

Tips on How to Study your Bible

Objective: To Understand the Author's Intended Meaning & Apply It in Life—Changing Ways.

1st, read through the entire book (or passage) of the Bible that you are studying.
 2nd, go back and study more in depth each section/chapter (making observations, interpretations, applications).
 3rd, see how it all fits together in the “big picture” of the entire book.

1. Study:

2. Observation: What does the Bible actually say?

The Six Big Questions	The Six Structural Clues
1. Who? (characters, significant meanings, pronoun references (i.e. “he, they, we” etc.)	1. Repetition (look for repeated or emphasized words and phrases—these may be significant.)
2. What? (context, cultural issues; look at a Bible dictionary, map, what is described in this passage?)	2. Comparison/Contrast (look for words: “like” or “as,” “but,” “however,” “instead”), etc.
3. When? (look for time-oriented words: “before,” “formerly,” “now,” “after,” etc. What season or time of day is it?)	3. Commands (Look for words like “do, go, believe”), etc.; is it a positive or negative command? “Go there!” Or “Don’t do this....” etc.
4. Where? (cities, countries; geography, find “place” words: “under,” “over,” “in,” “at”)	4. Questions / Answers (explicit or implicit answers, rhetorical questions—answer is obvious)
5. Why? (what is the purpose, rationale, reason behind this statement or action?)	5. Cause/Effect (conditional or unconditional, “in order that,” “if...then...,” “for this reason”)
6. How? (directives, adverbs, importance of actions)	6. Connectives (relationship between two thoughts, “finally,” “therefore,” “also,” “but”) etc.

3. Interpretation:

A. Context Analysis
 What precedes a passage and what follows? Grasp the “big picture.”
 Consider:

- Genre, Literary context (i.e narrative (story), poetry, prophecy)
- Culture & Historical Background
- Geography (map) & Theology

C. Compare with Scripture
 Evaluate your interpretation in light of the whole Bible.
 Consider:

- Do other Bible passages speak to this topic?
- Do they confirm or contradict your understanding of this passage?
- How have other Bible scholars interpreted this passage?

* a Bible concordance, dictionary or commentary would be helpful

What does the passage mean?

B. Content Analysis
 Determine the meaning of the passage in its original setting with special attention to the author’s “big idea” or main theme.
 -Analyze the structure
 -Examine the grammar
 -Compare translations
 -Define key words
 -Study the historical-cultural background
 * Typically, the main point of the passage is what plainly sticks out when you read it

D. Conclusions
 Describe the “big idea” along with sub-points, and paraphrase the passage in your own words.



Growing Deeper

A Disciplemaking Tool of Harvest Evangelical Free Church

Week of October 6, 2019

Hebrews 4:1-13

Chapter 4 continues the theme of God’s rest. An early church leader named Augustine once said “You have made us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.” The concept of God’s rest throughout Scripture has included the OT concepts of completion (Gen 2); dwelling in the land God promised (Josh 21:43-45; Ps 95); rest from legalistic good works trying to please God (Mt. 11:28-30) - an invitation to trust in Christ for salvation and eternal rest in heaven for believers. We achieve God’s rest through humbly obeying God’s Word. It’s another warning to not harden your hearts, but fully trust in the Lord.

Q: Where do you go to find rest? Couch in living room? Hammock in the back yard? Favorite vacation spot?

Q: (4:1-13) How would you describe the rest that God offers to His children?

Q: (v.1) What is the promise of entering God’s rest?

Q: (v.1, 11) What is the urgency of the warning? What are we to fear?

Q: What keeps you from experiencing God’s rest today?

Q: (v.12) How is God's Word described?

Q: (v.12) How does God's Word both encourage and challenge believers?

Q: How does God's Word and His penetrating knowledge (vv.12-13) relate to unbelief in the heart (4:1-11)?

Q: Nothing is hidden from God's sight (vv. 12-13). How is this critically important for believers (and non-believers)?

Q: Ask God to examine your heart to see if you are trying to enter God's rest by your own efforts, or through faith in Christ. What evidence does your life show that you have been truly saved by faith in Christ alone?

Pray: "Lord, when I think of all the people around me that are far from You, it gets overwhelming! Forgive me of my selfishness and fears. I turn them over to You. Stir up your Holy Spirit within me; give me boldness to seize opportunities you give me today, to be a friend to those around me. Give me opportunities to share Jesus in words and deeds in your strength, leaving the results to You. In Jesus name, Amen!"

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4. Application:

How does this truth work (for me and for others)?

A. Understand

Original Meaning

Do not read current culture into Biblical history & culture.

- Step into their world.
- What is the author's intended meaning?
- What is the historical-cultural context?
- What did it mean to the original recipients?
- be careful not to read your personal opinions into the text

B. Identify Timeless Principles

God's character & His Truth never change, but Bible characters are often just like us.

- What is the main point?
- What do I learn about God?
- What do I learn about the people involved?
- Does the passage show how I can praise, thank or trust God?
- Does it reveal a sin I need to repent?
- Does it reveal something I need to make a decision about?
- Does it reveal something I need to do for the sake of Christ, myself, others?
- What is God teaching me?

C. Personal Application

How can I apply the timeless principles of Scripture to my life?

- Is there a **Sin** to confess?
- **Promise** to claim?
- **Action** to avoid?
- **Command** to obey?
- **Example** to follow?

- Is there a challenge to face?
- Is there an error in my beliefs or lifestyle?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a verse to memorize?

Get Started! (Find a Bible that fits your reading level. Some suggestions: NIV, NLT, ESV, NKJV, NASB, or children's Bible) **** PRAY** that God will help you understand and apply His Word to your life.

1. Use different Bible translations & develop a consistent, doable reading plan (i.e. to read/study Romans in one month)
2. If studying a book (i.e. book of John), read the entire chapter/book first, then go back and study it in more detail.
3. Get a notebook, outline each chapter, note key verses, highlights, themes, circle/highlight key words in your Bible.
4. Memorize key verses that are helpful to you (read them 3 times, write them 3 times, recite them out loud 3 times)
5. Meditate slowly on specific passages (put it in your own words, look for applications for your life, pray through the text)
6. Share what you are learning with someone else; keep each other accountable; learn from each other, study in a group.