



A Proper Method Of Bible Study

❶ THE METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY SHOULD BE ONE OF GREAT CAREFULNESS

The reading, searching, and studying of the Bible should be with great attention, and very deliberate! Peter in **II Peter 3:16** warned of those who were “*unlearned (untaught) and unstable*” and he went on to say that they “*wrest*” (*twist & pervert*) the Scriptures. **They mishandle the Word of God**, and they do this “*unto their own destruction*” **This is a warning; THE MISHANDLING THE WORD OF GOD IS A PATH THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION!** Paul assured his readers that he faithfully handled the **Word of God (II Corinthians 4:2)**, and he admonished young Timothy to give diligence to the study of Scripture rightly dividing it (**II Timothy 2:15**). **THE READER OF THE BIBLE MUST TAKE GREAT CARE NOT TO DISTORT SCRIPTURE!**

● THE METHOD OF READING, SEARCHING, AND STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD BE ORDERLY, AND SYSTEMATIC:

The **Word of God** is more than a list of facts, it has an overall plot, and God inspired the writers to write in a very orderly and systematic way, and God teaches in a very orderly and systematic way (**Isaiah 28:10, 13**). **GOD REVEALS TRUTH PROGRESSIVELY THROUGH HIS WORD!** yet so often people read the **Word of God** roaming at random, looking for whatever they feel they need at the time, hopping around haphazardly from chapter to chapter, and from verse to verse with no lasting results. The METHOD of reading, searching, and studying the **Word of God** with the greatest amount of profit will be orderly, and systematic!

● THE METHOD OF READING, SEARCHING, AND STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD BE MEDITATIVE:

To read, search, and study the **Word of God** MEDITATIVELY means that;

“the mind is actively engaged in such, a state of concentration”

It is thinking upon what is being read (*both during and after*), seeking to make personal application, and praying that the Holy Spirit would open and reveal truth. It is possible to read, and yet be in a state of oblivion, unaffected by what is being read, and **such should never be the case when reading the Word of God!**

- **THE METHOD OF READING, SEARCHING, AND STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD BE PRECISE:**

The **Word of God** is a very precise book, that is it is minute, exact, and very detailed! **GOD DOES NOT TEACH IN VAGUE OR SHALLOW TERMS, BUT WITH VERY DEFINITE PRECISION!** That being so, it is important that our METHOD of study be with precision and exactness! This requires diligence, carefulness, and very close attention!

- ② **SOME IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER FOR A PROPER METHOD OF STUDY**

- **THE BIBLE INTERPRETS ITSELF:**

Again, the reader of the Bible does not determine meaning; **the meaning has already been determined by the Author, WE ARE TO DISCOVER THE MEANING!** In achieving this, it is important to remember that **the Bible is its own best commentary! SCRIPTURE EXPLAINS SCRIPTURE!** There is a unity of teaching throughout, and each passage harmonizes with this body of teaching. There is a **Divinely inspired unity to the Bible**, and no passage will contradict Biblical principles! **A CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE WILL ALWAYS BE CONSISTENT WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE!** All through Scripture we see **Scripture quoting Scripture**, because **SCRIPTURE HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE!** Without a doubt, there are passages of Scripture that are somewhat difficult to understand (**II Peter 3:16**), and when that is the case, **BEWARE OF TWISTING SCRIPTURE**, but **examine other passages of Scripture that relate or teach the same concept!** Use Scripture as a gauge to discover meaning, **the teaching of one passage may be brought out by relating it to others!** **LET CLEAR PASSAGES ILLUMINATE THOSE THAT ARE UNCLEAR!** Though we are to view the relation of the parts to the whole, we must also beware of so emphasizing distant context to the neglect of near context!

