**THE BASICS OF BIBLE STUDY**

***2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)***

***Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.***

* **Lesson**: In this lesson we will learn to study the Bible and be equipped to teach others.
* **Key passages**: Acts 17:2-11; Ezra 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:15; Luke 24:24-49
* **Writer**: Ginny Porter
* **Hear the Word**: This lesson is available on Audio.

**Introduction**

Written over a span of 1000 plus years, the sixty-six books that comprise the Bible were written and recorded by the Holy Spirit on the hearts of approximately 49 different writers. Each one of these men, being inspired by God, took scrolls and ink in hand and meticulously began to write. (Luke 1:1-4) These were men who studied the Word of God and quoted one another. Each book of the Bible has correlating truths and principles taught over and over in a variety of ways and circumstances. By paralleling and cross-referencing you will build a sound doctrinal foundation by which to live. We study the Bible in order to know the God of the Bible, apply His truth to our lives and then make Him well known to the ends of the earth.

Through study we gain insight, understanding and explanation of the unsearchable truths contained within the pages of Scriptures. As Jerry Bridges has said, “Reading gives us breadth, but study gives us depth.” Our lives will be transformed by having daily encounter with the ***Living Word of God…The LORD Jesus Christ***. As we begin to study, remember this: the Bible will always demand a response to what we learn.

**A Brief History Lesson**

Inevitably, someone will ask you this question: Where did we get the Bible? Perhaps you have had wondered this yourself, and so we will have a brief history lesson. The following is merely a synopsis of men God used to preserve and propagate His Word, and as the story unfolds, we gain fresh insight into the importance of Bible Study. The Old Testament was completed around 1406 BC and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament around 50 AD. The Syrian Christians produced a simple translation about 110 AD. This was followed by the Coptic Bible of the third century AD, the Gothic Bible in the fourth century, the Latin vulgate Bible in 382 AD, just to name a few. I would like to fast forward in history and focus on two Greek monks named Cyril and Methodius. They left Thessalonica in 862 AD armed with the Great Commission. They took the gospel to the Slavic peoples of Central Europe. This area was known as Bohemia and Moravia and later as Czechoslovakia. Twenty years ago the Velvet Revolution took place and the country was split into Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The two monks who evangelized this part of the world insisted that the gospel be preached to all peoples each in their own native tongue. They translated the Bible into the Slavic language.

The following is merely a partial list of important people who are credited with translating the Bible. Englishman John Wycliffe (1320-1384 AD) was martyred for translating the Bible. Following in Wycliffe’s footsteps was reformer William Tyndale (1494-1536 AD). He was instrumental in translating the Bible into the English language. He was also martyred for the Word of God.

Prior to Wycliffe and Tyndale was a man named Jon Huss. He took his stand for the Bible and was burned alive at the stake in 1450 AD in the city of Prague by the Catholic Church. Why? He insisted that scripture was the final authority and that it should made available to all people. He sang as he was burning, and as he was dying he said that God would rise up a man who would see to it that the Bible would be widely translated.

Jon Huss made disciples, and this insured that the Word of God would continue to be preached. When God’s truth is invested in the hearts of men and women, they grow up and multiply. This ensures that the Word of God is transported from one generation to the next. The result of John Huss’ obedience to the Great Commission was a group of committed disciples - followers of Christ who were called The Moravian Brotherhood. In 1457 AD these brothers founded the oldest protestant church -- the Moravian Church; they also began the first organized global mission movement. Today, the Moravian Churches can be found all over the world.

One hundred years after Huss’s martyrdom, Martin Luther (1522-1534 AD) began the reformation, and Luther also translated the Bible. As a side note, the fires of persecution are aflame all over this world today and our brothers and sisters in Christ are joining these who have been martyred for their faith and the Word of God.

It is important to take a moment and point out the sad implications on future generations if we don’t love the Truth and pass on God’s Word. We have just seen a list of men who were passionately devoted to God’s Word, so much so, that it cost them their lives. What do you think these men would say if they knew that today less than 2% of the populations of these countries are Evangelical Christians? We would like to hope that our church programs will make disciples of the nations. It is just not so! In Europe and here in the States, we see the tragic effects. Are you beginning to understand why it is so important to study the Bible?

