

# HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

*By Amanda Cain*

## WHY STUDY THE BIBLE

As a Christian, you must understand that the Bible, which is commonly called the Word of God, is a gift from God. It was written by man under the direct inspiration from God.

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16 (NKJV)** says: "All scripture is given by inspiration God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

### We should study the Bible:

- a) Because it is \_\_\_\_\_, from the Greek, helpful or serviceable, that is advantageous, for us to do so.
- b) It \_\_\_\_\_ us about the God we serve and how to live a "righteous" life before Him.
- c) It guides and \_\_\_\_\_ us through the important decisions of our lives.
- d) It helps us to get back on the right path after we mess up.
- e) It prepares us for the work of the \_\_\_\_\_ (to serve); specifically that which God has called us to do.

As you can see there are many reasons why we should study the Bible, however; the most important reason why we should study the Bible is because God Commands us to:

**JOSHUA 1:8 (NKJV)** " This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

**2 TIMOTHY 2:15** "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The word study for the Greek means to use speed that is to make effort, be prompt, or earnest - do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavor, labor.

It is Gods desire that we get to know Him by spending time diligently studying the gift He left for us, the Bible, His Word, that we may live a perfect and complete (accomplish, thoroughly furnish) life on this earth.

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## WHY THE BIBLE CAN BE TRUSTED

## MATTHEW 24:35

1. It is \_\_\_\_\_ accurate **PSALM 33:4**
2. It is \_\_\_\_\_ accurate **PSALM 148:5-6, ISAIAH 40:22, JOB 26:7, JEREMIAH 33:22, LEVITICUS 17:11, LEVITICUS 13:4, PSALM 12:6**
3. It is Prophetically accurate **2 PETER 1:21, MATTHEW 26:56, REVELATION 22:6**
4. It is Thematically Unified **LUKE 24:27**
5. It is Trusted by Jesus **MATTHEW 5:18**
6. It has Survived all Attacks **1 PETER 1:24-25**
7. It has \_\_\_\_\_ Power **JOHN 8:31-32**

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## UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

- The word Bible means \_\_\_\_\_. It comes from the Greek word Biblos, which was also a Greek city that was the #1 importer of papyrus (paper).
- It is the most read book in history and the most translated book in history.
- All of time marks itself on the truths of Gods word.
- It was written over a period of 1600 years, in over a dozen countries, on 3 continents, by people from all walks of life. It is written in 3 languages and by 40 different people.
- The Bible is \_\_\_\_\_ in chronological order. The books are grouped by type of book.

### Old Testament

- **1st 5 books - Pentateuch** - Law books - called the Law books because it is when Moses gave the Law. It includes: story of creation, Noah, Joseph, Moses, Mt Sinai, 10 commandments, all the way up to when they enter the promise land.
- **Next section - Historical** - 12 books - Joshua - Esther. It includes Israel's history after Moses entering into the promise land. This is the end historically of the Old Testament. If you are are reading it as history , time ends there, but there are more sections.
- **Poetical Section** - 5 books - Job - Songs of Solomon. For example, you could actually enter or insert some of Psalm into 1 Samuel.
- **Prophetical section** - 17 books - Again, you could insert these prophets into the history section because they all lived in the history section.
  - 5 major prophets Isaiah - Daniel - called major just because they are long. 12 minor prophets - Hosea - Malachi - smaller

Then you get 400 years of complete silence. The Jews come out of exile back into Jerusalem, the Greek conquest takes place in this time-period, Alexander the Great, Roman conquest.

## New Testament

- **Gospels** - 4 books - Matthew, Mark, Luke , and John. This is 4 different accounts of the exact same story.
- After Jesus was resurrected and went back to heaven the church was established.
- **Acts** - historical record of 1st church.
- During the history churches were established and letters were written and these letters are called: **The Epistles** - 21 books - Romans - Jude. Church planters like Paul wrote letters. Again, if you read a chronological Bible these would be inserted into the book of Acts. These Epistles teach us how to be a church today and how we are to live our lives as Christians.
- 66th book of the Bible - **Revelations**. This is the prophecy of the last days and eternity, how it is all going to end up one day.

The Bible was written by men under the \_\_\_\_\_.

It is Gods written revelation of His will to men. It's central theme is salvation through Jesus Christ; and Jesus Christ can be seen in every book of the Bible.