- **SCRIPTURE IS TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY UNLESS THERE IS REASON IN THE TEXT OR CONTEXT TO READ IT FIGURATIVELY:**

To read, search, and study the Bible **literally** means that;

“we do so in terms of normal language usage”

To approach the Bible **literally** means that;

“we view words and sentences according to their grammatical sense, with proper place given to figurative elements in the text”

A **literal view** of the Scriptures is;

“to read it in a manner consistent with the basic rules of language”

That the Bible should be read, searched, and studied **literally** does not imply that there are no figures of speech! **A LITERAL VIEW OF THE SCRIPTURES RECOGNIZES SYMBOLISM AND FIGURES OF SPEECH WITHIN CONTEXT!** A **literal view** of the Scriptures is **reading with common sense!** A **literal view** recognizes the difference between a **plain literal statement** and a **figurative literal statement!** For example; **John 6:3** *“And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples”* This is a **plain literal statement!**

In **Galatians 2:9** Paul refers to James, Peter, and John and says that they “*seemed to be pillars*” This is a **figurative literal statement!** There is a **literal meaning** of “*stability and support*” taught in **figurative language!** The **figure** of speech adds to the depth of the meaning of a **literal truth!** **ALL SCRIPTURE HAS INTENDED MEANING WHETHER THE PARTICULAR TRUTH IS COMMUNICATED BY A PLAIN LITERAL STATEMENT OR A FIGURATIVE STATEMENT!** There are different forms of **figurative** speech used throughout the **Word of God:**

FIGURE	EXAMPLE
Simile (an explicit comparison of two unlike things)	“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water” (Psalm 1:3). “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6). “Is not my word like as a fireand like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces” (Jeremiah 23:29).
Parable (an extended simile; a story about everyday matters that illustrate a single truth or principle)	
Metaphor (a comparison in which one thing is spoken of as if it were another”	“The LORD is my rock ” (Psalm 18:2). “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my feet” (Psalm 119:105). “Ye are the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). “Go and tell that fox ” (Luke 13:32). “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35). “For we are in this tabernacle ” (II Corinthians 5:4). “Beware of dogs ” (Philippians 3:2)
Allegory (an extended metaphor)	(Daniel 2:31-45; John 10:1-6)
Personification (a type of metaphor speaking about something as if it were a person)	“And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up” (Numbers 16:32). “Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together” (Psalm 98:8). “The sea saw it and fled ” (Psalm 114:3).
Hyperbole (conscious exaggeration for emotional effect)	“my liver is poured upon the earth” (Lamentations 2:11). Also (Matthew 23:24; James 3:6).



When **figurative** language is being used **it is obvious.**

When **figurative** language is being used it is **always intended to convey literal truth.**

When **figurative** language is being used it **never contradicts the literal truth of Scripture.**

● **CHAPTER DIVISIONS ARE NOT NATURAL DIVISIONS OF THOUGHT:**

The examples are numerous! Many if not most allow **chapter divisions** to mislead them into stopping in the middle of a subject matter, and only interpreting part of a thought! **CHAPTER AND VERSE DIVISIONS ARE SIMPLY MEANT AS LOCATORS, AND ARE TO BE VIEWED AS SUCH!** It is important not to allow **chapter divisions** to interrupt the flow of context. In order to prevent the interruption of context **pay close attention to connecting and joining words (*conjunctions*)**, at the beginning of chapters. **THESE ARE INDICATIVE OF A CONTINUATION OF THOUGHT! A few examples:**

