

How to Study Your Bible:

Psalms 119:114 “Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.

Proverbs 30:5 “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

The goal of Bible study: to learn who the God of the Bible is, striving to learn the whole Bible and what it is saying to me. This protects me from falling into error.

Quote by Thomas Brooks “Remember that it is not hasty reading, but serious meditation on holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the mere touching of the flower by the bee that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time on the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove to be the choicest, sweetest, wisest and strongest Christian.”

What is Bible Literacy?

Biblical literacy is the ability to rightly read and understand the Bible, using the proper tools of study, thereby becoming well acquainted with the Bible's character (innate qualities) and content.

Simply, the ability to read and understand the Bible.

Stage 1- Comprehension “What does it say?”

1. Read Introductory Material

a. Answer 4 Archaeological questions:

- Who wrote it?
- When was it written?
- To whom was it written?
- Why was it written?

2. Repetitive Reading

-Read the scripture several times (how many times depends on you and how long the chapters or book is)

3. Printed Copy of Text

- Double space, 12 point font, thick paper
- Highlighters

- Ruler if needed
- Colored pencils

4. Annotation

- Are certain words, phrases, or ideas repeated? Use your colored pencils to mark them distinctly on your printed copy.
- Develop any system you like- circling, boxing, different kinds of underlines, icons. Just be consistent and do what works for you. You might find some suggestions for annotation online.
- Is a particular attribute of God illustrated or celebrated? Write it in the margin.
- Does the text make several points in a row? Number each point as it is introduced in the text
- Are there words you don't understand? Mark them with a question mark so you can look up a definition for them.
- Are there key transition words, such as *if/then, therefore, likewise, but, because, or in the same way?* Draw an arrow to connect a concluding thought to its beginning argument or thought.
- Is an idea confusing? Write your question in the margin to address at a later time.

5. Use an English dictionary

- Look up unfamiliar words that need closer examination.
- Look up words you might think you know and understand.
- When we slow down and consider the meaning of key words or unfamiliar words we move toward comprehension.

6. Outline

- Look for main and sub points
- This doesn't have to be exhaustive. The purpose is to help you recognize the overall purpose and structure of the text.

Stage 2- Interpretation “What does it mean?”

- We should always endeavor to understand and attempt to interpret scripture before we look at other helps like books, study bibles, blogs, etc.

Tools to help:

1. Cross reference (in the margin of your Bible or at the bottom of the page)

- Identify commonalities between different parts of the Bible, similar themes words, phrases, events, people.
- “Let scripture interpret scripture”
- Scripture will never contradict itself

2. Paraphrasing

- The skill of writing someone else’s thoughts into your own words. This is hard.
- This will grow our investment as students of the word.
- This will force you to read for detail and meaning, even if your paraphrasing isn’t great.

❖ Once we have earnestly attempted comprehension and interpretation on our own we are ready to consider the interpretation of others.

- Ask your pastor or seasoned teacher for recommendations to build a personal library of trusted commentators.
- Remember they are human.
- These trusted commentators might suggest other good sources.
- The Bible is the final authority.
- Strongs concordance- book or app

Stage 3- Application “How should it change me?”

Questions:

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
 2. How does this aspect of God’s character change my view of self?
 3. What should I do in response?
- Knowledge of God through comprehension of the text and proper interpretation of what it means can now be applied to your life in a way that challenges you to change.
 - View your interactions with the Bible as a savings account. I stretch my understanding daily, I deposit what I glean, and I patiently wait for it to accumulate in value, knowing that one day I will need to draw on it. And it will be there for me.
 - Jeremiah 29:13 , Proverbs 2:4-5

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.