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## MIRROR IMAGE:

### Jesus Christ

12 tribes of Israel.....12 disciples  
1 World Government System.....1 World Government  
World Judged and destroyed.....World judged and destroyed  
Satan and Sin Enters.....Satan and Sin Exit  
God and Righteous man in Paradise.....God and redeemed man back in Paradise

## FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- The word testament means “covenant” or agreement. The Old Testament is the covenant God made with man about his salvation before Christ came. The New Testament is the agreement God made with man about his salvation after Christ came.
- In the Old Testament we find the covenant of the law. In the New Testament we find the covenant of grace through Jesus Christ.
- The Old Testament is associated with Moses - The New Testament with Christ.
- The Old Testament begins with God, **GENESIS 1:1** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
- The New Testament begins with Christ. **MATTHEW 1** - the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.
- From Adam to Abraham we have the history of the human race.
- From Abraham to Christ we have the history of the church.
- From Christ to present we have the history of the church.

- The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew.
- The New Testament was written mostly in Greek
- Longest chapter - **PSALM 119**
- Shortest chapter - **PSALM 117**
- Longest verse - **ESTHER 8:9**
- Shortest verse - **JOHN 11:35**
- Longest book of the OT - **PSALMS**
- Longest book of New Testament - **LUKE**

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## TYPES OF BIBLES

At the heart of any effective Bible study is a good study Bible. Study Bibles are Bibles which have study notes either in the margin (or elsewhere), or inserted into the text. Many study Bibles are available in several popular versions. The following is a list of good study Bibles that are readily available:

1. The Open Bible - available in KJV, NKJV, and NASB, has cross references at the end of selected verses.
2. Thompson Chain Reference - available in KJV, NIV.
3. NIV Study Bible.
4. Scofield Reference Bible - and New Scofield Reference Bible.
5. YOUVersion App.
6. Spirit Filled Life Bible.
7. Rhema Study Bible.

As you choose your study Bible, you want to pay close attention to the type of Bible translation. Bible translations can be quite helpful to your Bible study in that they can simplify difficult passages in the Bible and make them easier to understand.

When choosing a Bible translation, keep in mind that there are several types of translations each with a different purpose. The following is a list of the different types of Bible translations available.

1. **Ultra Literal Translations:** These are translations that attempt to provide an English word for every Greek or Hebrew word in the original text, in other words, a word for word translation of the original text. These are usually very difficult to read but can be very helpful for finding exact word meanings. An example of this translations is the exeGeses Bible.
2. **Literal Translations:** These translations provide in a readable format, the English word or phrase equivalent for each word or phrase in the original text. Examples of these translations are:

- King James Version (KJV)
  - New King James Version (NKJV)
  - American Standard Version (ASB)
  - Revised Standard Version (RSV)
3. **Modern Literal Translations:** These translations substitute modern words for archaic words, bringing the Bible into a modern language while yet still retaining the literal form. Examples include:
- New American Standard Version (NASB)
  - New International Version (NIV)
4. **Modern English Translations:** These translations present a rendering of the text in present-day English and contemporary style. Examples of these translations are:
- New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)
  - New English Bible (NEB)
5. **Paraphrases:** Paraphrases are expanded translations, attempting to provide the meaning of the original, not word for word but rather thought for thought bringing out the rich shades of meaning in the original words. Examples of these translations are:
- The Living Bible (TLB)
  - The Message Bible (TMB)

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## METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY

As you prepare to study your Bible, realize that there is no “right” way to do it. You should prepare your heart and determine what your overall objective is going to be for the study session. Once this is completed, you can use of the following methods to help you achieve your objectives:

- The Devotional Method: This method alone can be used to study the Bible. The term “method” may be misleading here since it isn’t a mechanical method like the others. Rather it is one by which you actually feed your spirit man. This method feeds your spirit so you need to earnestly seek the mind of God for some direction.
  1. Begin with prayer. This will help you to center your thoughts upon things of the Lord.
  2. Read slowly and take brief notes.