CONNECTING WORD	EXAMPLE
<u>And</u> (<i>a word used to indicate <u>addition</u> or <u>consequence</u> of something previously said, or to give further <u>explanation</u> of something previously said</i>)	I Corinthians 2:1; 3:1
<u>Furthermore</u> (<i>meaning exactly what it says, further more, or in addition</i>)	I Thessalonians 4:1
<u>Then</u> (<i>used to express next in order of <u>time</u> or <u>position</u>, and also used to express <u>consequence</u></i>)	Matthew 4:1
<u>For</u> (<i>used to express <u>reason</u> or <u>grounds</u></i>)	II Corinthians 5:1; Colossians 2:1; Hebrews 5:1; 7:1
<u>But</u> (<i>conveys the same idea of <u>yet</u>, on the other hand, <u>notwithstanding</u> or <u>nevertheless</u></i>)	II Corinthians 2:1; I Thessalonians 5:1
<u>Though</u> (<i>in spite of the fact, or even if</i>)	I Corinthians 13:1
<u>Therefore</u> (<i>stating a <u>reason</u> or <u>consequence</u></i>)	Romans 2:1; 5:1; 8:1; 12:1
<u>Moreover</u> (<i>as a further matter, or besides</i>)	I Corinthians 10:1; 15:1

● **A VERSE IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO A SENTENCE:**

Though each verse begins with a capital letter that does not mean that each verse is a sentence. **They are sometimes, but not always!** For example; in **Matthew 3**, **verses 1-2** together are one sentence. **Verse 3** is one sentence, and **verse 4** is one sentence, and **verses 5-6** together are one sentence.

- **STUDY SCRIPTURE IN ITS PROPER SETTING**

The Bible should be **read** and **studied** in light of its grammatical setting, contextual setting (*immediate & remote*), in light of historical setting, and in light of geographical setting. **DO NOT READ SCRIPTURE NEGLECTING ITS SETTING!**

- **RECOGNIZE DIALOGUE:**

Identify who is speaking, to whom they are speaking, and of what they are speaking.

- **UNDERSTAND THE INTENT OR PURPOSE OF THE WRITER:**

- **CONSIDER THE STYLE OF WRITING:**

The Bible contains a variety of literary styles, such as; statutory (*commandments*), historical, poetic, proverbial, prophetic, parabohical, allegorical, and epistles.

- **RECOGNIZE AND ANALYZE WORDS AND GRAMMAR:**

One will never properly interpret Scripture oblivious to **word usage**, and **grammatical structure**.

- **THE BIBLE DOES NOT APPEAR IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER:**

- **DO NOT CONFINE SCRIPTURE IN THE BOX OF PERSONAL BELIEF AND EXPERIENCE:**

In all Bible study, one should not attempt to mold a passage to their beliefs, **but to mold their beliefs to Scripture!** One should not attempt to interpret Scripture in light of personal experience, **but interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture!**

③ **VARIOUS TYPES OF STUDY ARE INCLUDED IN A PROPER METHOD**

There are various types of Bible study and though there are preferences for certain types of study; the **reader should not limit themselves to only one type of study!** Regardless of the type of Bible study that is chosen, **BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLES REMAIN THE SAME!**



PROPER APPROACH
PRECISE OBSERVATION
ACCURATE INTERPRETATION
RELEVANT APPLICATION



Regardless of the type of study chosen, these principles should be carried out:



REVERENTLY
PRAYERFULLY
SUBMISSIVELY
DILIGENTLY
ORDERLY
THOROUGHLY
MEDITATIVELY

● **TOPICAL BIBLE STUDY:**

This is the study of a particular **topic** or **subject** matter. In **TOPICAL** Bible study; **the topic is the main thought, and all Scriptures relating to that main thought are for the purpose of gathering detailed information concerning the main thought.** The **TOPICAL** method of Bible study is a good way to bring together in an orderly manner what the Bible teaches upon a subject! The purpose of **TOPICAL** Bible study is to **discover what the Bible teaches about a particular topic or subject!** The **objective** of a **TOPICAL** study is to **GET A COMPLETE PICTURE OF WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT!** **TOPICAL** Bible study is the favorite type of study for many, and though there is much profit in the thorough study of particular topics, **you will not attain a thorough well rounded knowledge of the Bible by only using this method!** There is also a particular **danger** of this type of study, that being; **the lifting of topical verses out of their contextual setting.** In **TOPICAL** study:



