**"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"**

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**How I Study The Bible**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. In this series (**"Give Me The Bible"**), we have covered...
   1. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy
   2. Why I Read The Bible
   3. Why I Believe The Bible
   4. Why I Love The Bible
   5. Why I Obey The Bible
   6. Why I Study The Old Testament
   7. How I Read The Bible
2. In this final lesson I wish to share thoughts related to **studying the Bible**...
   1. To ensure proper comprehension
   2. To avoid misapplying the Bible
3. Not all Bible study proves profitable...
   1. We must handle the Word of God properly - [**2Ti 2:15**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Tim%202.15)
   2. Some twist the Scriptures to their own destruction - [**2Pe 3:16**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Pet%203.16)

[This is not a definitive treatment of Bible exegesis, but a few thoughts that I keep in mind as I study the Bible. First, in a positive vein, with regards to...]

1. **SEEKING COMPREHENSION**
   1. **BASIC STUDY PRINCIPLES...**
      1. **Study the Bible the way it was written**
         1. The Word of God was revealed book by book; shouldn't we study it the same way?
         2. Many limit the bulk of their Bible study to topical studies or certain texts
         3. This increases the possibility of taking things out of context
         4. Truth requires **considering all** that God has revealed - cf. [**Ps 119:160**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20119.160)
         5. Words, phrases, passages, should be studied in the context of their respective books
         6. "The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian." - **A. W. Tozer**
         7. "The Bible is a harp with a thousand strings. Play on one to the exclusion of its relationship to the others, and you will develop discord. Play on all of them, keeping them in their places in the divine scale, and you will hear heavenly music all the time." - **William P. White**
      2. **Study both privately and corporately**
         1. Some study only when at church (corporately)
            1. Unprepared to truly benefit from their studies with others
            2. Unlikely to know when others may misinterpret or misapply the text
            3. "We have become so accustomed to hearing preachers or expositors, as important as that is, that many in the process have abandoned the grand privilege of personally hearing from God's Word daily." - **Ravi Zacharias**
         2. Some study only by themselves (privately)
            1. Not appreciating assistance from others - e.g., [**Lk 24:44-45**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Luke%2024.44-45)**;**[**Ac 8:30-31**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Acts%208.30-31)
            2. More likely to fall prey to misinterpretation or false teaching
      3. **Study with the proper spirit**
         1. With meekness, humility - **[Jm 1:21](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/James%201.21" \t "_blank);**[**Ps 25:9**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%2025.9)
         2. This why I believe the bulk of one's study should be in the form of daily devotional reading, accompanied with meditation and prayer - [**Ps 86:11**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%2086.11)**;**[**119:33**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20119.33)
         3. "Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like trying to eat without swallowing." - **Anonymous**
   2. **BASIC STUDY TOOLS...**
      1. **Good translation**
         1. Accurate, but readable
         2. Word for word translations preferred; thought for thought suitable for comparison
         3. Suggested: ESV, NKJV, NASB (word for word); NLT (thought for thought)
      2. **Readable layout**
         1. Font size - suitable for reading (for me, that means at least 10 point!)
         2. Paper - minimal ghosting or bleed through (text visible from other side)
         3. Paragraph vs. verse by verse (personal preferences may vary)
         4. The layout of the text on paper should be easy on the eyes and comprehension
      3. **Dictionaries, maps, study Bibles**
         1. To look up the meaning of words, geographical information
         2. If we don't know the meaning of a word, we won't know the meaning of the text
         3. A good grasp of geographical information enhances Biblical understanding
         4. Beware of study Bibles with notes by one person, or a particular theological bias
         5. Suggested: ESV Study Bible, NLT Study Bible
      4. **Markup tools**
         1. Many have found writing marginal notes, highlighting words or phrases helpful
         2. I like to highlight as I read, with a [**Zebra Eco Zebrite Double-Ended Highlighter**](http://astore.amazon.com/executablepre-20/detail/B001BZ700Q)
         3. For notes, many recommend this pen: **[Pigma Micron Pen #005 0.2mm](http://www.amazon.com/Pigma-Micron-Pen-005-20mm/dp/B0018N4310)**

[Other study tools are certainly available, perhaps best recommended by a mature Christian. Now for some thoughts related to how we might avoid misapplying the Bible...]

