

Studying The Bible

A Bible Study For Examining God's Word

Study: A Bible Study For Examining God's Word
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Introduction:

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God is living and powerful. God uses it in our lives to convict, cleanse, teach, rebuke, correct, and train in righteousness. It is our sword in the spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness.

In order to consistently and correctly handle God's Word, you will learn the inductive Bible study method. The inductive method is the process of studying Scripture passages, and then basing your conclusion on that study. It includes the steps of observation, interpretation, and application. This approach will allow you to most accurately determine what the writer was trying to communicate.

This study was designed for you to practice the Bible study principles as you learn them. You are encouraged to take extra time for further study, prayer and reflection.

WEEK 1

Things To Consider

Before we get into the actual principles of studying the Bible, let's consider some verses that help us keep perspective. It's not enough just to know what the Bible means; we need to also keep in mind some of the insights and warnings it gives us.

Day 1 - Knowledge puffs up. 1 Corinthians 8:1-3

In the context of chapter 8, what did the Corinthians have knowledge of that was leading them to be puffed up?

How might these verses be applied to someone who is very knowledgeable in the Bible?

What is the greater concern than knowledge?

Day 2 - Bible study is hard work. 2 Timothy 2:14-15

What does the workman do?

Why do you think hard work is important in Bible study?

Day 3 - The Holy Spirit gives understanding.

John 14:25-27

What does the Spirit do?

How does this come into play in your study?

Day 4 - The goal is transformation. Romans 12:1-2

Into what are we being transformed?

(See 2 Corinthians 3:18)

How are we transformed?

How big a part does Scripture play? Explain.

Day 5 - The Bible reveals what God will do in us through His Spirit.

Galatians 3:1-5

Do we study the Bible to determine what effort God expects from us or what He will do in us as we live by faith?

How does this give us freedom from a yoke of slavery?

Day 6 - Do not just study the Word. James 1:22-25

Day 7 - It will keep your way pure. Psalm 119:9-16

Making it Practical

1. Complete the following study in order to learn to examine God's Word.
2. Pray a prayer of submission to God to let Him live His life through you as He gives you a new and clearer understanding of the Bible.
3. Set aside a time and place when you will study the Bible on a systematic basis.

WEEK 2

Observation - "What do I see?"

Observation is taking a close look at the text and recording what you see. At this point you are not trying to draw conclusions, but are just seeing what's there. Observation takes a look at the whole, the parts, and the details. It asks and answers investigative questions like who, what, where, and when. Read the day's assignment carefully and write out five observations for each assignment. See Appendix A for examples.

Day 1 - Ephesians 1:3-14

Day 2 - Ephesians 1:3-14 (Make 5 new observations)

Day 3 - Ephesians 1:3-14 (Try for 5 more)

Day 4 - Luke 8:22-25

Day 5 - Matthew 22:34-40

Day 6 - Acts 2:42

Day 7 - 2 Chronicles 7:14

WEEK 3

Interpretation - "What does it mean?"

Rule # 1 - Let Scripture interpret Scripture.

When we interpret the Bible we are trying to accurately determine what the writer was trying to communicate. There are certain "rules" to follow that will help us do that. The first is that we cannot interpret a verse or passage and fail to take the whole Bible into consideration. One resource that can help is cross-reference Bibles.

Write out the main thought in the verses that follow to understand the Bible's overall perspective.

Day 1 - Galatians 5:4 "A person can lose their salvation."

John 5:24 -

John 10:28-29 -

Day 2 - Romans 8:9-11 -

2 Corinthians 5:17 -

Ephesians 1:13-14 -

Day 3 - Acts 2:38 "A person must be baptized to be saved."

Acts 10:43 -

Luke 23:40-43

Day 4 - 1 Corinthians 1:13-15 -

Ephesians 2:8-9 -

Titus 3:4-7 -

Day 5 - John 14:14 "We can have whatever we want."

1 John 5:14-15 -

Romans 8:26 -

Day 6 - 1 John 3:21-22 -

James 4:1-3 -

Day 7 - Matthew 10:5-7 "A person should not share the gospel with Gentiles."

Matthew 28:19 -

WEEK 4

Interpretation - "What does it mean?"

Rule # 2 - Interpret the Bible literally.