- ✓ Select Topics Prayerfully And Not Randomly
- ✓ A Topical Bible Is A Good Source Of Reference
 - ✓ Take Note Where Topic First Appears
- ✓ Study Each Passage Thoroughly Where The Topic Appears
- ✓ List Key Thoughts In The Passages Where The Topic Appears
- ✓ Define Key Terms In The Passages Where The Topic Appears
 - ✓ Summarize The Passages Where The Topic Appears

✓ Study Related Topics

✓ Study The Opposite Topics

✓ A Thorough Topical Study Will Branch Out

✓ Look For Repeated Phrases Concerning The Topic

A THOROUGH TOPICAL STUDY WILL BRANCH OUT INTO OTHER STUDIES!

• CHARACTER BIBLE STUDY:

This is the study of a certain **person** in the Bible. The purpose of such is to **discover what the Bible says about a particular individual**, in order to **get a complete picture of what the Bible says about a particular individual!** The objective of a **CHARACTER** study is to **learn from the lives of others (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:1-11)**. In the study of Bible characters, it is important to **create a biographical sketch or profile of the person being studied:**



✓ Read The Scriptures That Tell Of Their Life

✓ Gather And Write Down Information From These Scriptures

✓ Study The Meaning Of Their Name (*Bible names reveal character*)

✓ Study The Time And Place Of Birth

✓ Study The Family Tree And The Characteristics Of Other Family Members (*this leads to the study of other people as well*)

✓ Study The Time In Which The Person Lived

✓ Study The Attitudes, Beliefs, And Customs That Prevailed In The Time They Lived

✓ Study Major Events In Their Life

✓ Study The Influences And Factors That Shaped Their Lives

✓ Study Those Who Lived During The Same Time Frame, For The Purpose of Comparison

✓ Study The Person's Personality Traits. Both Positive And Negative (*both are for our learning*)

✓ Study Conflicts And Trials That The Person Faced

- ✓ Study Achievements Of The Person
- ✓ Determine If There Is A Key Verse That Best Describes Them
- ✓ Study How Their Lives May Have Typified Christ
- ✓ Discover The Various Lessons To Be Learned From Their Lives
- ✓ Study The Time And Circumstances Of Their Death

A THOROUGH CHARACTER STUDY WILL BRANCH OUT INTO OTHER STUDIES!

● **BOOK STUDY:**

The purpose of such is to **discover the teaching of a particular book of the Bible!** In this type of study:



- ✓ Read The Book Through Several Times
- ✓ Reading The Book Through Several Times Write Down General Observations
- ✓ Consider The Overall Literary Style Of The Book
- ✓ Observe Historical, Parabolical, Allegorical, And Prophetic Statements
- ✓ Study The Author (*a character study when possible*)
- ✓ Study The Historical Setting In Which The Book Was Written.
For example; if one were to study the book of ***Isaiah***, the first verse mentions four kings who reigned during the time the book was written. Such information leads to a study of **II Kings 15-18;** and **II Chronicles 26-32.**
- ✓ Study Parallel Books And Contemporaries
For example; **I & II Kings** should be studied along with **I & II Chronicles.** The four Gospels should be studied together.
- ✓ Consider To Whom The Book May Be Written To
- ✓ If The Book Is Written To Someone Or Of Someone, Study Their Character And Circumstances

- ✓ Consider The Intent Or Purpose Of The Writer
- ✓ Consider The Main Theme Of The Book
- ✓ Are There Key Doctrines Taught In The Book
- ✓ If Studying An Old Testament Book, Note Where It Is Quoted In The New Testament
- ✓ Ask Yourself If There Is A Key Verse, Chapter, Word, Phrase, Or Thought
- ✓ Look For Repeated Words And Phrases Throughout The Book
- ✓ Determine If There Is A Key Spiritual Lesson
- ✓ Note How Is Christ Seen In The Book
- ✓ Note God's Character In The Book
- ✓ Note Commands In The Book
- ✓ Note Warnings In The Book
- ✓ Note Promises In The Book
- ✓ Note Key People In The Book
- ✓ Outline The Entire Book

A THOROUGH BOOK STUDY WILL BRANCH OUT INTO OTHER STUDIES!

