

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. Take time to do Bible study.

- One session of 2 hours, for example, is better than 4 sessions of 1/2 hr.
- The Bible itself encourages us to search the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11).
- "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel." (Ezra 7:6, 10). Your heart has to be in it when you study Scripture.
- "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." (Ps.119:162). It takes work to find treasures, but it's also a very rewarding experience.

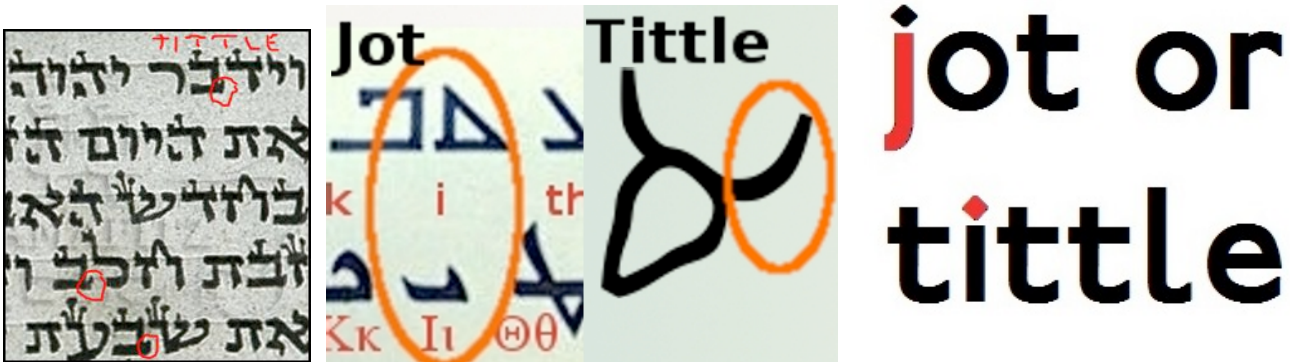
2. Understanding Scripture is only through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10-16).

- "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." Realize that the Scriptures are inspired by God.
- Let this time of study be an experience with God and ask the Lord to guide you in your reading. This time of fellowship with the Lord will increase your love for His Word. "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97).
- The Holy Spirit wants to glorify the Lord Jesus (Jn.16:14). Recognize Him in Scripture and return what you find in worship to God the Father (Jn.4:23,24).
- Allow the Lord to speak to your heart and conscience and not just your intellect.

3. Approach the Scriptures believing that God wants to show you His treasures.

4. Details are important and can be key to our understanding.

Matthew 5:18 – "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."



The above image gives the idea of what it would be in English lettering.

5. Select a Bible that will encourage you to study God's Word.

- Use a Bible with good references to other texts without any notes from other Bible teachers (Scofield's, Ryrie's, Nelson's or MacArthur's Study Bibles are good, but may not encourage you to study Scripture for yourself. Consult these commentaries later after you have first studied for yourself.)
- A Bible with clear text and paragraphs makes for easier reading. (Just remember that paragraph and chapter divisions are not in the original Hebrew and Greek texts.)
- Using the same Bible all the time will make it easier to find what you noticed before.
- A wide-margin Bible or Bible with blank pages or spaces can be helpful for making notes.
- Try not to use a pen to write notes in your Bible. Use a pencil instead, because you might have to erase it when you grow in your understanding of Scripture.
- Do not underline too many verses, because the next time you read the text, you have emphasized that particular verse and the Holy Spirit might want to draw your attention to another verse.

6. Different Bible translations.

- Use a Bible translation that is accurate to the original text, such as KJV, NKJV, ESV, NASB, DARBY.
- Comparing different Bible translations can be helpful in understanding the text.
- Paraphrase Bibles, such as Good News or JB Philips may be easier to follow, but they're unreliable for accuracy.
- Two principles when choosing a translation:
 - a. Accuracy to the original Hebrew and Greek text.
 - b. Readability: The NT was originally written in the common Greek and not in the classical Greek. This tells us that God intends us to be able to read the Scriptures in our own language.