Taking the Bible in its literal, normal usage means the words say what they do in everyday usage. We apply to the Bible the same rules of grammar that we do when reading any other book. While we do not interpret allegorically (having hidden spiritual meaning), we do recognize the Bible uses figures of speech (word pictures) and symbols (a visible object or being that represents something invisible or spiritual).

Day 1 - Genesis 3:1-7 Do these verses deal with a fictional story that tell us we all make moral choices that have consequences? How should they be interpreted?

Day 2 - Jonah 1:1-17 Is this a picture of how we are often swallowed up with problems as we try to get away from other problems? How should they be interpreted?

Day 3 - John 20:1-9 Does this passage tell us how the Spirit of Christ lives on and can impact our lives today? How should they be interpreted?

Day 4 - John 6:35-40 What figure of speech (word picture) do you see? Explain how the figure of speech enhances your understanding.

Day 5 - Matthew 23:16, 33 What figure of speech do you see? Explain how the figure of speech enhances your understanding.

Day 6 - Daniel 2 What symbols (visible objects or beings that represents something invisible or spiritual) do you see? How do these symbols enhance your understanding?

Day 7 - Revelation 1:12-16 What symbols do you see? How do these symbols enhance your understanding?

WEEK 5

Interpretation - "What does it mean?"

Rule # 3 - Interpret the Bible grammatically.

As valuable as it is to have the Bible in our own language we must remember that the majority of the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. It is always helpful to go back to the original language to define a word. The best places to find this information are in reference books such as Strong's Concordance or Vine's Expository Dictionary. For an explanation on how to do a concordance word study see Appendix B. Use a reference book to determine the meaning of the following words. Write out the meaning of the verse based upon your discoveries. If you do not have a reference book use Appendix C.

Using the original languages helps to...

Day 1 - ...understand difficult words

1Thessalonians 5:23 sanctify

Day 2 - ...discover new meanings

2 Peter 1:10 election

Day 3 - ...compare variations of the same word
John 13:34; 15:19 love

Day 4 - 2 Corinthians 5:17 creature

Day 5 - 2 Corinthians 5:18 reconciled

Day 6 - 2 Corinthians 5:19 imputing

Day 7 - 2 Corinthians 5:20 beseech

WEEK 6

Interpretation - "What does it mean?"

Rule # 4 - Consider the context.

Neglecting the context is a common reason for misinterpreting the Bible. It is important to study each statement in light of the passage surrounding it. Read the verses that come before and after to examine the entire thought of the writer. This helps not to make determinations without seeing the whole picture. Determine how the following verses are used out of context and write out your reasons. Appendix D will provide you with help.

Day 1 - Amos 5:23 "God does not want musical instruments in the church because He has said He will not listen to music."

Day 2 - 1 Peter 3:3 "Women should not wear jewelry or go the beauty shop."

Day 3 - 1 Corinthians 10:23 "There is nothing my unsaved friends can do that I can't do as well because the Bible says, 'Everything is permissible.'"

Day 4 - 1 Peter 2:24 "Jesus' wounds bring physical healing to those who have the faith to claim this promise."

Day 5 - Deuteronomy 5:12 "Christians should not play sports, go on trips, or do lawn work on Sundays."

Day 6 - Galatians 3:26 "God considers everyone He created His children and, therefore, everyone has eternal life."

Day 7 - 1 Corinthians 11:22 "God forbids church picnics, fellowships, and banquets."

WEEK 7

Interpretation - "What does it mean?"

Rule # 5 - Take history and culture into account.

Because Scripture originated in a historical and cultural setting, it can best be understood in light of the Biblical history and culture. This information can be gleaned from the Bible itself as well as from reference books such as Bible encyclopedias, Bible atlases, and Bible times and customs.

Write out your thoughts on how the information included helps your understanding of the following passages.

Day 1 - Exodus 7:14-10:29 The Egyptians had many gods that were worshiped at small local shrines. Some of those worshiped included: Hapi-god of the Nile, Heqet- frog headed god, Sef-god of desert. Vatsnit-god represented by flies, Seshmet-goddess with power of disease, Osiris-god of crops, Re-sun god, Isis-goddess who protected children.

Day 2 - John 4:1-26 When conquering Israel in 722 BC, the king of Assyria brought in heathen colonists to replace the deported Israelites. These people intermarried with the Israelites. The Samaritans were a mixed race with a heathen core.

