

GRACE BIBLE TRAINING CENTRE (GBTC)
SCHOOL OF MINISTRY
ARUSHA - TANZANIA

SUBJECT: BIBLE STUDY METHODS

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

COURSE TEACHER: BISHOP EKONG

1.1 Introduction

This course is to be studied as complimentary to the subject of Bible Survey. Bible Survey covers topics such as the Origin of the Bible, the Author of the Bible, the Structure and Classifications of the Bible, and the Message of the Bible.

This course will help to understand effective ways of studying the Bible so as to benefit from its teachings and messages.

Written assignments will be expected at the end of this course and will be assessed for grades.

This course is about a very important activity: the careful, methodical study of the Bible. It is divided into four lessons of study. The first part is an introduction to the basic principles, the need and reasons for Bible Study, terminology, and relationships that are essential to all effective methods of Bible study. The last part of the course presents other important methods of Bible study.

The 4 lessons are:

- Lesson 1 – Introduction
- Lesson 2 – Guides to Understanding the Bible
- Lesson 3 – Aids to Bible Study
- Lesson 4 – Types or Methods of Bible Study

While much in the course is necessarily intellectual comment on how to study, constant emphasis is placed on the student's spiritual improvement as the main purpose of the course.

To understand the Bible, one must do more than merely read it. Reading it has value but often fails to make clear the relationship between different parts of the Bible. When one studies the Bible with an organized plan in mind, one would have to write down important findings that help to see the unity that is present throughout the Scriptures. Furthermore, such study helps to remember God's warnings and obey His commands. Obedience to God is the result of personal application of devotional Bible study. This application will build up one's faith in Christ and strengthen their spiritual life.

This study emphasizes the value of skilled procedures of observation and interpretation as aids to understanding the Bible and accomplishing the main purpose of the course. This purpose is to help in the application of Bible truth to one's own life and to share it with others.

Biblical knowledge of God and His ways brings us the responsibility of sharing that knowledge with others. The world is hungry for the truth of God. It is God's plan that His kingdom grow because of this principle of sharing. Jesus shared in this way. He taught people, then He sent them to teach others. Luke 10:1 tells of His sending out 72 men ahead of Him into the towns where He was about to go. They could share with others what they had learned from Jesus. We too must share in this way.

1.2 The Need for Study of Scripture

The ultimate intent of the Bible is to change lives. What you learn from it should make a difference in one's attitude and actions. The Holy Spirit is not interested in imparting intellectual knowledge only. His goal is to prepare people spiritually and intellectually for good works. The goal is the understanding of Bible truth, and then to apply it to one's life. The classic verse declaring the *inspiration* of Scripture and the goal of Scripture is 2Timothy 3:16-17. The goal is, "*That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" The Word of God can only do this as one studies its pages.

Disciplined study is *defined as diligent application of the mind, careful examination of the facts, and deep thought about them.* In thinking about the facts, one draws some conclusions and makes some decisions. When these decisions become part of one's life, it will become more based on scriptural principles, and fulfilling 2Timothy 3:16-17.

The entrance of the Word of God brings light (*Psalms 119:130*). God's rules for living lead to peace, joy, and satisfaction.

1.3 The Reason for Study of the Bible

There are many reasons everyone should study the Bible. The most important reasons are:

- a) It is a way to grow spiritually, and
- b) It is a method of learning God's plan for us.

To be physically healthy and normal, children must eat the right foods essential to that growth. As God's children, we must also grow spiritually. In 2Peter 3:18, we read, "*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*"

Our spiritual food is the Bible. As we study it, we get to know our Saviour Jesus Christ better. This knowledge helps us become strong Christians "*until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the*

whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants” (Ephesians 4:13–14).

In studying the Bible, we not only learn of God’s plans for our future but also of His promises for the present.

The Bible is the food that keeps our souls alive. As we read it daily we receive health and strength for both soul and body. Jesus said, *“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).*

Through His Word, God inspires faith for salvation, hope for our future, and love for others. Inspiration is an influence that leads us to good ideas or actions. Many poets, musicians, and artists have received their inspiration from the Bible. The Bible gave them ideas for creating various art forms.

The truth we find in the Bible answers our most important questions, giving us the meaning and purpose of life. It frees us from ignorance and error. Jesus said, *“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).*