7. How should we use Bible commentaries?

-- The following verses give us a healthy balance:

1 John 2:26, 27 – “These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”

Eph 4:11-12 – “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ...”

Most of what we know we learned from other people. It is God's mind that we are taught by sound and godly Bible teachers through oral and written ministry, but ultimately it is the Holy Spirit in us who teaches us. We need to be searching the Scriptures ourselves and not blindly follow Bible teachers. At the same time we need to respect the fact that the Scriptures have been read and studied by others for many centuries.

8. Some Bible Helps:

- Strongs Exhaustive Concordance
- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words
- Biblical encyclopedia (ex. Wycliffs, Ungers)
- Online/ Computer Helps, such as E-sword, Biblegateway.com, Blueletterbible.org
- Interlinear Bible
- Bible commentaries

Good Bible Study is marked by these three things:

- a) Observation
- b) Interpretation
- c) Application

OBSERVATION

- Observation involves skilful reading. Read the whole section without being distracted.
- Make distinction between narrative (ex. Genesis, Gospels, Acts), poetry (ex. Psalms, Song of Solomon), prophecy (ex. Isaiah, Amos, Revelation) and letters (ex. Romans, Titus, James).
- Who is the author of the passage? What do you know about him?
- Whom is the author addressing? (God's people? A specific church? Unbelievers?)
- What is the context before and after the passage?
- What are the most important terms, key words and/or concepts in this passage?
- What terms and/or figures of speech do you need to define so you can better understand the passage?
- Are there any commands, promises or warnings in this passage?
- Can you find any repetition of words or ideas in this text?
- Are there people or places crucial to this passage? Find out all you can.

INTERPRETATION

- Outline the passage: What do you think are the main points and sub-points of what the author is saying here?
- State what you think the author is saying in this passage in one or two sentences.
- What was the meaning of this passage to the author's audience?
- After you have done all the above questions then check commentaries (not before) to see if what you have found goes along with what other godly men have found.
- -- Some rules of interpretation to remember to avoid confusion and misinterpretation:
 - a) Dispensational differences – Ex. David in Psalm 51:11 says “Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me”. The N.T. says that the Holy Spirit will abide with us for ever (Jn.14:16). Also, what is said to Israel in the O.T. is not always the same as what is said to the Church in the N.T.
 - b) Context – Ex. Mt. 7:1 “Judge not, that you be not judged”. This text is misused to tolerate all kinds of sin. The context explains how to understand this verse.
 - c) Scripture is explained by Scripture. Does your interpretation of one Bible verse correspond with the rest of Scripture? (2 Pt. 1:20-21)
 - d) Take the Bible literally unless the Bible clearly shows figurative language.

“The Bible itself follows the normal or literal method of interpretation. For example the O.T. prophesied that Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Mc.5:2), that He would ride on a donkey (Zc.9:9), that He would be punished for our sins (Isa.53:4-8). And He did all those things just as literally predicted. In quoting the O.T., the N.T. writers treated it as a normal, human instrument of communication.” (Roy B. Zuck in ‘Basic Bible Interpretation’)
 - e) Recognize typology & illustrations in Scripture (ex. Melchizedek as type of Christ), but don't go into the extremes of allegorizing, i.e. looking for supposed secret or hidden meanings totally unrelated to the text. (ex. Ps.1:3, “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water”, was explained by one church father as speaking of the cross and baptism).

Challenges in Bible interpretation:

- a) Time gap – We can't ask the apostle Paul or Peter.
- b) Geographical gap – We don't live in the Middle East (A Bible atlas and encyclopedia are helpful for this).
- c) Cultural gap – Different customs (ex. The expression “gird up your loins”)
- d) Language gap – The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. Every language has expressions and words that are difficult to translate. Also, the Greek text of the N.T., for example, does not differentiate between capital and lower case letters, doesn't contain chapter, paragraph and verse divisions and doesn't use any punctuation like periods and commas.