Day 3 - 1 Peter 3:8-22 During the time of Jesus and the early church, Rome was in power. They controlled all of Israel and the known world. In 64 AD Nero, emperor of Rome, began persecution of the Christians.

Day 4 - 2 Timothy 4:1-18 Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy and considered him "my true son in the faith." At the time of writing this letter, Paul was a prisoner in a Roman dungeon. According to tradition, Paul was beheaded not long after.

Day 5 - Psalm 23; John 10:1-21 The biblical shepherd knew the sheep well and responded to them instantly. The shepherd had a name for each sheep and watched over them at night by sleeping in the opening of the sheepfold. The rod the shepherd carried was a heavy club used to protect the sheep from wild animals. The staff was used to help control the sheep.

Day 6 - Matthew 9:9-13 Taxes were paid to the Roman Empire and were collected by local people called publicans. The publicans would collect excessive taxes in order to make a good living for themselves. The Jews hated the tax collectors and regarded them as traitors.

Day 7 - Matthew 3:11-12 The winnowing fork was a five pronged fork. The fork was used by putting it into the pile and throwing the mixture of grain and straw high into the air. The grain fell back to the floor and the straw blew away. The grain was gathered and sifted, the straw was collected for animals. The refuse of the winnowed grain (chaff) was burned in stoves.

WEEK 8

Application - "How should I respond?"

When we are studying the Bible, each Scripture has only one accurate meaning. But, each Scripture can have many different applications or ways of making it a practical part of your life. Sometimes the application is made directly from the verses in the same way it was applied when they were written. At other times the application is made from a general principle that is timeless and implied in the text. The verse has been applied when you put it into practice.

In each verse given, write out the interpretation and three ways the verse personally applies to your life.

Day 1 - 1 Samuel 15:22

Day 2 - Psalm 127:1

Day 3 - Daniel 1:8

Day 4 - Matthew 5:13-16

Day 5 - Acts 1:8

Day 6 - Romans 12:1-2

Day 7 - 1 Peter 5:5-6

WEEK 9

Re-creation

Recreation is a way of outlining the passage that enables us to see it in better detail. We are arranging the words to better see their relationship. When re-creating a passage use the following guidelines: 1) independent sentences go to the far left of the paper 2) dependent phrases are placed below the word they modify 3) keep grammatical rules of modification in mind 4) line up phrases that modify the same words 5) if a phrase seems to modify several different words select the one that is preferable to you 6) highlight connectives 7) use lines and arrows when necessary 8) re-create in pencil so you can make changes 9) don't worry about perfection just do your best. Re-create the following passage. For an example of a re-created passage, see Appendix E.

Day 1-7 - Hebrews 11

WEEK 10

Various Approaches

After you become confident with the observation, interpretation, application of the inductive method of Bible study, you will want to build into your study a variety of approaches. You may want to buy reference books that will assist you in your study. Appendix F gives a suggested list of Bible study resources. Follow the instructions for the next week to learn other approaches of study.

Overview Approach (Reading through the entire book a number of times to see it as a whole.)

Day 1 - Determine the main theme of Titus.

Day 2 - Develop the outline of Titus.

Topical Approach (Study of one particular issue or subject of interest.)
Follow this format: study-summarize-conclude-apply (see Appendix G). This study can be done with a concordance or simply listing verses as you read through a book.

Day 3 - Study Prayer in the book of Acts. (Acts 1:14,24; 2:42; 3:1; 4:24,31; 6:4,6; 7:59; 8:15,22,24; 9:11,40; 10:2,4,9,30; 11:5; 12:5,12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:13,16,25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17,18; 26:29; 27:29; 28:8)

Day 4 - Continue prayer study in Acts.

Biographical Approach (Listing observations from a study of biblical characters for summary and application.)

Day 5 - Make observations from the life of Isaac.

Genesis 22:1-19; 24:62-67; 25:21-23; 26:1-35; 27:1-28:5

Day 6 - Make summaries and applications from the life of Isaac.

Theological Approach (Focusing on what a book says about a particular aspect of God. a.k.a.-Christ, salvation, sin, Holy Spirit)

Day 7 - Determine how Titus develops our understanding of Christ.

