many times that I have been stumped by something in the Bible. And no matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't bring it all together to make it understandable. Well, I've learned to pray about it and wait. It has never failed to work. It might take days, weeks, or months, but God always give me an answer. So, just hang in there and wait on the Lord.

***A list like this could go on forever, so I'll end it here to keep it simple. As you continue to study God's Holy Word, you will learn a lot of new techniques and tricks to make it easier and fun. One day, you will have forgotten more then you could ever remember. But this could never be said enough:**

Fall In Love With The Author Of The Bible- Not Just The Bible.

Examples of Verses that made me question the Bible:

***Here we find Jesus appearing to steal from someone's field.**

"At that time, Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields. His disciples were

hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.” (Matthew 12:1)

Yet, I didn't allow myself to get stuck on that verse, I trusted God that it was my understanding that was the issue, not the truthfulness of the Bible. So in time, God revealed the answer to me. As we see here:

“When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, then you may eat of grapes your fill at your own pleasure; but you shall not put any in your container. When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the ears with your hand; but you shall not move a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.” (Deuteronomy 23:24-25)

Why it is good to get into the Greek and Hebrew.

This verse is a sample of improper interpretation of the Bible. The word of God is 100% accurate, yet the way it was interpreted was flawed. We would not know this unless we got into the original Greek to seek it out. Often, you will find in some Bibles that they will grey out the text or *italicize* it to represent as being added later or different from the source material.

- **How it is written in the majority of Bibles:**

“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.* And there are three that bear witness on the earth: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three are into the one.” (1 John 5:7-8)

- **How it is actually originally written in the Greek:**

“For there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three are in agreement.” (1 John 5:7-8)

Also, in the Old Testament, the Word “LORD” is actually “YHWH”. God's Name is often changed as it was thought improper to say His name. It is not wrong to say His name, it is wrong to use it in vain. That is something to keep an eye on while you read. You will find the majority of names in the Bible have been changed, but there's only one way to find out!

Why It's Good To Look Into Multiple Versions Of The Bible.

This will help you catch interpretation variations that might have a major impact on what the Bible is actually saying.

- **As it is often translated:**

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:2)

- **As it's originally written:**

“On one of sabbaths, let each of you put by himself, storing up whatever he is prospered, that there not be collections then when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:2)

- **As correctly interpreted based upon the meaning of the “Saying”:**

“After the Sabbath ends, each of you should set aside and save something from your surplus in proportion to what you have, so that no collections will have to be made when I arrive.” (1 Corinthians 16:2)

The Benefit Of Using Commentaries In Your Study:

*Using the above verse as our focus.

“Upon the first day of the week — So **κατα μίαν σαββατων** here signifies, the Hebrews using the numeral for the ordinal numbers, as Gen_1:5, The evening and the morning were one day; that is, the first day; and also using the word sabbath to denote the week, as Luk_18:12. I fast twice, **του σαββατου**, in the week. So Mar_16:2, **πρωι της μιας σαββατων**, early the first day of the week. Let every one of you lay by him in store, &c.”

Joseph Benson's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments

The Benefit Of Using Concordances:

As seen in the verse above. The word used here as week is given a number to search out its meaning in the Greek.

“Upon the first day of the **week** (G4521)...” (1 Corinthians 16:2)

Strong’s Concordance: G4521 - [σάββατον](#) - [sabbaton](#) - [sab'-bat-on](#)

Of Hebrew origin [H7676]; the *Sabbath* (that is, *Shabbath*), or day of weekly *repose* from secular avocations (also the observance or institution itself); by extension a *se'nnight*, that is, the interval between two Sabbaths; likewise the plural in all the above applications: - sabbath (day), week.

Without the context of the culture and the people it was written to, it would appear to support the mislead belief that this was a new day of worship. Being the “first day of the week”, or as often referred to as the “Lord’s Day”. Yet, the only day Jesus ever claimed was the Sabbath. “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” (Matthew 12:8) So, what we are left with without some searching and digging deeper is the equivalent of somebody 2000 years from our day, searching through an old book and they see the saying written: “It was a real hot potato!” To them, they would assume, without cultural context, that the food was a potato, and it was cooked sufficiently to be eaten. In our day, we know this as a saying implying the topic or object isn’t something anyone really wanted to handle. This is why when dealing with doctrine and belief in the Bible, you must dig deeper than surface layer and brief explanations. To know the truth, you must become a treasure hunter! If you apply these tips, techniques, and guidance in your own Bible study, I promise a new world will open as understanding of God and His Word will open up to you.

Notes: