

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Part 1 of HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE. Various Passages.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. November 19, 2023.

WE ARE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Christians make some outrageous claims.

- For example: We say God became a man and lived with us.

When people ask us how we can be sure of our claims, we say ...

- We have a book. We call it the Bible.

THE GOD-BREATHED BOOK

We believe the Bible is the written Word of God.

- God breathed it out.

2 Timothy 3:16a (ESV) All Scripture is breathed out by God...

- The Bible is a library of 66 books by 40 authors over 1500 years. God's Spirit worked in and through the authors to write God's words.

2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV) knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along (Greek = *phero* = like wind in the sails) by the Holy Spirit.

- Consequently, we regard the Bible as sacred, true, clear, and essential.

THE BENEFITS OF BIBLE STUDY

God speaks to us when we hear, read, or study the Bible.

Psalms 19:7-8 (CSB) The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up.

THE BARRIERS TO BIBLE STUDY

Many people experience barriers to Bible study.

- For example: we find it difficult, irrelevant, boring. We don't make time. We can't focus. Our brains are worn out. We haven't found it soul-satisfying.

SIX STEPS TO SOUL-SATISFYING BIBLE STUDY

Step One: Find your motivation (start with why).

- Calvin: see God clearly and accurately (Institutes 1.6.1). Psalm 119 has dozens of reasons: truth, hope, comfort, worship, holiness.
- The Bible was written to draw us back to God through Jesus Christ.

Step Two: Choose a reliable Bible version you understand.

- I have two questions when choosing a version: Can I understand it? Can I rely on it (is it an accurate translation of the original languages)? I use:
 - The New Living Bible - for personal reading
 - The New International Version - for personal reading
 - The Christian Standard Bible - for personal and study
 - The English Standard Version - for study
 - The New American Standard Version - for study
- The Bible Project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmO0Fwa74QM>

Step Three: Build a Bible Study Habit

- Things left to chance don't get done. Consistency is the key.
- Have a plan. For example: through the Bible in a year, New Testament book by book, word study, topical study. The Bible app. Ask Google: What does the Bible say about _____.
 - www.bible.com/reading-plans/17755-the-bible-explained
 - www.bible.com/reading-plans/29316-bibleproject-how-to-read-the-bible

Step Four: Use Helpful Study Methods.

- The H.E.A.R. method (pick up a sample on the the table)
- The Seven Arrows method (pick up a sample on table):
- The Six Questions method: who, where, when, what, why, how?

Step Five: Use a reliable study Bible or commentary.

- Start with the Bible alone. Then, use resources to answer questions etc.
- Free resources are available online:
 - Multiple study resources: www.blueletterbible.org
 - Commentaries: www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/
- I use various study Bibles for quick insights. Pick one:
 - The New Living Illustrated Study Bible
 - The NIV Zondervan Study Bible
 - The ESV Study Bible

Step Six: Pray and apply.

- The Bible warns against reading without heeding (James 1:22) and information without transformation (1 Corinthians 8:1).
- The goal is to hear from God and respond. Bible reading should lead to life-change. Pray before, during, and after (Psalm 119:18; Colossians 1:9-10).

Before: “Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. Amen.”

After: “Lord, thank you for the Bible by which you speak into my life. As I read and study it, please give me complete knowledge of your will with spiritual wisdom and understanding. As a result, may the way I live always honor and please you. Let my life produce every kind of good fruit as I grow to know you better and better. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.”

WHAT’S YOUR PLAN?

SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

GET STARTED

- What's on the menu for Thanksgiving? Who will be at the table?

DIVE IN

- Review the study guide. What were Pastor Peter's main ideas, insights, or Bible passages related to reading and studying the Bible?
- What is your motivation to study the Bible? What do you get out of it?
- Discuss the benefits of Bible reading and study based on Psalm 19:7-8. Use multiple Bible versions to gain insight and clarity.

HELP AND ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

- Be vulnerable: Share the barriers, difficulties, and challenges you face in your attempts to read and study the Bible. Ask the group for ideas and solutions.
- Share the plan you follow for Bible reading and study.
- Share with the group the helpful Bible versions and study resources you use to get the most out of Bible reading and study.
- Explain how you figure out ways to apply what you read.

PRAY TOGETHER

Pray for the members of the small group, your pastors/elders, the Cornerstone family, and our outreach partners. And anything else the Lord puts on your mind.

Pray a focused prayer of thanksgiving. Look up Colossians 3:15-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Psalms 50:23; 100:1-5; 107:1; .