WEEK 11

Armor of God Study Ephesians 6:10-20

Over the next two weeks you are going to do a detailed study of the armor of God from Ephesians 6:10-20. You will be using the inductive method to come to an accurate understanding of this passage. When you have completed it, select your own passage for a detailed study.

Day 1 - Read through the entire book of Ephesians in order to get an overview. What is the main theme? Do you see an outline?

Day 2 - Do a historical and cultural study on the book of Ephesians. When was it written? What were the main circumstances surrounding its writing? What can you learn about the Roman armor? Use study Bibles, Bible encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Day 3 - When Paul says in verse thirteen, "Therefore put on the full armor of God", what is the context of this statement?

Day 4-5 - Re-create Ephesians 6:10-20

Day 6-7 - Make as many observations as you can.

WEEK 12

Armor of God Study Ephesians 6:10-20 Week 2

Day 1-2 - Do studies on words you think are key words in this passage. Use the Strong's Concordance or the Vine's Expository Dictionary.

Day 3-4 - Compare Scripture with Scripture using a cross-reference Bible.

Day 5 - List the word pictures that are in this passage.

Day 6 - List three applications that make this passage practical for your life.

Day 7 - Pray through the passage, especially focusing on putting on the armor of God.

Appendix A

Galatians 5:16-26

1. The writer is very connected to a "spiritual life."
2. The writer wants the same for his readers.
3. There is some kind of conflict going on inside of us as believers.
4. Living by the Spirit is the key to this victory.
5. The acts of the sinful nature (flesh) are deplorable.
6. Envy seems to be on par with witchcraft and drunkenness.
7. The writer gives a warning.
8. The writer had already given this warning at least once.
9. A lifestyle lived in the sinful nature (flesh) has consequences.
10. The life of the Spirit produces fruit in our lives.
11. These qualities are the result of the Spirit in us not our effort to produce them.
12. Spirit life - Good! Sinful nature - Bad!
13. There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit.
14. We are not a slave to sinful passions and desires.
15. As Christians we live by the indwelling Spirit.
16. We should keep in step with the Spirit.
17. There is no room for conceit, provoking or envy.

Appendix B

(Strong's must be used with the King James Version)

Follow this procedure when doing a word study in Strong's Concordance.

1. Look up the word in the concordance.
2. Find the Scripture reference under the word.
3. Write down the number that is beside the Scripture reference.
4. Look up the number in the dictionary in the back of the concordance. (There are two dictionaries, Hebrew and Greek. Make sure you're using the correct one.)
5. Here is what you will find when you look up a word:

A.1921 B.????????????; C. epiginosko; D. from 1909 and 1097; E. to become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly F. AV - know

30, acknowledge 5, perceive 3, take knowledge of 2, have knowledge of 1, know well 1; 42

- A. Strong's #
- B. Greek word
- C. Greek pronunciation
- D. Origin of the word
- E. Definition
- F. Other English words used for this Greek word

6. Write down the definition

7. Determine how the definition helps you to understand the passage.

Note: There are software programs available for finding the meaning of words in the original languages that can be obtained at your local Christian bookstore.

Appendix C

Word Studies

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - 37 ???????; hagiazo; from 40; 1) to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow; 2) to separate from profane things and dedicate to God; AV - sanctify 26, hallow 2, be holy 1; 29

2 Peter 1:10 - 1589 ???????; ekloge; from 1586; 1) the act of picking out, choosing 1a) of the act of God's free will by which before the foundation of the world he decreed his blessings to certain persons; AV - election 6, chosen 1; 7

John 13:34 - 25; agapao; perhaps from agan (much) [or cf 5368]; 1) of persons 1a) to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly; AV - love 135, beloved 7; 142

John 15:19 - 5368; phileo; from 5384; 1) to love 1a) to approve of 1b) to like 1c) sanction 1d) to treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome, befriend; AV - love 22, kiss 3; 25

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 2937; ktisis; from 2936; 1) the act of founding, establishing, building, etc. 1a) the act of creating, creation; AV - creature 11, creation 6, building 1, ordinance 1; 19

2 Corinthians 5:18 - 2644; katallasso; from 2596 and 236; 1) to change, exchange, as coins for others of equivalent value 1a) to

reconcile (those who are at variance) 1b) return to favour with, be reconciled to one; AV - reconcile 6; 6

2 Corinthians 5:19 - 3049; logizomai; middle voice from 3056; 1) to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over 1a) to take into account, to make an account of; AV - think 9, impute 8, reckon 6, count 5, account 4, suppose 2, reason 1, number 1, misc 5; 41

2 Corinthians 5:20 - 3870 ??????????; parakaleo; from 3844 and 2564; 1) to call to one's side, call for, summon 2) to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc. 2a) to admonish, exhort 2b) to beg, entreat, beseech ; AV- beseech 43, comfort 23, exhort 21, desire 8, pray 6, intreat 3, misc 4, vr besought 1; 109

Appendix D

Verses in Context

Amos 5:23 - Judgement (Day of the Lord) is coming because of the wickedness of Israel. God says he hates all of their "religiousness" including their songs and music.

1 Peter 3:3 - This verse is not teaching that these things are forbidden, but is emphasizing the far greater importance of inner qualities that produce beauty of character.

1 Corinthians 10:23 - This verse deals with Christian liberty and tells us that even though we have freedom not everything is beneficial for others.

1 Peter 2:24 - It speaks of the suffering of Christ in order that we might be dead to sins and alive to righteousness.

Deuteronomy 5:12 - This was given to Israel and not the church. In addition the Sabbath is Saturday not Sunday.

Galatians 3:26 - We are all sons of God "through faith in Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 11:22 - This is speaking to the issue of divisions and excess in the church, not that they should have no food there.

Appendix E

Hebrews 12:1-6

Therefore,
since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off
everything that hinders
and the sin that so easily entangles,
and let us run with perseverance
the race marked out for us.
Let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy set before Him
endured the cross,
scorning its- shame,
and sat down at the right-
hand of the throne of God
Consider Him who endured such opposition
from sinful men,
so that you will not grow weary
and lose heart.

In your struggle against sin,
you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.
And
you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as
sons:
"My son do not make light of the Lord's dis-
cipline,
and do not lose heart when He rebukes you,
because the Lord disciplines-
those He loves,
and He punishes everyone He-
accepts as a son."

Appendix F

Bible Study Resources

Concordance

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
Lists every word of the Bible alphabetically (KJV text).

Bible Dictionaries

Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press.
New Bible Dictionary, Eerdmans.

Bible Encyclopedias

The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Zondervan Publishing.
Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, Moody Press.

Word Studies

Vine's Expository Dictionary, Revell.
Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Moody Press.

Bible Commentaries

Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old and New Testaments, Victor Books.
The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Moody Press.
The New Unger's Bible Handbook, Moody Press.

Bible Atlases

Baker's Bible Atlas, Baker Book House.
Atlas of Bible Lands, Hammond, Inc.

History and Culture

New Testament Times, by Merrill C. Tenney, Eerdmans.
The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times, by Ralph Gower, Moody Press.

Other Resources

Nave's Topical Bible, Moody Press
The Narrated Bible In Chronological Order, by F. LaGard Smith, Harvest House Publishers.

Appendix G

Topical Study on Knowing God

Study

Summarize (limited example)

1. He is known in Judah. Ps 76:1
2. Christ has made God known. Jn 1:18; Mt 11:27; 1 Jn 5:20
3. Knowing God is eternal life. Jn 17:3
4. Knowing Christ is a growing relationship. Phil 3:10

5. Knowing God changes our actions. Tit 1:16
6. We know God if we obey Him. 1 Jn 2:3-4
7. Christ knows us like a shepherd knows the sheep. Jn 10:14,15, 27

Conclude (limited example)

1. Does God know us?
 - * intimately Ps 139:1-6
 - * those who love Him 1Cor 8:3
2. How do we know God?
 - * through Christ Jn 1:18; Jn 17:26; 1 Jn 5:20
3. What are the results of knowing God?
 - * knowing God is eternal life Jn 17:3
4. What are the characteristics of those who know God?
 - * listens to His teaching 1 Jn 4:6
 - * obedience 1 Jn 2:3-4
 - * change (lives, actions) Gal 4:8-9; Tit 1:16
 - * loves 1 Jn 4:7-8
 - * growing Phil 3:10

Apply

1. Living the Christian life is based upon my personal relationship with God.
2. I find peace in the fact that God knows me intimately.
3. I offer praise to God for allowing me to know Him through His Son.
4. I surrender my life to Christ as the shepherd of my soul.