**Digging Deeper:** Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17; Matthew 10:17-39, 23:9-10; John 15:18-26, 16:6-14; Hebrew 11:1-40

**Why Do You Study the Bible?**

***Ezra 7:10***

***For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.***

The Greek word for disciple is mathetes; the definition is a learner or pupil.For a Christian, Jesus is our subject, the Bible is our curriculum, but our entire life is the class room.

Why do we study the Bible? The most obvious reason is to know God, but take a look at a Bible scholar whose name was Ezra. He was a man who knew the Word of God. Most Bible scholars believe he is the writer, not only of the book that bears his name, but also first and second Chronicles and the book of Nehemiah. He set his heart to study the Law of the Lord. I urge you to spend some time looking at the text and context of his writings. Ezra is a wonderful example to follow because he studied in order to put God’s Word into practice. He studied it so that he could teach it to others. As the apostle Paul told Timothy, his main disciple, “***All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)***

So why do we learn to study the Bible? To help others to learn to study the Bible and be well equipped to teach others also! (2 Timothy 2:2) In the Following word search, see the definition for the word teach.

**Word Search:**

* **Disciple or teach (KJV)** in Greek: matheteuo: **-** *to become a pupil; to disciple; i.e. enroll as a scholar; to be a disciple, instruct, and teach.*
* **Teach** in Greek: dadasko*: - to learn, to teach.*

When I was a child in the faith, I studied the Bible for myself. It never occurred to me to study for others, but that is precisely what a disciple maker does! Now, following the example of Ezra, I study in order to apply these truths to my life and invest them into others. However, no true student of the Bible will ever think they have grasped the riches of wisdom, knowledge and understanding contained within the precious pages of the Holy Scriptures. The more I study, the more I realize how little I do know, much less, lived up to the truth I have already received.

***Colossians 3:16 (NIV)***

***Let the Word of God dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.***

When we make disciples, we are leaving an eternal inheritance for our spiritual offspring. Disciples are stewards of God’s Word. It is written by a person upon the heart of another person. I have two questions for you. Are you someone’s *Living epistle* of Christ? Who is your *Living epistle*?

***2 Corinthians 3:2-3 (NIV)***

***You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.***

**Digging Deeper**: Matthew 28:16-20; Ezra 7:1-26; Nehemiah Chapters 7 and 8; Psalms 78:1-7

**How Are We to Study?**

***Acts 17:2-3, 11b (NASB)***

***And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.” 11b “…For they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”***

We recommend using the NIV Chronological Bible as a daily reading plan to cover the Bible within a year. Or perhaps a three year study plan that covers the Old Testament in the first year, followed by one book of the New Testament per month. By the end of a three year study you should have a grasp of the Bible as a whole.

As you study, parallel the Old Testament to the New Testament. You will find Christ Jesus is revealed, although in types, figures and shadows. As you read, make notes of major themes of each book and in the margins make notes of truths to remember. You may want to stop and list any questions that come to mind. These would be good starting points for more in-depth studies.

**Digging Deeper:** 2 Timothy 2:2, 3:16-17; 1Timothy 4:13, 15-16; Acts 17:2-11; Hebrew 5:12-14

**Observation and Interpretation**

***2 Peter 1:19-21 (NASB)***

***So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.***

How do we find the meaning or interpretation of a passage? The most basic principle of interpretation is to let the Scripture interpret Scripture, and you do this by cross-referencing. There are numerous possible *applications* that apply to the Scriptures, but there is only one *correct interpretation*.We must understand the original context to faithfully apply the scriptures to our context because our application is always built on interpretation.

Rudyard Kipling, the writer of The Jungle Book said, “I keep six editorial friends with me at all times – **Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.**” As you study the full context and employ these six questions, you will have a good understanding of the background and purpose for which it was written. As you observe the text, ask yourself: “*who wrote it, what does it say, when, where, and how was it written,* and finally*, why was it written*?

A chronological study of the Babylon captivity, the return of the Jewish people and rebuilding of Jerusalem would be a great place to practice these principles. Timelines are also helpful.