● **WORD STUDY:**

The Bible of course is made up of words, and we must not fail to appreciate the immense significance and power of words. A Biblical **word study** is the study of a particular word in the Bible. The purpose of such a study is to **DISCOVER THE USE AND MEANING OF A PARTICULAR WORD WITHIN ITS BIBLICAL CONTEXT!** In this type of study:



- ✓ Select A Word To Study
- ✓ Define The English Word

✓ Define The Word In Its Original Language

In this twofold definition of the word, it is important to remember that **time and culture can alter the common meaning of words**. A word that meant one thing hundreds of years ago may mean something entirely different today. For example; the word “*prevent*” (**Psalm 59:10; 79:8; 88:13; 119:148; I Thessalonians 4:15**), today the word means “*to deprive, to hold back, or hinder*” but in the Bible it means “*to go before, to precede*” The phrase “*by and by*” (**Mark 6:25; Luke 21:9**) today has reference to “*a distant or remote future*” but in the Bible it meant “*the nearest possible future*” **Accuracy** in interpretation demands that we **always find the meaning of the word in the time in which it was used! THE WORD IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER THE ENGLISH DEFINITION!**

✓ In Defining The Word Being Studied **Note Synonyms And Antonyms**

The defining of words in English and in their original language should include the study of **synonyms** (*other words that have the same or similar meaning*), and **antonyms** (*words of opposite meaning*). The study of **synonyms** and **antonyms** greatly helps in the clarification of the meaning of the word that you are studying.

✓ Locate And Read All The Verses Where The Exact Word That Is Being Studied Is Used

✓ Locate And Read All The Verses Where There Are Variations Of The Word That Is Being Studied

✓ Locate And Read All The Verses Where Synonyms Of The Word Being Studied Are Used

✓ In Reading The Verses Where The Word That Is Being Studied Is Used **Note The Various Settings Of The Word**. How Is The Word Used In Relation To Other Words

✓ In Reading The Verses Reading The Verses Where The Word Being Studied Is Used **Note How The Word Is Used**

✓ In Reading The Verses Where The Word That Is Being Studied Is Used, **Note The Tenses Of The Word**

✓ Follow The Word That Is Being Studied In Its Original Language And Note The Various Translations Of The Word From The Original Language

✓ In Reading The Verses Where The Word That Is Being Studied Is Found, **Always Note Context**

In a Biblical **word study**, people often make the mistake of thinking that a word has the same meaning in every instance, but such is not true in any language, and certainly not in the Bible! **A word is capable of multiple meanings**, this is true in every language, and **it is context that determines meaning!** For example the word “*trust*” can mean “*an assured reliance*” and it can also mean “*a property interest held by one person for the benefit of another*” or it can mean “*a charge or duty imposed upon one*” The word “*trunk*” can refer to the “*main stem of a tree*” or to “*a piece of luggage*” or to the “*part of an elephant*” Obviously when a word is used it does not mean everything that the word could possibly mean! **Biblical language is no different!** The

word “*suffer*” in the Bible can mean “to permit or allow” (**Matthew 3:15; 19:14**), and it can mean “to be in misery” (**II Timothy 3:12**). **A WORD IN ITS IMMEDIATE CONTEXT IS THE BEST INDICATOR OF ITS INTENDED MEANING!** It is important to remember, that **the meaning of a word may have two parts**. There is **denotation** (*the actual meaning*), and there is **connotation** (*that which it suggests or implies*). For example; the word “*Samaritan*” the **denotation** is “a person living in or from Samaria” the **connotation** is “a very despised person” The word “*publican*” the **denotation** is “a tax collector” the **connotation** is “a sinner” The word “*Gentile*” the **denotation** is “a non-Jew” the **connotation** is “a heathen” The word “*dogs*” the **denotation** is “a breed of animal” the **connotation** is “the filthy and ungodly” **THE IMPORTANCE OF OBSERVING CONTEXT IN A WORD STUDY CANNOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED!**

A THOROUGH WORD STUDY WILL BRANCH OUT INTO OTHER STUDIES!

