

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

No technique works without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, who is our Teacher. We must be God's child and abiding in Him to hear from Him. The first step in Bible study is to prepare our hearts to receive from the Lord of the universe!

Begin with session on "GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BIBLE."

Information without application = frustration!! Meditation and application are critical to life change. These need to be used with every Bible study method.

HOW TO THINK (*meditate*) ON GOD'S WORD.

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."
Psalm 1:2-3

HOW?

- a) **Picture** it.
- b) **Paraphrase** it.
- c) **Pick out** key words or thoughts.
- d) **Pose** questions. – Who, what, when, where, why, how?
- e) **Personalize** the truths.
- f) **Pray** it back to God.

We need to **DIGEST** God's Word. Is there a/an:

Disposition to change (attitude?)

Initiative to obey?

Gift for which to be thankful?

Example to pursue?

Sin to confess?

Truth to claim?

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| HOW TO <u>APPLY</u> GOD'S WORD. |
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"...but whosoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:19b

3 key questions:

- a) What did it mean ***then***?
- b) What is the ***timeless*** principle?
- c) What does it mean for ***me*** today?

Design an ***action step*** in one sentence.

Four goals of application:

- a) ***Personal***
- b) ***Practical***
- c) ***Possible***
- d) ***Measurable***

THE QUIET TIME

See separate session on this method

The simplest and yet profoundly valuable and life-changing

BOOK BACKGROUND STUDY

Materials:

- Bible Dictionary
- Study Bible
- Bible Handbook
- Bible atlas
- Commentary

Approach:

1. Pick a book you wish to study.
2. Who is the author? (Some are impossible to know.)
3. Date the book is written
4. To or for whom?
5. From where?
6. Why was this book written?
7. Context of the book:
 - Geographical setting
 - Historical events
 - Culture of the day
 - Political situation
8. Summarize and apply

BOOK SURVEY STUDY

Materials:

- Bible
- Several different translations
- Bible dictionary/encyclopedia
- Bible handbook
- O.T. or N.T. survey summaries

Approach:

1. Read through the book several times.
2. Utilize different translations.
3. Begin to write down notes and observations.
4. What words or thoughts are used frequently?
5. What are the key verses in the book?

6. Identify what you believe to be the main theme of the book.
7. Who are the central characters/players in the book?
8. Go chapter by chapter. Title each chapter succinctly.
9. Outline the book.
10. Check commentaries and other resources to see what they have to offer and how their conclusions compare with yours.
11. Follow the meditation and application techniques.

VERSE BY VERSE STUDY

Materials:

- Bible
- Concordance or cross references
- Bible dictionary/encyclopedia

Approach:

1. Read the verse several times from different translations.
2. Paraphrase and write the verse in your own words. Be complete and accurate.
3. Write out questions, commands, and observations.
4. Check cross references for additional insights.
5. Follow the meditation and application techniques.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Attempt to gain an understanding of what God is trying to say through a particular chapter of the Bible. Remember that current chapter divisions were not in the original manuscripts and were added about 1200 A.D. in order to make the Bible more readable. Keep in mind that sometimes Bible chapters do interrupt the natural flow of the text. There are 1189 of them in the Protestant Bible!

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Cross references

Approach:

1. Read the chapter without study helps and write down the thoughts and impressions that come from the Holy Spirit.
2. Read the chapter through without stopping from several translations.
3. Read it aloud to yourself.
4. Give the chapter a short but descriptive heading.
5. List the major points in the chapter.
6. Who are the central characters?

7. See if you can locate the key verse(s).
8. Make a list of key words in the chapter.
9. What are some things that are puzzling or that I don't understand?
10. Do some cross reference checking:
 - Within the same book
 - Within other books by the same author
 - Within the same Testament (Old or New)
 - Within the Bible as a whole
11. How is Christ revealed in this chapter?
12. List major lessons you have learned from this chapter.
13. Application
 - How do these lessons apply to me?
 - What am I going to do about them?
 - Pray: God help me to ...

TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Concordance/cross references
- Topical Bible

Approach:

1. Pick a topic you wish to study.
2. Compile a list of words related to your topic.
3. Collect all Bible references relating to each word.
4. Look up each reference and write down your thoughts and questions on each verse.
5. Go back and summarize a list of key principles for each topic.
6. Apply Meditation and Application Techniques

Partial list of topics:

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|-------------|------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|
| Adoption | Faint | Kingdom | Name | Sanctify |
| Adversary | Faith | Know | Obey | Save |
| Apostle | Favor | Law | Passover | Servant |
| Atonement | Fear | Laying on of Hands | Peace | Sin |
| Baptize | Fellowship | Life | Perfect | Soul |
| Believe | Flesh | Light | Perish | Spirit |
| Bless | Good | Lord | Preach | Temptation |
| Body | Gospel | Love | Propitiation | Trial |
| Call | Grace | Lust | Reconcile | Truth |
| Chasten | Hear | Manifest | Redeem | Understand |
| Christ | Hell | Marriage | Remnant | Vain |
| Church | Holy | Mediator | Repent | Vision |
| Confess | Hope | Meek | Rest | Watch |
| Covenant | Immanuel | Mercy | Resurrection | Wisdom |
| Death | Iniquity | Mind | Righteous | Witness |
| Disciple | Jehovah | Minister | Sabbath | Word |
| Everlasting | Jesus | Miracle | Sacrifice | World |
| Evil | Judgment | Mystery | Saint | Worship |

BIOGRAPHICAL BIBLE STUDY

One of the most inspiring methods of Bible study is that of the men and women (and even children!) of the Bible. God's Word is very frank and transparent of their strengths and weaknesses and we can learn and apply much that will help us in our relationship with God.

Materials needed:

- Bible
- Concordance
- Topical Bible
- Bible dictionary or encyclopedia

Approach:

1. Pick a character to study. A partial list is below.
2. List all the references you can find on this individual. Remember that he or she may go by more than one name, and sometimes is not named in every reference (i.e. – Matthew/Levi, Simon/Peter, or Pharaoh's wife).

3. Try to put together a chronological outline of the person's life.
4. Read the accounts several times and jot down general impressions/insights. You may want to refer to the sections below as you study the life.
5. Summarize the main principles you have learned.
6. Use the meditation and application techniques.
7. Share your findings with someone else!

Background

1. What can you discover about his/her family and ancestry?
2. What does his/her name mean? Why was he/she given that name? Was it ever changed?
3. What is his/her home life like? How is he/she raised? Where is he/she raised?
4. What are the characteristics of his/her parents? Do they influence him/her?
5. Is there anything special about his/her birth?
6. Where does he/she live? What is his/her everyday life like?
7. Is he/she exposed to other cultures? Do they affect him/her in any way?
8. What is the condition of his/her country -- politically and spiritually - during his/her lifetime?
9. What kind of training does he/she have? Does he/she have any schooling?
10. What is his/her occupation?
11. How long does he/she live? Where does he/she die? How does he/she die?

Reputation

1. What do people say about him/her?
2. What do his enemies say about him/her?
3. What does his/her family (wife/husband, children, brothers, sisters, parents) say about him/her?
4. What does God say about him/her, if anything?
5. Why does God allow this person to be mentioned in the Bible?

Tests of Character

1. What are his/her aims and motives?
2. Describe his/her home life.
3. How does he/she respond to failure/discouragement?
4. How does he/she respond to adversity/criticism?
5. How does he/she respond to success?
6. How does he/she respond to the trivial and mundane things in life?
7. How quickly does he/she praise God for the good/bad things that happen to him/her?
8. How quickly does he/she obey God?

Significant Events

1. Is there any great crisis in his/her life? How did he/she handle it?
2. What are the great accomplishments for which he/she is remembered?
3. Did he/she experience a divine 'call'? How does he/she respond to it?
4. What crucial decisions does he/she have to make? How do they affect him/her? Others?
5. Does any recurring problem keep coming up in his/her life?
6. Where does he/she succeed? Where does he/she fail? Why?
7. How do environment and circumstances affect him/her?
8. What part does he/she play in the history of God's plan?