**Digging Deeper:**

Read the following: (740-681 BC) - Isaiah 44:28; (626-586 BC) - Jeremiah 15:16, 20:9, 25:12-13,29:10 31:33-34,38; (605-537 BC) - Daniel 5:30, 6:10,28, 7:13-14, 9:1-6; (440 BC) - Ezra 1:1, 7:6, 10; (430 BC) - Nehemiah 8:1, 6-8, 12, 13, 18, 9:2-5

The following are terms used for the study of interpretation or explanation of the scriptures. The terms hermeneutics and exegesis have been used interchangeably. Herb Hodges described the word exegesis to me, and this is what he said, “Exegesis means to take by the hand and lead out from invisibility to visibility”.

**Word Search:**

* **Hermeneutics’**:-the study of interpretation of written text. It can also be used for other forms of communication, including verbal. Jesus used this word in Luke 24:31, 32, 45, it is translated as: *opened their eyes* *or minds* and *explained.*

The word hermeneutics comes from the Greek word hermeneuo. It means to *translate, interpret, to explain thoroughly, and expound.*

Just before His ascension, Jesus did an exegesis of the entire Old Testament! ***He explained that… the entire Bible is about Him!*** Wouldn’t you have loved to be part of that Bible Study?

***Luke 24:25-49 (NASB)***

***And He said to them, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Then beginning with the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in ALL the Scriptures. They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?” Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you: but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” AMEN.***

**Digging Deeper:** 2 Peter 1:19-21**;** Luke 4:14-21; John 5: 39-47; Matthew 5:17-19; Psalms 16:8, 40:7-8, 110:1, 22:1-31; Isaiah 7:14, 28:16, 53:1-12, 61:1-2; Joshua 23:14-15; 1 Kings 8:56

**Illumination and Application**

***Luke 24:45 (NASB)***

***Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.***

Have you ever asked this question, “What is God saying to me through this passage, and how does it apply to my life? It takes the mind of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible. To make relevant life application of a passage requires right belief and right action in response to the truth that is revealed. If what you believe doesn’t lead to action, it isn’t true belief.

Bible study is not just for ***information; it’s for life*** ***transformation.*** And yet, without proper ***interpretation*** and ***understanding*** we cannot make ***application.*** If you will allow God’s Word to penetrate your heart, by applying it to your attitude and actions, your life will be transformed! The following questions will help you as you study.

**Think About These Things**

1. Is there a command to obey? Is there a sin to avoid, confess and repent of?
2. Is there a lesson to learn?
3. Is there a new truth to carry with me?
4. Is there specific counsel on an issue of my life?
5. Is there an example to follow?
6. Is there a promise to claim?
7. Is there a prayer to repeat?
8. Is there a verse to memorize?

**Digging Deeper:**  Matthew 13:12-23, 28:18; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Romans 12:1-2; James 1:21-25; Ephesians 1:17-19; 2 Corinthians 2:1-16; 1 John 2:27

**Meditation** **and Transportation**

***Joshua 1:7-8 (NIV)***

***Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.***

When you meditate on the Scriptures, it is like giving your mind a bath. Here are some helpful tips to help you in this process. Write down the verses and what you believe the Lord is saying to you. By meditating on the passage throughout the day, you can turn the passage into a prayer. When your study becomes further meditation, the Holy Spirit will bring the application into focus. Without meditation you may walk away from your time in the Word and remember nothing of what He has said. We remember approximately twenty percent of what we hear, forty percent of what we read and eighty-five percent of what we write, but I believe we can remember almost all of what we share with others. So take notes and share it with others!

It’s been wisely said, if you give someone a fish -- you will feed them for a day. But, teach them to fish -- and you will feed them for life! Likewise, it is wonderful to teach someone the Bible, but much better to teach them to study for themselves! However, if you t*each them to follow the Good Shepherd as a disciple, they will fish for men and multitudes of generations will eat!*

**Digging Deeper:**  Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3; Psalm 119:12-24; John 17:17; Psalms 119:97-103

**Pearls of Wisdom**

***Colossians 3:16 (NIV)***

***Let the Word of God dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.***