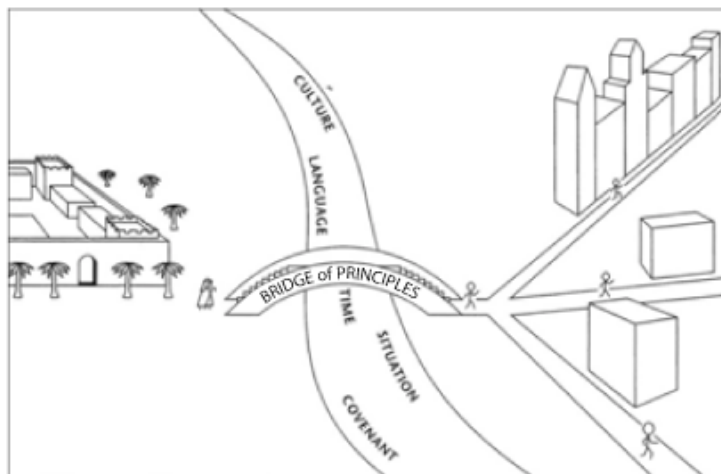
On top of that the order of words is quite different than in English.

So for example Hebrews 10:12, 13 looks like this in English when literally translated from Greek:

“he but one on behalf of sins having offered sacrifice in perpetuity sat down at right hand of god from then on expecting until are put the enemies of him footstool of the feet of him” (as given in “The Interlinear Bible” by Jay P. Green)

The NKJV renders it, “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.”

****Illustration to left: Bible times is pictured on the left (with palm trees), Present time is on right (with tall buildings).**



APPLICATION

- What does this passage mean for believers and for me today?
- How should understanding this passage change your life?
- The acronym SPECS:
 - a) Is there a Sin to be forsaken?
 - b) Is there a Promise to be claimed?
 - c) Is there an Example to be followed?
 - d) Is there a Command to be obeyed?
 - e) Is there a Stumbling block or hindrance to be avoided?

The Bible can be studied different ways. You can study a

Chapter or Section of a Bible book: Ex. Mark 12:18-27

Subject: Ex. The Sabbath

Person: Ex. Ruth

Bible Book: Ex. 1 Thessalonians

Apologetic subject: Ex. Jesus is the promised Messiah (Christ) from the Old Testament (Acts 9:22)

Comparison of Bible Books: Ex. Gospel of Matthew & Gospel of Luke

Here are some helpful tips when doing Bible study on a topical subject:

1. Believe that God wants to bless you if you study His Word in a prayerful attitude. Ask Him for guidance.
2. Use your concordance to find all or most important texts on your subject. Write them down and read the context in which these texts are found and compare Scripture with Scripture. Remember that Strong's Concordance is based on the King James Version.
3. Take time to observe the texts and write what you learn on paper, so you don't forget.
4. Do not start your study by looking up Bible commentaries written by others. Doing that later may be helpful. You get more blessing out of Scripture, if you find God's treasures yourself.
5. Observe the differences and similarities of your subject between the Old and New Testament.
6. Looking up the meaning of Hebrew (O.T.) and Greek (N.T.) words can be helpful in your study. You can use the numbering system in Strong's Concordance.
7. In some cases knowledge of the cultural background of what you're studying can be helpful. A Biblical encyclopedia can be used for this purpose.
8. All Scripture points to the Lord Jesus. How does your subject relate to Him?
9. When studying this subject, it's important to ask, "What do these verses mean in its context?" And secondly, "How does all this teaching apply to me today and what can I learn from this?"
10. When presenting your subject to other people, make sure you support your conclusions with Scripture references.

NOTE: Some of the above information on this handout is from other sources.

NEXT SESSION: MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2012

SUBJECT: How to study a Topic ---- We will be studying what the Bible says about "the Sabbath".