Relationships

1. How does he/she get along with other people? Is he/she a loner? Is he/she a team person?
2. How does he/she treat other people? Does he/she use them or serve them?
3. What is his/her wife/husband like? How does she/he influence him/her/his?
4. What are his/her children like? How do they influence him/her?

5. Who are his/her close companions? What are they like? How do they influence him/her?
6. Who are his/her enemies? What are they like? How do they influence him/her?
7. What influence does he/she have on others? On his nation? On other nations?
8. Does he/she take care of his family? How do his/her children turn out?
9. Do his/her friends and family help or hinder him/her in serving the Lord?
10. Does he/she train anyone to take his place? Does he/she leave a "Timothy" (disciple) behind?

Personality

1. What are the outstanding strengths in his/her character? What traits did he/she have?
2. Does his/her life show any development of character as time passed? Is there growth and progression there?
3. What are his/her particular faults and weaknesses?
4. What are his/her particular sins? What steps led to those sins? How does he/she handle those sins?
5. What are the results of his/her sins and weaknesses?
6. Does he/she ever get the victory over his particular sins and weaknesses?
7. What qualities make him/her a success or failure?

MAJOR BIBLE MEN

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. Abraham | 9. Isaac | 17. Nehemiah |
| 2. Daniel | 10. Jacob | 18. Paul |
| 3. David | 11. Jeremiah | 19. Peter |
| 4. Elijah | 12. Jesus | 20. Pharaoh |
| 5. Elisha | 13. John – apostle | 21. Samson |

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| 6. Ezekiel | 14. Joseph – OT | 22. Samuel |
| 7. Ezra | 15. Joshua | 23. Saul – OT |
| 8. Isaiah | 16. Moses | 24. Solomon |

Minor but Important Men of the Bible

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|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Aaron | 15. Aquila | 29. Herod | 43. Kings – any | 57. Pontius Pilate |
| 2. Abel | 16. Asa | 30. Hezekiah | 44. Laban | 58. Prophets – any |
| 3. Abimelech | 17. Balaam | 31. Hosea | 45. Lot | 59. Rehoboam |
| 4. Abner | 18. Barnabas | 32. Jabez | 46. Luke | 60. Shamgar |
| 5. Absalom | 19. Barzillai | 33. James | 47. Mark | 61. Silas |
| 6. Achan | 20. Caiaphas | 34. Jehoshaphat | 48. Matthew | 62. Stephen |
| 7. Adam | 21. Caleb | 35. Jeroboam | 49. Melchizedek | 63. Timothy |
| 8. Ahab | 22. Eli | 36. Joab | 50. Mephibosheth | 64. Titus |
| 9. Ahithophel | 23. Esau | 37. Job | 51. Mordecai | 65. Tychicus |
| 10. Amos | 24. Gehazi | 38. John the Baptist | 52. Naaman | 66. Uzziah |
| 11. Ananias | 25. Gideon | 39. Jonah | 53. Nathan | 67. Zechariah |
| 12. Andrew | 26. Habakkuk | 40. Jonathan | 54. Noah | 68. Zedekiah |
| 13. Apollos | 27. Haggai | 41. Judas Iscariot | 55. Philemon | 69. Zephaniah |
| 14. Apostles – any | 28. Haman | 42. Judges – any | 56. Philip | 70. Zerubbabel |

Prominent Women of the Bible

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Abigail | 11. Eunice | 21. Mary Magdalene | 31. Rebecca |
| 2. Abishai | 12. Eve | 22. Mary of Bethany | 32. Ruth |
| 3. Anna | 13. Hagar | 23. Michal | 33. Sapphira |
| 4. Bathsheba | 14. Hannah | 24. Miriam | 34. Sarah |
| 5. Deborah | 15. Jezebel | 25. Newman's maid | 35. The Shunnamite |
| 6. Delilah | 16. Jochebed | 26. Naomi | 36. Vashti |
| 7. Dinah | 17. Leah | 27. Priscilla | 37. Zipporah |
| 8. Dorcas | 18. Lydia | 28. Queen of Sheba | |
| 9. Elizabeth | 19. Martha | 29. Rachel | |
| 10. Esther | 20. Mary – Jesus' mother | 30. Rehab | |