1. **AVOIDING MISAPPLICATION**
   1. **BEWARE OF REACTIONARY THEOLOGY...**
      1. This terminology is one of my own making
      2. Studying the Bible, but mostly in reaction to false teaching
      3. To prove others wrong, rather than to learn what is right for oneself
      4. Applying texts based on usefulness in making a religious argument
      5. We should study to learn and obey truth first, then to examine and expose error
   2. **BEWARE OF CONCORDANCE THEOLOGY...**
      1. Another terminology of my own making
      2. Studying the Bible with an overdependence of a concordance
      3. Assuming scriptures listed under a similar topic are necessarily related
      4. Applying texts without contextual considerations
      5. We should study the context first, then words in their particular context
   3. **BEWARE OF CONFUSING THE COVENANTS...**
      1. The Bible speaks of two covenants - [**Ga 4:24-26**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Gal%204.24-26)
         1. One first and old, the other second and new - [**He 8:7-13**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb%208.7-13)**;**[**9:15**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%209.15)**;**[**12:24**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%2012.24)
         2. The latter being better, coming of force when Jesus died - [**He 7:22**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Heb%207.22)**;**[**8:6**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%208.6)**;**[**9:15-17**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%209.15-17)
      2. Failure to distinguish leads to much confusion
         1. Many appeal to OT to justify worship and practice
         2. Christians live under the new covenant of our Lord and Savior
      3. Some examples: Sabbath keeping, instrumental worship, separate priesthood
   4. **BEWARE OF NOT SEEING THE FOREST FOR THE TREES...**
      1. Developing doctrines based on a few select passages
      2. Often ignoring other passages which contradict their conclusions
      3. Some examples: Calvinism, pre-millennialism, full preterism
   5. **BEWARE OF ROOT FALLACIES...**
      1. Supposing etymology determines meaning, that words are defined by their roots
      2. Not necessarily; words are defined by their usage, which may be quite different
      3. English example: **nice** (from Latin, **nescius**, meaning ignorant!)
      4. Greek example: **church** (**ecclesia**, called out) - properly defined as assembly, congregation
      5. We must be careful to define words as used in their historical setting
   6. **BEWARE OF IGNORING DIVERSE MEANINGS...**
      1. Assuming that a particular word or phrase means the same in every place
      2. Words often have more than one meaning
      3. English example: **run** (has at least 28 different meanings!)
      4. Hebrew example: **spirit** (has at least 9 different meanings)
      5. We must let the context define how a word or phrase is to be understood
   7. **BEWARE OF NOT WAITING FOR THE CONCLUSION...**
      1. Developing doctrines based on statements midway through the discussion
      2. Which may contradict the author's own concluding statements
      3. I see this especially involving Paul's lengthy and difficult arguments - cf. [**2Pe 3:15-16**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Pet%203.15-16)
      4. Example: Concluding that God predestines some to be lost, when God desires to show mercy on all - cf. [**Ro 9:15-24**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom%209.15-24) with [**Ro 11:32**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom%2011.32)**;** cf. [**1Ti 2:4-6**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Tim%202.4-6)**;**[**2Pe 3:9**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Pet%203.9)
   8. **BEWARE OF MISHANDLING PROPHECIES...**
      1. Interpreting prophecies literally when they may be fulfilled figuratively
      2. This was the mistake of the Jews in Jesus' day regarding the nature of the kingdom
      3. The apostles needed divine interpretation to understand OT prophecies - [**Lk 24:44-47**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Luke%2024.44-47)
      4. We do well to let the NT interpret OT prophecies:, where the NT is silent on OT prophecies, we should be cautious and not dogmatic in our interpretations

**CONCLUSION**

1. For the person willing to study the Bible carefully, there is great reward... - [**Ps 1:1-3**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%201.1-3)
2. "The Bible is...as necessary to spiritual life as breath is to natural life. There is nothing more essential to our lives than the Word of God." - **Jack Hayford**

I pray that this series of outlines will encourage you to let the Bible transform your life!