

Studying, Interpreting and Applying the Bible
Bible Study is for Everyone, pp. 9-16

Ways in Which the Bible May Be Misused

- 1) *The Scriptures may be misused when you are ignorant about what the Bible says on a given subject.*

Text Example: Ordination of practicing homosexuals under the idea that Jesus is loving and accepting and does not say anywhere they could not be ordained. This ignores both Old Testament (Lev. 18) and New Testament teaching (Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 11) on homosexuality being a perverse sin.

Another Example: _____

- 2) *The Scriptures may be misused when you take a verse out of context*

Text example: Using John 16:24 (*until now you have not asked anything in My name, Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete*) to claim carte blanche in prayer

Another Example: _____

- 3) *The Scriptures may be misused when you read into a passage & have it say what it does not say.*

Text Example: Using Mark 16:17-18 about Jesus' promise to the Apostles they would not be hurt by snakes or poison) to justify modern practice of snake handlers

Another Example: Mark 12:31 (*"The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*) - interpreted as you must love yourself before you can love others.

- 4) *The Scriptures may be misused when you give undue emphasis to less important things*

Text Example: Did Judas participate with Jesus and the other disciples in the Last Supper - at what point did Judas leave? Majoring on a minor issue

Another Example: _____

- 5) *The Scriptures may be misused whenever you use the Bible to try to get God to do what you want, rather than what God wants done.*

Text Example: Using Matthew 18:19 (*Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven*) to claim that God will grant the desired request because two or more agreed about it in prayer. The actual context is church discipline. James 4:1-6 deals specifically with motive in prayer. 1 John 5:13-15 deals with confidence in prayer due to asking according to God's will

Another Example: _____

The Need for Bible Study Methods

Bible study methods are guidelines to enhance the study of the Scriptures.

Principles of Bible Study

- 1) *You must do original investigation* - Acts 17:11 (*Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so*).

Our primary objective is to know the Bible, not the opinion of others about the Bible

- 2) *You must have written reproduction*

It enhances your study over reading, and enables you to refer back to the fruits of previous study and build on it. This is a major difference between Bible study and Bible reading.

- 3) *Your study must be consistent and systematic*

This ensures both progress in the study and helps avoid taking passages out of context

- 4) *You study must be "pass-on-able"* - 2 Timothy 2:2 (*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*) - you need to be able to pass on to other what you have learned

- 5) *You must apply what you study to your life* - James 1:22 (*But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves*).

Bible study is not for the purpose of intellectual exercise, but for producing life change by increasing in the knowledge of God and His will and obedience to it.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE - Overview

I. REASONS FOR PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

- A. Protection against _____
- B. Protection against _____
- C. Knowledge of the _____
- D. Knowledge of _____
- E. Encouragement and _____
- F. Ability to live a _____
- G. Instruction and warnings about _____
- H. Approved unto God as a _____

II. PATTERN OF PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

- 1. PRAYER: _____
- 2. READ: _____

- 3. CONTEXT: _____

- 4. OBSERVE: _____

- 5. DEFINE: _____

- 6. QUESTION: _____

- 7. COMPARE: _____

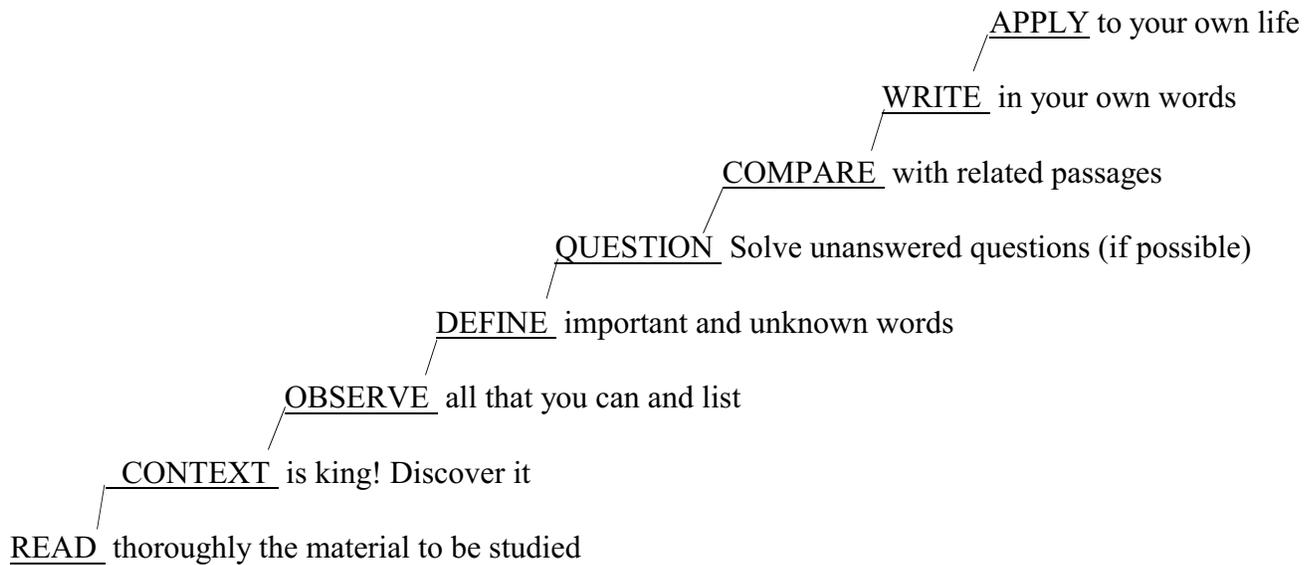
- 8. WRITE: _____

- 9. APPLY: _____

Use the following general questions to help you in your application:

- 1. What is it that **really** speaks to me in this passage of Scripture?
- 2. In what way have I deviated from it ... where have I fallen short?
- 3. What do I intend to **do** about it in my life? - What are my specific plans?

Material adapted from Chuck Swindoll



III. TYPES OF BIBLE STUDIES

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW. Studies that take you through _____ quantities of Scripture in a short time. Includes systematic plans to read through the entire Bible (whether in order or chronologically), book surveys and historical surveys such as the history of Israel, the life of Paul, etc.

Purpose: These type of studies are basically _____ in order to gain a sense of the flow of Scripture or an overall picture of a particular book or topic being studied.

Benefits: Gives an overall _____ in which specific studies are set. Example: Exodus, Leviticus & Numbers help a person understand Hebrews. They help in discovering the context surrounding a specific study.

Drawbacks:

1. Questions arise while reading that have to be left unanswered which can produce tension.
2. Some sections of Scripture can seem dry/boring making Bible study hard work & less enjoyable.
3. It may not address a particular need you have at the moment and so may seem less relevant.

Tips:

1. Set aside a certain time everyday and get into a _____ of reading at that time.
2. Be diligent at keeping at or ahead of the reading schedule.
3. Do not let yourself get behind, and if you do, then catch up A.S.A.P.
4. Try to do it in conjunction with someone else for mutual encouragement and accountability.
5. Pursue side questions only if you have time to complete your daily reading too. (Do not sacrifice your general reading in order to chase rabbit trails).
6. Write down _____ that come up, then go back to those at another time. You will be surprised how many questions will be answered by just continuing on in the reading.

2. BOOK STUDIES. Studies of _____ books can be very short (3 John) or very time consuming (Isaiah). These studies can be placed in several sub-categories ranging from in-depth research to a general survey as above.

Purpose: The normal purpose of a personal book study is to become more _____ with the truths within that book. There should also be an emphasis upon application of those truths to one's own life.

Benefits: This _____ than a general overview. There is more time put into thinking and digging out the truths in the text and their practical application to life. There is less pressure to move quickly as in a survey, so it is more relaxed. It is broad enough so that context is easily discovered. This is probably one of the best type of personal Bible studies with other types being used to assist.

Draw-backs. So much time can be spent in one book that other parts of Scripture may be neglected. It is important to remember that we need the whole counsel of God.

Tips:

1. _____ through the entire book a minimum of 5-10 times.
2. Develop a Theme and/or Purpose statement for the book.
3. _____ the entire book.
4. Gain an understanding of the historical and cultural background of the book.
5. Follow the stair-step method suggested in part 1.

3. Passage Studies are similar to book studies except they focus on a _____ section of scripture. It may encompass a number of chapters of a book such as The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, a single chapter such as the characteristics of a godly man in Psalm 15, or just a few verses such as Spiritual Armor in Ephesians 6:10-20.

Purpose. The normal purpose of a passage study is to examine a text in-depth. This type of study usually involves some additional types of study mentioned below.

Benefits. The main benefit is a _____ of a passage within its immediate context.

Draw-backs.

1. So much time maybe spent on one section that the rest of Scripture is neglected.
2. Care must be taken to make sure to set the passage within its overall _____.

Tips.

1. Become familiar with the passage within its context.
2. Follow the stair-step method suggested as a general pattern.
3. Outline the passage in detail before the definition step.

4. TOPICAL STUDIES let the student follow a _____ and trace a theme or topic throughout Scripture. Sub-categories of this method are the Biographical / Historical and Theological methods. These two methods will be discussed in detail below. In general, topical studies have the advantage of letting the student learn about something that is of particular interest to him/her. Often this results in the study having an increased relevance to his/her own life.

Historical Studies: This method traces the _____ of some historical character to see how God worked in that person's life. 1 Corinthians 10:11 states that the history of Israel was recorded so that we might learn from both their accomplishments and mistakes.

Method.

1. Choose a Biblical character to study.
2. Find as much information about the character as you can. (A concordance will help you find the passages about him/her.
3. _____ the geography, climate, conditions and culture of that time period.
4. Arrange the information gathered in some logical manner. Chronology, key events in his/her life, close associations, character traits, accomplishments, etc.
5. Determine the _____ to be learned from that person's life.

Theological Studies: The Bible is not written according to _____ theological themes. These themes must be developed through careful research and study. This method traces a particular theme throughout Scripture (or may be limited to a certain book or Biblical author). This method is not extremely difficult, but neither is it easy. It is very important that verses examined when tracing a theme are put into their correct context.