PREPARATION AT HOME FOR STUDY: Go through the above "Helpful Hints when doing Bible Study on a Topical Subject" questions/points and Observation/ Interpretation & Application lists as well, answering them for the Subject --The Sabbath--.

Come Prepared to share what you have found from your own personal Study on "The Sabbath".

Books Available from the Charlottetown Bible Chapel Library

Book title	Call Number	Shelf category
How to Study the Bible	F91	Christian Living
Enjoy Your Bible!	F92	Christian Living
Living By the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible	F96	Christian Living
And God Said: An Overview of the Holy Bible	R14	Reference
Guidelines for the Understanding of the Scriptures	R15	Reference
Halley's Bible Handbook	R16	Reference
The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible	R22	Reference
Unger's Bible Handbook	R23	Reference
The Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Aaron . Golan	R30.1	Reference
The Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Goliath . Papyri	R30.2	Reference
The Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Parable . Zuzim	R30.3	Reference
Willmington's Guide to the Bible	R31	Reference
New Bible Dictionary	R32	Reference
New Strong's Complete Dictionary of Bible Words	R33	Reference
Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts	R39	Reference
Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words	R40	Reference
The Illustrated Bible Handbook	R42	Reference
A Survey of the Old Testament: 3rd Edition	R43.1	Reference
A Survey of the New Testament: 4th Edition	R43.2	Reference
Expository Dictionary of Bible Words	R44	Reference
Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words	R45	Reference
The New Ungers Bible Dictionary	R46	Reference
Chronological Guide to the Bible	R47	Reference
Word Studies in the Greek New Testament: Volume 1	R48.1	Reference
Word Studies in the Greek New Testament: Volume 2	R48.2	Reference
Word Studies in the Greek New Testament: Volume 3	R48.3	Reference
The New Testament: An Expanded Translation	R48.4	Reference
Your Old Testament Toolbox	R49	Reference
Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, A	R50	Reference
Ironside Commentaries		
Romans and Galatians	G96.R	Commentary
Philippians and Colossians	G96.P	Commentary
Hebrews	G96.H	Commentary
James and 1 and 2 Peter	G96.J	Commentary
1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon	G96.T	Commentary

What the Bible Teaches: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther	G64.15	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Psalms	G64.16	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes	G64.17	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Exodus	G64.2	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Song of Solomon and Isaiah	G64.20	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Leviticus/Deuteronomy	G64.3	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: Matthew and Mark	G64.40	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: Luke	G64.41	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: John	G64.42	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: Acts and James	G64.43	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Romans	G64.44	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: I Corinthians and II Corinthians	G64.45	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon	G64.46	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus	G64.47	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: Hebrews	G64.48	Commentary
What the Bible teaches: I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude	G64.49	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Revelation	G64.57	Commentary
What the Bible Teaches: Joshua, Judges, and Ruth	G64.6	Commentary
Believer's Bible Commentary	G65	Commentary
The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament	G78.1	Commentary
The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament	G78.2	Commentary
Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds NT Commentary. Vol.1	G92.1	Commentary
Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds NT Commentary. Vol. 2	G92.2	Commentary
Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds NT Commentary. Vol. 3	G92.3	Commentary
Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds NT Commentary. Vol. 4	G92.4	Commentary
The Applied Old Testament Commentary	G93.1	Commentary
The Applied New Testament Commentary	G93.2	Commentary
Bible Exposition Commentary: Genesis.Deuteronomy	G94.1	Commentary
Bible Exposition Commentary: Joshua.Esther	G94.2	Commentary
Bible Exposition Commentary: Job.Song of Solomon	G94.3	Commentary
Bible Exposition Commentary: Isaiah.Malachi	G94.4	Commentary
Bible Exposition Commentary: Matthew.Galatians	G94.5	Commentary
Bible Exposition Commentary: Ephesians.Revelation	G94.6	Commentary
The MacArthur Bible Commentary	G95	Commentary