

How to Study the Bible

One of the most difficult things for new believers to begin to do is how do I learn and understand what is in the Bible. The desire to learn and know what is in the Bible is very much akin to wanting to learn what is a history book, or a science book, or some other area of learning that you are just beginning to move into. However, with the scripture, you are not dealing with a text book of religion, nor a handbook on “How to . . .,” but you are dealing with the very Word of God. Consequently, although your approach to studying the Bible want necessarily be that different from the mental approach you take in studying some other text, because this is God’s Word to man, the questions you will ask, and the answers you will receive will, without question, be quite different!

We are, therefore, going to focus on four areas of how to read and appropriate God’s truths in His Word for our lives. These are all four legitimate ways, but they are different because of the difference in the objective of each.

- I. **Devotional Reading** – In devotional reading, you are simply reading and letting the Holy Spirit speak to you what He would have you to know without looking for anything in particular.
 - A. **Proverbs**
 1. You read one chapter per day, for the day of the month.
 2. For example, today is November 27, so you read Proverbs 27, and so on.
 3. If you miss a day, that is alright, you simply read the chapter for the next day. Thus, if you miss today (Nov. 27), tomorrow you read chapter 28 (Nov. 28).
 - B. **Psalms**
 1. You read 1-5 chapters per day.
 2. You may want to read Proverbs in the morning and Psalms in the evenings.
 - C. **Through the Bible**
 1. In this method, you may choose any number of methods.
 - a. You may simply begin in the beginning with Genesis and read through to the end, Revelation, at a pace that suits you.

- b. You may wish to read a portion of the Old Testament and a portion of the New Testament simultaneously – i.e., you will for example read three chapters of Genesis and one chapter of Matthew (Genesis in the morning and Matthew in the evening, etc.).
- c. Another way would be to divide the bible in half as far as the chapters are concerned, and if you do that, the division will be between Psalms 117 and 118.
 - (1) Thus, you would begin in Genesis 1 and Psalms 118.
 - (2) You could read one chapter of Genesis and one chapter of Psalms, and continue on through the whole Bible.
 - (3) You may find you want to read more chapters than that, and you are totally free to read as much or as little as you feel led to.

- II. Personal Application – In this approach you are wanting to ask the question, “What is God saying to me in this passage?”**
- A. You select a Bible book that you want to read.
 - B. You get a pen and notebook to write your notes in.
 - C. You can use one Bible version, or better yet, you may want to use two or more (I suggest three at the most) whereby you can get a broader view of what the text is saying.
 - 1. You may want to use a NKJ, NAS and the Living Translation.
 - 2. The Amplified Bible is excellent for beginning Bible study as it gives you in English the expanded translation of the Greek and Hebrew.
 - D. Let’s say you begin in John 1:1-5.
 - 1. You will read John 1:1-5 in the NKJ, and then in the NAS and finally in the Amplified Bible.
 - 2. You will then write down in your notebook, under the heading, “John 1:1-5,” what it is that God is saying to you.
 - 3. You will then proceed to the next section, John 1:6-8 and follow the same procedure, and so on until you finish the entire book.
 - 4. You can see that this is not a quick run through of the book of John, but you are carefully and slowly reading through the scripture and letting God show you His truths in a deep and personal way.

- III. Historical and Theological Application – In this method you are going for much deeper study and this requires some serious time and dedication.**
- A. You will need to acquire access to books that give some basic background to historical and theological studies.**
 - B. At your own pace and direction of interest, you can incorporate your study of the scripture with these other sources.**
 - C. For example, you may want to begin reading an Introduction to the Bible along with your devotional reading and personal application.**
 - D. As you are doing your personal application, you may come upon some questions that the text itself doesn't answer (for example, why was John sent before Jesus), and a good Bible commentary would be able to give you that information.**
 - E. In addition, as you progress in your study, you may want to know more about the Pharisees of Jesus' day, and thus, you would need to consult with a good Bible dictionary.**
 - F. Let's say you want to know about Jesus' miracles as a whole, then you would need to consult with *Nave's Topical Bible* that has all of His miracles listed in order from all the Gospels.**
 - G. Let's say that you are now having questions about certain theological issues such as the deity of Christ, then you can resort to some good systematic theology books that would go into detail about that doctrine in a thorough going, biblical analysis.**
- IV. Linguistic Study – This is the incorporation of the use of the biblical languages into your study.**
- A. The linguistic study is of utmost importance as it is here you are getting into the first hand meaning of the text.**
 - B. There are different levels where you can approach this study.**
 - 1. You may use the various "Word Studies" that are available in English that require no actual knowledge of the original languages at all.**
 - 2. You may consult with sources that do use the original languages with the assumption that you, the reader, have some understanding of the languages.**
 - a. Under this latter, there are two approaches you can take:
(1) You may be dependent on what someone else says the languages say.**

