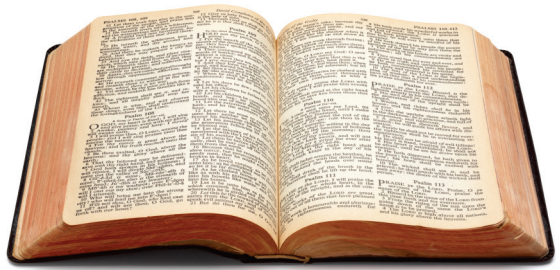


WHY SHOULD I STUDY THE BIBLE?

(Lesson 1, April 15, 2018)



“No Christian should be handicapped by his own inability to study God’s Word!”

It is your richest source of spiritual blessing, your greatest safeguard against deceivers and their false doctrine, your most instructive manual for life, godliness, and abiding peace. Job said, *“I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food”* (Job 23:12). Physical food is necessary; spiritual food is more necessary.

Statistics:

- The Bible is the best-selling book in history.
- According to the research by the Barna Research Group, 93% of all the households in America own one or more Bibles, but of this group, 57% do not read the Bible at all during the typical week.
- The number one reason given for not reading the Bible is the perception of irrelevance.
- Thirty-one percent of all adults in America say that the Bible is too difficult to understand.

The Bible is more than a book; it is a library of 66 books that are unified around a common theme. The theme is Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, coming again to reign.

*He’s the Rose of Sharon, the lily fair
Whenever I open the Bible, the Lord of the Bible is there.
He, in the Book’s beginning, gave the earth it’s form
He’s the Ark of Safety, to bear the brunt of the storm.
The burning bush in the desert, the budding of Aaron’s rod,
Whenever I open the Bible, I see the Son of God.
The Lamb upon Mt. Moriah, the ladder from earth to sky
The scarlet chord in the window, the serpent lifted high*

*The smitten rock in the desert, the Shepherd with staff and crook.
 Yes, the face of my Lord I discover whenever I open the Book.
 He is the seed of woman, the Savior, virgin born.
 He is the son of David, whom men rejected with scorn
 The Lord of eternal glory whom John the apostle saw,
 The light of the celestial city and the lamb without spot or flaw.
 The bridegroom coming at midnight for whom his people look
 Yes, whenever I open the Bible, I see my Lord in the Book.
 Therefore, think of it carefully, study it prayerfully.
 Deep in thine heart let its oracles dwell.
 Ponder its mystery, slight not its history.
 None can e'er love it too fondly or well.*

I. THE POWER OF THE SCRIPTURES

A. Why does the Bible have power?

1. It is _____—flawless and therefore trustworthy.
“The law of the Lord is perfect” (Ps. 19:7). If God authored it, and He is perfect, then the Bible is perfect, and it is the ultimate authority. The character of God stands behind it!
2. It is _____—it contains no errors of fact or contradictory statements.
(Prov. 30:5-6) “Every word of God is pure: . . . 6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”
3. It is _____—nothing needs to be nor can be added to it.
4. It is _____.
(Isa. 1:2) “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.”
5. It is _____.
 - a. For salvation
(2 Tim. 3:15) “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

- b. For perfection
(2 Tim. 3:16-17) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - c. For hope
(Rom.15:4) "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
 - d. For blessing
(James 1:25) "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
6. It is effective.
(Isa. 55:11) "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."
7. It is _____—because how you respond to the Word of God determines the essence of your life and your eternal destiny.
(John 8:47) "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

Being under the Word of God should be a stimulus not a substitute for getting into it for ourselves.

II. WHY DON'T SOME PEOPLE STUDY THE BIBLE?

- A. They don't think that it is relevant for today.
- B. They don't know how to study the Bible.
- C. It isn't a _____ in their daily schedule.
- D. They don't think they can understand it on their own.
- E. They want to but haven't exercised sufficient _____ to accomplish it.

III. AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The goal in Bible Study is change! God wants us to change to be like Him. We change as we interact with His truth. Here is a three-step approach that will guarantee life-change – three crucial steps carried out in a particular order. They are:

A. Step 1 – Observation

Observation asks the question, “What do I _____?” As soon as you read the Scriptures you begin asking yourself, “What are the facts?” You become the Sherlock Holmes of Bible study. You pull out your magnifying glass and become a spiritual detective, looking for clues. No detail is trivial. *(John 21:25) “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”*

If God could have written enough about Jesus to fill the world with books about Him, and He condensed it to this one volume, then every detail in here is important. God would not include trivial, useless material in His Book of All Books. Observation logically leads to the next step...