**Example: MATTHEW 18:21-35** (NKJV) Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” **22** Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. **23** Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. **24** And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. **25** But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. **26** The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ **27** Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. **28** “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ **29** So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ **30** And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. **31** So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. **32** Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked

servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

**33** Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' **34** And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. **35** "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

3. Look for the true meaning of the passage you are reading.
  - a. What is the main subject?
  - b. Who are the persons revealed in the passage? Who is speaking? About whom are they speaking? Who is acting?
  - c. What is the key verse?
  - d. What does this passage teach about Jesus?
  - e. Does this passage portray any sin for me to confess or forsake?
  - f. Does this passage contain any commands for me to obey?
  - g. Is there any promise for me to claim?
  - h. Is there any instructions or me to follow?
4. Keep a spiritual diary.
5. Memorize passages of the Word of God.
6. Obey the word of God

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- **The Synthetic Method:** The synthetic method of Bible study allows you to get the overall picture of a book or subject. The word “synthetic” here is taken from the Greek. It takes the preposition syn, which means “together” and the verbal root “the”, which means “to put”, so that we come up with the meaning a putting or placing together. This method is designed to give us a bird’s eye view of the Bible. To use the synthetic method approach to studying, start by reading a chapter or verse through several times. Look for the main theme of the book or passage first. For example:

1. The book of Colossians speaks of Christ and the Church.
2. The book of Ephesians speaks to the believer and the Church.
3. The book of Galatians speaks of the believers’ freedom found in Christ.

The synthetic method pays no attention to details, but looks at the book or passage as a whole. When using the synthetic method to study the Bible

1. Look for distinct themes that run through the book or passage.
2. Watch how these themes develop.
3. Is there any one verse or passage that stars this theme clearly than any other?

- **The Biographical Method:** The biographical method of Bible study is simply studying the history of a person who is mentioned in the Bible. It should include all events recorded in the person’s life. It should also include any text that might give us some clue as to who the person was. Be careful, however, not to confuse individuals with the same name. A good example of this can be seen using the name Noah. There are two different people in the Bible with this name. The first one we are all aware of was the man called by God to repopulate the earth after the flood. The second one; however, is quite a different person and not even a man but in this case it’s a woman. So be careful when using this method to study the Bible.
- **The Analytical Method:** The analytical method of Bible study consists of pulling apart sections of Scripture, words or phrases, then analyzing them in

detail. This method involves the use of study tools such as Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Bible dictionaries, and other study aids.

- This method generally involves the study of words and sometimes phrases, commonly called doing a word study, in whole or in part. It may also involve noting the occurrences of words, and often deals with the word meanings.
- **Example: JOHN 10:10 (NKJV)** "the thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."
- Abundantly = Pereissos (per-is-SOSs) Strongs #4053 - Super abundance, excessive, overflowing, surplus, over and above, more than enough, profuse, extraordinary, abound the ordinary, more than sufficient.
- **The Topical Method:** The topical method of Bible study consists of selecting a subject or topic from the Bible. The topic may consist of a theme or concept; it may be a word or phrase. For example, you may select a topic of healing as a theme and do a word search on heal or Healing. A topical Bible like the Nave's Topical Bible, is an excellent study tool for this method of Bible Study. **Example:** Healing Scriptures: **PHILIPPIANS 2:13, PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9, HEBREWS 13:8, JAMES 5:14-16, 1 PETER 2:24, 1 JOHN 5:14,15**
- **The Practical Method:** The practical method of Bible study involves looking at the way the book or passage applies to you in a "practical" way. You should try to answer some of the following questions:
  - a. How does this verse or passage affect my daily life?
  - b. How can I apply it for everyday living?
  - c. How does it apply to my Christian walk?

Entire books or short passages may be studied in this way. Some good examples for this type of study include the book of Proverbs, Psalms, the

book of James, and the Sermon on the Mount. This method lends toward personal application.

While there are many of her good methods for Bible study, these six methods will help guide you and allow you to meet your overall Bible study objectives. Certain subjects tend to lend themselves more readily to one method over another. Let the above information help you determine which approach will be suitable to meet your specific Bible Study needs.

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## **BIBLE STUDY APPROACHES**

1. **By The Book:** Read the book at least a dozen times, the answer the following basic questions:
  - a. Who is the author?
  - b. What were the circumstances of the author when writing?