● VERSE BY VERSE STUDY:

This is the study of a **passage** or **verse** in detail, **it is an investigative approach to the Bible**. This type of study moves from **general overview** to **specifics!** The purpose of such is to **DISCOVER WHAT A VERSE OR PASSAGE IS SAYING, AND WHAT IT MEANS!** In this type of study:



✓ Observe Context

Be aware of the context, the purpose and the intent of the book in which the verse appears. Read the verses before and after the verse or verses being studied.

✓ Consider The Verse Or Passage In Its Contextual Setting

✓ Read The Verse In Various Ways

The goal of reading a verse is to **discover what it says**, which is prerequisite to **discovering what it means**. **ACCURACY IS CRITICAL, AND THE KEY IS NOT TO MISS OR READ OVER ANY WORDS!** Read the verse straight through several times, making and noting observations each time through. Make a vertical list on a piece of paper of each and every word in the verse, and then read it. **STUDY EACH WORD AND NOTE THE FUNCTION OF EACH WORD!** Having listed each word, begin to put the words together by phrases and clauses, and read it that way. **READING THE WORD OF GOD IN THESE WAYS GREATLY ENHANCES ONE’S ABILITY TO NOTICE WHAT IS BEING SAID!**

✓ Observe Words That Indicate A Reason Or Explanation

Such words as; “*Because*” “*For*” “*Wherefore*”

✓ Observe Words That Indicate Time And Order Of Events

Such words as; *“After” “Before” “Henceforth” “Hitherto” “Now” “Then” “Until” “When” “While”*

✓ Observe Words That Indicate **Result**

Such words as; *“Then” “Thus” “Therefore”*

✓ Observe Words That Indicate **Purpose**

Such words as; *“For” “That”*

✓ Observe Words That Indicate **Contrast**

Such words as; *“But” “However” “Much More” “Nevertheless” “Yet”*

✓ Observe Words That Indicate **Comparison**

Such words as; *“As” “Like” “Likewise”*

✓ Observe Words That Indicate **Means** Or **Agency**

Such words as; *“By” “Through” “Whereby”*

✓ Observe Words That Indicate **Addition To** Or **Connection**

Such words as; *“Also” “And” “Furthermore”*

✓ Observe Words That Indicate **Condition**

Such words as; *“If”*

✓ Observe **Pronouns**

Always identify the noun that the pronoun refers back to. Recognize whether the pronoun is singular or plural, first or second person, or possessive. Always note any shift in the use of pronouns, from *“ye”* to *“they”* and *“us”* to *“them”* etc.

✓ Observe **Dialogue**

Always be aware of **who** is speaking and to **whom**, and about **what**.

✓ Observe **Actions** And **Roles** Of God

✓ Observe **Actions** And **Roles** Of People

✓ Observe **Lists**

This is two or more items connected by the word *“and”*

✓ Observe **Repetitions** In All Forms

✓Note The Tone Of The Verse Or Passage

A THOROUGH VERSE STUDY WILL BRANCH OUT INTO OTHER STUDIES!

BIBLE READING AND STUDY SHOULD BE REWARDING TO EVERY DY LIFE! And such requires a proper METHOD of study! A proper METHOD of study will never be random or haphazard, but always with great carefulness, orderliness, diligence, thoroughness, and with a meditative mind, and a receptive heart, and based upon sound Bible study principles!

THE GOAL

A HEART AND LIFE CHANGING CONFORMITY!

