

How to Study the Bible

It is important to thoroughly read the Bible, but simply reading the Bible is not the same as studying. The Divine Word of God deserves respect and should be understood and practiced. The Bible is one of the most misinterpreted books ever written, and most people can find it very hard to understand. The Bible records a long time of history including many cultures and ages, as well as relating and correlating to any modern era; it is translated from the original manuscripts in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic by reputable scholars.

The goal in studying the Bible is to understand the message in the correct context. If you struggle with where to start with your Bible reading, how often to read your Bible, how much to read in one sitting, or how to get things out of it (apply it to your life/practice it), this article can help.

1. Plan your study. Set aside a time and place to study. Develop a plan of what you want to read each day. Having a plan excites you to discover what you learn from God's Word for that day; it will also keep you organized, keeping track of what passages you have covered and what lessons you have learned.

2. Choose a translation of the bible you are comfortable reading. Many bible apps offer different translations such as the free Youversion Bible app. Look through those and pick one that suits your reading style. Some translations are better for reading while others are better for studying. NIV (New International Version) is good for both in my opinion.

3. Study the Bible with an attitude of prayer. Ask God to help you understand His Word before you even begin your reading. This is the first step in understanding the Bible. Bible study should be approached

with a prayerful desire to learn. Discipline yourself to be with the Word. The Bible will come alive for you. It is spiritual food.

4. Focus on the New Testament first. It is better to read the New Testament first if you are a new believer since you have begun a new relationship with Jesus Christ and the New Testament is all about the life of Christ and His followers. When you read the Old Testament, you will discover that it points to the time when Christ would eventually come. Consider reading the gospel of John first in the New Testament. You can just read the New Testament in order after that.

- The gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the life of Christ while He was on the earth.
- Acts is the history of the early church.
- Romans through Jude are writings to various churches and believers instructing them how to live the Christian life.
- Revelation speaks of Christ's return to earth in the future.

5. Pick out topics to study. A topical study is just that – a topic you may want to study especially if it is something you are currently dealing with in life.

6. For deeper study use a bible dictionary. Make sure that you look up words in the chapter that you are reading from. This will help you understand the Bible better.

NOTE: A Free Bible Program and App is E-sword.net. You can download different translations of the bible, bible dictionaries, commentaries, etc.

7. Have a notebook or app to take notes. Write down those things that really helped you as you were reading or studying.

8. Get rid of all distractions. Turn off the electronics. You may want to read from an actual bible with pages instead of on your electronic device because of the pop-up distractions you will get. Try to find a

quiet place where you can read without hindrances. This is your alone time with God.

Studying with Others

1. Find a Bible study group. Find a group of people that you can study with. The text is very complicated and having some help to get through it will be very important. They will also help keep you motivated and inspired.

2. Share what God spoke to you with others within your Bible study group. Discuss what you have read with others and ask questions of those who may have more experience reading and studying the Bible than you do.

3. Don't let opinions override God's Word. If a teaching or action doesn't line up with God's Word, always choose and live by God's Word.

Tips

* At first it can seem daunting to read everyday. But when you are in God's Word, it clears your mind and prepares you for the day. Don't give up. If you feel discouraged, ask the Lord for help.

* Pray before you start any Bible study or reading. Ask God to clear your mind and to show you things in His word before you begin reading. There is a prayer for wisdom and revelation in Ephesians 1:16-23 you can pray for yourself.

* When you begin your study of your Bible ask the Holy Spirit for help. John 14:26 says that He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance the sayings of Jesus. I John 2:27 is similar.

* Don't worry about how long it takes to read through the Bible, just be consistent.

* There are enough reference books and study guides to fill a library. Don't feel you need to get them all. It would run into the thousands of dollars. Get what works for your needs.

* Research the version or translation you are going to study with. Is it accurate? Is it just a modern readable version, or is it intended for study?

Warnings

*When you read what different Bible teachers says about a topic, you will get conflicting opinions, and this will cause you to become confused. Be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11 and judge everything you hear from others by the scriptures.

*The Bible was not written in English but in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. This means that some words and concepts are "not" direct one-to-one translations but are the translators attempt to express the feeling & meaning of the passage. Some were translated literally, and some functionally. Read with a prayerful mind and be willing to obey and be a doer of the Word (James 1:22-25).