B. Step 2 – Interpretation

Interpretation asks the question, “What does it _____?” Your quest is for meaning. Too much Bible study begins here and usually ends here! A quick reading of a verse or passage is usually followed by the thought, “Okay, what’s that mean? I think it means...” The reader walks away thinking they have made a sufficient effort with the Holy Scriptures. The problem is that they have never been trained how to read God’s Word. I’m going to teach you how to read the Bible. You have to learn to “see” before you can understand. You cannot properly interpret what you have not learned to see. And you don’t interpret the Bible to walk away with more facts in your head, so the third step is...

C. Step Three – Application

Application asks the question, “How does it _____?” You are NOT asking, “Does it work?” It does; it always does; it always has, it always will! The Bible will always make you face reality; it will change your life. But you have to study the Bible and not just give it a cursory reading.

IV. HOW ABOUT YOU?

Self-Examination

“A great tragedy among Christians today is that too many are under the Word of God, but not in it for ourselves.”



What about you? Do you regularly read and study the Bible on your own? Or are you part of the majority of people who rarely if ever open the Bible for themselves? Here’s a simple exercise to help you evaluate your bible reading habits.

How often do you read the Bible? (Check one)

- NEVER
- ONCE A MONTH
- ONCE A WEEK
- TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK
- EVERY DAY

When you read it, how much time do you spend reading?

- 5 Minutes or less 15 minutes 30 minutes 45 minutes 1 hour or more

Here are a few reasons that people give for not reading the Bible. Check the ones that express why you don’t read the Bible more or different than you do.

- _____ The Bible doesn't seem relevant to my life.
- _____ The Bible seems confusing and hard to understand. I don't know how to make sense out of it.
- _____ I used to read the Bible, and it made me feel good. But after a while, it didn't seem to have the same impact, so finally I gave it up.
- _____ I feel guilty when I read the Bible.
- _____ The Bible is hopelessly out-of-date. It may have some interesting stories, but it has little significance for my life today.
- _____ I rely on my pastor or teacher to explain the Bible to me. If I need to know something, he will tell me about it.
- _____ I have doubts about the Bible's reliability.
- _____ I don't have time. I'm just too busy.
- _____ The Bible seems boring to me.
- _____ I don't own a Bible.
- _____ The Bible is full of myths and half-truths. Why study something that lacks credibility?
- _____ I don't read, period! It's not just the Bible; I don't read anything.

CHECKLIST



WORKING IT THROUGH

Take a moment to assess your relationship with God's Word. Circle the number that is most appropriate for each step.

1. **READ** – I can read a passage in the Bible and get a general idea of the story. In reading the Bible, I am:

1 – *Bad* 2 – *Poor* 3 – *OK* 4 – *Good* 5 – *Very Good*

I think I can improve my Bible reading skill by:

2. UNDERSTAND – When I read the Bible, I can figure out what the words mean, learn the facts, and see the concepts. In understanding the Bible, I am:

1 – *Bad* 2 – *Poor* 3 – *OK* 4 – *Good* 5 – *Very Good*

I can probably improve my Bible understanding by:

3. APPLY – When I read and study the Bible, I can see myself in the story; I can see how the biblical principles relate to my life, and I can see what God wants me to do. My skill in applying Bible truths to my life is:

1 – *Bad* 2 – *Poor* 3 – *OK* 4 – *Good* 5 – *Very Good*

I think I can improve my application skills by:

4. DO – Based on my study of the Bible, I can design an action plan to obey God and put into practice now what He has taught me in His Word. In doing what I learn from God’s Word, I am:

1 – *Bad* 2 – *Poor* 3 – *OK* 4 – *Good* 5 – *Very Good*

I’m pretty sure that I could improve my doing skills by:

V. PRACTICE EXERCISE



Read the book of Philemon repeatedly. Barrage the text with questions. What can you find out about the relationships between Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus? Reconstruct the situation. What feelings are involved? What practical considerations? What questions remain unanswered as you read this letter? What problems does it create? What issues does it speak to? What issues do we face today that this book might speak to? How would you communicate this book and the insights you gain from it to someone else?