Method

1. Choose the theme or topic to be examined.
2. Gather as much information about it as possible. (A concordance, topical Bible, and Theologies will be helpful in finding Biblical passages related to your theme.)
3. Arrange material in a logical manner and _____ passages.
4. Draw conclusions as possible, but distinguish probabilities.
5. Determine the _____ of the truths discovered to your life

5. LEXICAL OR WORD STUDIES help you cross over the language barrier and get a good idea of the author's original meaning. Basic helps for this type of study are lexicons (language dictionaries) and an exhaustive concordance to look up all actual Biblical usages of the word.

Purpose. Lexical studies can be used for a variety of different purposes. They can be used simply to better define the meaning of a word in a particular verse. They can be used to clarify concepts contained within a word. They can be part of a theological study in trying to determine a broader theological theme. Often a simple word study (especially of the Greek) can bring new and greater insights into the understanding of a text.

Methods.

1. A simple _____ can be found in the back of an exhaustive concordance. More complex definitions giving a better understanding of the words meaning can be gained by looking up the word in Vine's or a lexicon.
2. A word can be traced through its usage in various passages to determine its meaning.
3. A word, its cognates, synonyms and antonyms can all be examined to discover its meaning and implications.

Tips

1. The _____ listed in a lexicon are to help you understand the range of meaning possible of the word as translated into your language. Be careful of picking and choosing from among the synonyms the meaning that you would like to believe. The precise meaning must be determined by both lexical usage and the particular context.
2. A condensed lexicon such as in a Strong's Concordance can be helpful, but it is much _____ to look up the meaning of words in more extensive lexicons which give more explanation of a word's usage and etymology due to the danger of 1 above.

6. GRAMMATICAL STUDIES help you cross over the _____ and get a good idea of the author's original meaning. Basic helps for this type of study are grammars of the translation language in which you are studying, for the more advanced student, Greek and Hebrew grammars.

Purpose: Grammar studies help place a particular word in its context and define its _____ according to its usage.

Method: Grammatical studies generally involve _____ of parts of speech and their relationships to each other: Subject, predicate, direct and indirect objects, subordinate phrases, infinitives, participles, verb tense, noun case, adverbs, adjectives, figures of speech (simile, allegory, metaphor, paradox, irony, euphemisms, etc.).

Tip:

1. Often, the best help in grammatical studies is a good understanding of the grammar of your own language as you study your translation.
2. Learning Greek and Hebrew is a great aide for the serious student.

Basic Bible Study Methods

There are many different types of Bible Study and hence many different methods. Howard F. Vos in *Effective Bible Study* gives 16 different methods ranging from devotional to Critical and Psychological. Obviously not all of these methods are practical for our purposes. Our purpose is to Study the Bible in order to understand it in order to know God and how He wants us to live our lives. We are primarily interested in the application of the Scriptures and not in the increase of our academic knowledge. However, the serious Bible Student soon finds that in order to dig out those golden nuggets of truth from scripture that can change you life, there has to be serious study that often has a flavor of the academic. Some good books on basic methods of Bible Study going from simple to more complex are: *How to Study the Bible*, R. A. Torrey. *How to Study the Bible*, John MacArthur. *How To Study the Bible*, Richard Mayhue. *How to Study Your Bible*, Kay Arthur. *Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, Walter Henriksen. *Basic Bible Interpretation*, Roy Zuck and *Living by the Book*, Howard Hendricks. (*First Hand Joy*, Rick Yohn, is out of print).

The Primary key to all Bible study is familiarity with the text being studied. This will require reading through the text several times. It is often helpful use different translations such as the NASB, NKJV, KJV, ESV, NIV, Amplified, etc. in order to gain a better understanding of the flow and meaning of the text. Before any kind of in-depth study can be done such as analyzing a chapter, paragraph or verse, the student must first gain a basic understanding of the book that the passage under consideration is in. The Theme, purpose, and background of the book must be understood. Study aides such as Bible Encyclopedias, Bible Dictionaries, Historical References and Commentaries can help the student in this. The Context of the passage to be studied must also be understood. It is a simple fact that much of the theological error existing in cults today is because passages of Scripture have been taken out of the context. The first rule of hermeneutics (the science of Bible Study) is that Context is king!

The next basic tool is studying the Scripture is to approach the Bible with an open mind and ask questions. You should never come to the Bible with pre-conceived ideas and then try to find Scriptures to prove your pre-suppositions. If you do so you will surely take passages out of their context. Approach scripture with an inquiring mind that is anxious to learn from it. The basic 6 questions Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How are the foundations. After this is done, then start asking the personal application questions. Chuck Swindoll suggests some of the following questions. Does the verse suggest an action you should take or avoid? Does it present a promise you may claim? Is there a principle you should begin to follow? A rebuke? An encouragement? Does it point out a sin in your life that needs to be confessed and forsaken? What is it in the passage that really speaks to me? In what way have I deviated from it... where have I fallen short? Or How does this passage encourage and strengthen me? The next step is to write down what specific actions you intend to take in response to what you have learned.

The following is an outline of the steps of basic Bible Study as presented by Chuck Swindoll:

