

STUDY THE BIBLE

Regarding the Bible, it's been said:

- This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from it.
- Dusty Bibles always lead to dirty lives.
- In fact, you are either in the Word and the Word is conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ, or you are in the world and the world is squeezing you into its mold.

I think most of us know this. We know that by reading the Bible we should be changed. We also might even recognize that when we aren't living right, we tend to avoid the words that will shine a light on our sin. We know this. We should be reading and studying the Bible, but how many of us really are in it for ourselves on a regular basis?

Why don't people read the Bible?

1. They don't believe it is relevant to their lives.
2. They don't know how to read it or study it.
3. They believe it takes special training or a pastor to understand it.
4. They don't have time (not a priority).
5. They don't believe it's entirely true.
6. They aren't interested in it or find it boring.
7. Nobody ever told them what they could gain by it.

So... Why Should We Study the Bible?

1. Bible Study is Essential to GROWTH
2. Bible Study is Essential to SPIRITUAL MATURITY
3. Bible Study is Essential to SPIRITUAL EFFECTIVENESS

There are 4 steps we should take when we come to any passage of Scripture. These steps apply if you study a single verse or a whole chapter or even a book.

1. OBSERVATION

➤ THINGS THAT ARE EMPHASIZED

- Amount of space dedicated to a subject or person
- Stated purpose
 - John 20:30-31
 - ◆ ³⁰Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe^[a] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- Order: Consider the order or sequence of events or lists.
 - Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

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➤ THINGS THAT ARE REPEATED

- **Words, phrases clauses**
- **Characters**
 - Barnabas in the book of Acts
 - His given name was Joseph, but the apostles named him Barnabas which means son of encouragement. Why?
- **Incidents or circumstances**
 - Judges: Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.
 - Gospel of Matthew: Jesus vs the Pharisees over and over again.
- **NT usage of OT passages**
 - It's a way of pointing out matters of crucial importance

➤ THINGS THAT ARE RELATED

- **Questions and answers**
 - Luke 5:17-26
 - Who can forgive sins but God alone?
 - Which is easier to say 'your sins are forgiven' or get up and walk?'
 - Answer: so that you may know who I am... get up and walk!
- **Cause and effect**
 - 2 Chronicles 7:14 - if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

➤ THINGS THAT ARE ALIKE

- **Similes (comparison using *like* or *as*)**
 - Psalm 42:1 – As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
 - 1 Peter 2:2 – Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.
- **Metaphor (comparison without using *like* or *as*)**
 - John 15:1 – I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.
 - Any other metaphors that you're familiar with?
 - ◆ Lord is my shepherd
 - ◆ We are his sheep

➤ THINGS THAT ARE NOT ALIKE (CONTRASTS)

- **Use of *but* (change of direction)**
 - Galatians 5 – works of the flesh... but the fruit of the Spirit
 - Acts 1:7-8 – when will you restore the kingdom? it's not for you to know... but you will receive power
- **Metaphors can show us things unlike**
 - Luke 18: the widow and the unrighteous judge
 - ◆ She makes a plea, he turns a deaf ear

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- ◆ She keeps making a plea, he finally answers so that he can be done with her.
- ◆ HOW MUCH MORE will your Father hear and respond to His children?
- **Irony**
 - Luke 8:
 - ◆ Crowds are surrounding Jesus and pressing him.
 - ◆ Who touched me?
 - ◆ Difference between the pressing touch from the crowds (inadvertent and casual) to the touch of faith – deliberate.
- **THINGS THAT CATCH YOUR ATTENTION**
 - Why was that detail included in the story?
 - What's in the name of the place or person?

8 STRATEGIES FOR READING/OBSERVING:

- 1: Read Thoughtfully
 - 2: Read Repeatedly
 - 3: Read Patiently
 - 4: Read Prayerfully
 - 5: Read Imaginatively
 - 6: Read Meditatively
 - 7: Read Acquisitively
 - 8: Read Telescopically
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2. INTERPRETATION

- **BARRIERS: We have to learn to interpret scripture because of several barriers from the original writer to our own context:**
 - **Language**
 - Bible was written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic
 - Reading multiple translations is helpful for picking up the different shades of meaning of the original words.
 - **Culture**
 - Geographic culture is so different around the world today.
 - Ancient culture is so different from our own.
 - In order to better understand what the authors intended, we must uncover the cultural context of the Scriptures.
 - Commentaries and encyclopedias (archaeology) help out greatly in this area.
 - **Literary Genres**
 - We can't read Song of Solomon or the Psalms the same way we would read Romans. Literary genre helps us in our approach to the Scripture.
 - Exposition:
 - ◆ a straightforward argument or explanation of a body of objective truth (the epistles)

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- Narrative and Biography:
 - ◆ the Bible is full of stories (Genesis, The Gospels, Acts)
 - Parables:
 - ◆ a brief tale that illustrates a moral principle. (Jesus' teachings in the Gospels)
 - Poetry:
 - ◆ Psalms, Ecclesiastes (contains some),
 - Proverbs and Wisdom Literature:
 - ◆ the author sits as a wise elder teaching young students wisdom principles.
 - Prophecy and Apocalyptic:
 - ◆ Major & Minor prophets, Revelation.
- **When we come to interpreting scripture we're asking: what does this mean or what is this saying?**
- We also need to be looking for the original understanding or intent
 - When approaching the OT we also want to try and look at it through the lens of the cross. How does this point to Jesus?
- **6 Errors to Avoid When Interpreting**
- Misreading the text
 - John 14:6 – I am THE way
 - ◆ Not: I am A way
 - 1 Timothy 6:10 – For the LOVE OF MONEY is the root of all kinds of evil
 - ◆ Not: Money is the root of all evil
 - Psalm 37:4 – Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.
 - ◆ Not: He will give you the desires of your heart.
 - Distorting the text
 - Making the text say something you want, not what it actually says.
 - Examples:
 - ◆ Philippians 4:13
 - ◆ Ephesians 5:22-24
 - Contradicting the text
 - The serpent did this with Eve in the Garden of Eden
 - ◆ Genesis 3:1-4
 - Subjectivism
 - Emphasis on personal interpretation
 - ◆ What does this mean to you? VS What does it mean?
 - Relativism
 - Relativism is the belief in changeable standards
 - Might say things like:
 - ◆ It doesn't mean that anymore
 - ◆ Meanings change over time
 - Overconfidence
 - Overconfidence is thinking you already know all there is to know about a passage, book or text.

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- **The Right to Disagree**
 - We will still come to places and disagree on the correct interpretation of specific passages.
 - We must conclude that the error is not in the text, but in our limited understanding.
 - We must keep the main things – the main things
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3. APPLICATION

- How does this apply to me today?
 - How does it apply through the lens of the cross?
 - Is the Spirit speaking or pointing to any specifics?
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4. PRAYER

- Read prayerfully.
- Pray the application into your life.
 - Confess and repent?
 - Guidance?
 - Opportunities to do _____?
 - Transformation
 - Help me be _____. Help me obey _____.

JOURNALING IS EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN THIS PROCESS!