- c. To whom was the book written?
  - d. Where was the book written?
  - e. When was the book written?
  - f. Why was the book written?
  - g. What were the major problems being addressed?
  - h. What solutions were given?
  - i. What was the central meaning in that day?
  - j. What is the central meaning today?
2. **By The Chapter:** How to analyze a chapter - Read the chapter through at least ten times. Then am the following questions:
- a. Who is the main subject?
  - b. Who are the main people?
  - c. What does it say about Christ?
  - d. What is the key or main verse?
  - e. What is the central lesson?
  - f. What are the main promises?
  - g. What are the main commands?
  - h. What error should I avoid?
  - i. What example is here?
  - j. What do I need most in this chapter to apply to my life?



3. **By The Verse:** There are many ways you can study a single Bible verse.
- a. Study it by the verbs in the verse.
  - b. Study the verse through the personalities revealed.
  - c. Study a verse by looking for the great ideas revealed in it.
  - d. Sometimes a combination of these various ideas applied to a verse will bring the correct results.

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## **RULES OF INTERPRETATION**

**2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 (NKJV)** states, all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reprocessing, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Because the Bible is God's Word, it has ETERNAL RELEVANCE = speaks to all mankind, in every age and in every culture.

Since God chose to speak his Word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has HISTORICAL PARTICULARITY = each document is conditioned by the language, time and culture in which it was originally written (and in some cases also by the oral history it had before it was written down).

There is tension that exists between its Eternal Relevance and Historical Particularity.

**EXEGESIS** = careful \_\_\_\_\_ study of the scripture to discover the original meaning intended, what it did mean to the writer and reader.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT** = has to do with several things such as time and culture of the author and its readers, that is, the geographical, topographical, and political factors that are relevant to the author's setting; and the occasion and purpose of the book, letter, psalm, prophetic oracle, or other genre.

As you begin to study to show yourself approved unto God, always seek the Holy Spirit for guidance and understanding.

**BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS** = is the \_\_\_\_\_ method of interpreting God's Word. It will help you accurately understand the message God intended to communicate. Its intent is to find out what the text meant to us, apply what the text means to ourselves, and our situations.

The following rules are widely accepted and should be used as general guidelines when attempting to better understand or interpret a scripture or passage.

1. Always \_\_\_\_\_ the context: Literary context = essentially, words only have meaning in sentences, and for the most part biblical sentences only have meaning in relation to preceding and succeeding sentences.
2. Learn to allow the Bible to \_\_\_\_\_ itself.
3. Do not over-spiritualize everything.
4. Assert an unassuming attitude.

## 5. Study parallel passages.

**Example** scripture: **ROMANS 8:26-30** Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. **28** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. **29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. **30** Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Also, Observation, Investigation, Correlation, and Application will aid in your pursuit of understanding the Word of God.

- Observation: What do I see?
- Investigation: Who, What, When, Where, Why and So What?
- Correlation: How does the information fit together?
- Application: How can I apply this to my life?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Questions always open a passage for greater depth of understanding. The following are some basic questions every student of the Word should consider.
- **Why** - was the book written? Should anyone listen to this passage? Are they people saying these things?
- **When** - does the episode take place? Was the book written?
- **Who** - wrote the book? Are the characters involved? Is doing the talking?
- **What** - are the political, social, and cultural circumstances? Does the language structure (verbs, tenses, etc) tell you? Did it meant to you?

- **So What** - what areas of my life does this speak to? What areas of the audiences life does this speak to? What experience of God in my life best expresses and explains what this passage is teaching?

## STRONGS CONCORDANCE

- 3 languages: Hebrew (most of OT), Aramaic/Chaldean (portions of Daniel, Ezra, some words and phrases the the NT), Greek (NT)
  - **JOHN 10:10** "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more ABUNDANTLY"
1. Look up desired word in Main Concordance at the beginning of the book. Make sure to look up the word exactly as it is written in the passage.
  2. Find the scripture you found the word in, and look for the number beside it #4053.
  3. Go to the back of the book and find the area your scripture is fond in (either the OT section or NT section)
  4. You will find the original Hebrew or Greek word and use for the word in that scripture. Abundantly - Perissoss - exceeding , abundantly a luge, more abundantly, advantage, exceedingly, very highly, beyond measure

You can also see from the main concordance what other scriptures use the word in the same meaning as the word you looked up. In our example this word Abundantly is also used in **EPHESIANS 3:20** .....able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that.....

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