

We must be Doers of the Word, and not just Hearers.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. **23** For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: **24** For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. God did not give us His message in the Bible to just “know His message”, so we cannot just pick what parts we want to obey.

How do we Understand the Bible?

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. We should have a study plan, and we should understand an overview of how we are going to study our Bible.

The Purpose: Above all, we must clarify that we are all sinners before God, and what or in what form do we treat this matter to resolve it. Simply put, we must confess our sins, repent of these sins abandoning them, and believe in Jesus Christ, in his work in dying and his resurrection on Calvary which is what makes one saved. But salvation is much more than a few words said to God without sincerity or without them affecting us in a real sense. When a person accepts the Savior, the entire work of salvation is to make this new birth change in their life so that they are pleasing to God, in other words that we comply with His will. But the main purpose is to understand the message from God. **Psalms 119:18** *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. 73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.*

The Method: This simply is to understand what God has said. There are various levels working in the method to understand what God has said. The Bible is not just one book, rather it is 66 books, by different authors, in different situations of history, to communicate to different people (using narratives, historical accounts, poems, didactic literature, etc.). The situation of every book, every author, every situation must be considered. The language and meanings of the words in their contexts should be

examined with these words in the original language because they give us much understanding. Also, the historical context surrounding the book or verses must be strongly considered BEFORE coming to a position on a verse. Within the Bible, there are two testaments or covenants. The Old Testament has its foundation in God choosing a single nation, foundation Abraham, and his descendants, and in the New Testament, its foundation is the church, that God's people are not just one nation and race, but all who worship God. The times and manners of when, how, etc. in how God treats people is also important to distinguish. While God does not change (**Hebrews 13:1; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 40:8; Psalms 102:25-27; 2 Timothy 2:13; Psalms 119:89**), but even so, God is a person, and the faithfulness of His character is one thing, but how He deals with human beings is a totally different thing. God has much mercy, but there is a limit to this mercy, and there is an end in how much God will put up with sin. In the days of Noah, (**Genesis 6:11** *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence*) and God, “like a person,” had enough, and God struck humanity with the flood. Sodom and Gomorrah are another example of the same. Neither case broke the faithfulness of God, nor did God “change.” The mercy of God has limits, and one must encounter this salvation of God while there is opportune time. **Isaiah 55:6** Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 1 Chronicles 28:9 *And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father... for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.* **Psalms 27:8** *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. Psalms 32:6* For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. The Bible affirms that if you seek for God, God will be found, and He will speak to you. But if you do not seek Him, there is a cut off, a time in which God will close all hope of help and salvation, and you will remain totally outside of God's help. **Matthew 25:11** *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* In the life of every individual, this time is at their death (**Hebrews 9:27**), and for groups, nations, races, etc. there is also a point in which God will cut them off. While you study God's dealing with each

person and group, do not make the mistake of presuming from all that God wants with that person, or what God commands and desires of that person, that all of that is for all people in all times. (God tried Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his only son, but God stopped Abraham before he was able to sacrifice him. **Genesis 22:1-19**. The universal element was to have faith, not to kill somebody.) Neither is it acceptable that we sacrifice animals today, as in the Old Testament.

We should understand that in the study of the Bible, the process is little by little we build our understandings. When somebody wants to be a rocket scientist, that person begins as a child learning the alphabet. The alphabet has little to do with rockets, but it is a foundation so that the person can read books. Learning basic math, once again, is not directly related with rocket science but is a foundation upon which a person will never achieve his goal without it. For us, as students of the Bible, we must begin with our own salvation and walking with God, and after this has been well achieved, we can understand more and more complicated things. We should not abandon or ignore this foundation of being a Christian nor should we despise it. The student should be praying daily, reading, and meditating on the Word of God daily. He should attend and participate with energy in a church of good doctrine. Beside this, he should be witnessing his faith to other the unsaved. He should be living an exemplary life compared to Jesus Christ. Maintaining these “foundations,” God can use the person in His work, and afterward God Himself will teach him the deepness of Scripture. But in no moment will the student “leave this foundational Christian life” to “go study intensively the Bible” and leave off the rest. The Bible is understood by obeying it.

The Problem

Isaiah 28:10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

We can describe this problem in this way, we learn by drips and not by buckets. In other words, you build an understanding of the Bible little by little over much time, and not by just an intense time of study and you are done. A time of intensive studying can help, but nonetheless, it will take time. Every good

student of the Bible will learn more every day for the rest of his life.

For those who know much of the Bible, it is easier for them to understand and arrive at correct interpretations than new students of Scripture can. So, not to discourage you but to orient you, **there are people with more knowledge of Scripture than what you have, and these are a great advantage. God has made the existence and structure of the church to help us here. Every "wise" Christian that has studied the Bible and can help others with their understandings is concentrated by God's design in churches.** This is the plan of God. In the structure that God has made, these men of God, that have their own lives in order, who obey the Scriptures and live the principles of God in their own lives, **they go before the church every week to explain the Bible, reading to the congregation the very words of God, making them clear, giving understanding, and making application to our lives.** If you do not want to attend church every Sunday, then there is a problem in you that will cause your spiritual growth to be retarded, poorly formed, and in error.

Learning the Method

There are different methods of studying the Bible, but all follow **a single master plan.** Firstly, **you study the passage or verse to learn all you can from it, in its context,** and after you learn the verse well, or at least you learn the clearest meaning of the verse. Then, secondly, **you seek other verses and passages related to what your first verse is talking about, or verses that shed light on that verse.** The idea is to become familiar with different statements about the point, and understand how these relate one to another, and **then present these conclusions to others.** But all of this must go towards an end or purpose. All these purposes unite in **Christ as the Savior.** (John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: **and they are they which testify of me.*** 47 *But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?)* This is, that **God is treating our sins and our lives after we are pardoned. Then we are to live the moral image of Jesus Christ,** and we remain in Christ, which is our sanctification.

We do not introduce anything outside of the Text.

It is important to keep control over your conclusions and thoughts. If a text doesn't say something, do not insert your idea into it. If you can establish the idea from another text, use that "other text." But the good student does not insert more than what is in the Bible. **We "illuminate" what God says, but we do not fabricate our own ideas.** Mark 7:7 *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*** It is essential to grasp the message of God in the Bible and not to repeat man's teachings.

Eat this Book.

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Ezekiel 3:1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

These passages speak of learning something that God has written, and internalizing it to your own life, and then go share it with others.

We must interact actually and personally with the Word of God. This point is very important and essential, but it is lost in so many students of the Bible (equally on many preachers). The wicked know in their head "all of the Bible" supposedly, **but none of this reaches their heart nor does it change their lives personally.** Luke 3:8 *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance...* John the Baptist demanded of the Jews, especially the leaders, those teachers that were so educated, **that their lives show their knowledge of the Word of God.** (Compare Matthew 15:8-9; 7:15; 23:27; 23:33). Jesus condemned the Pharisees that pretended to know so much of the Bible and be the most spiritual among the people but were nothing more than hypocrites. (Matthew 23:5 **But all their works they do for to be seen of men;** *they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments.*)

The Study Plan for Studying the Bible

By David Cox



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Psalms 119:15 I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways. A Bible student is a person who **1) has respect and a wonderful view towards God and His messages. He respects the authority of God to dictate everything in his own life. 2) The Bible student studies the Bible so as to impose it as a spiritual guide in his life. Knowledge without obedience is bad.** (2 Corinthians 10:5), and **it can even hurt the person.** If you have knowledge without obeying and putting that knowledge into practice in your own life, then this is called **hypocrisy.** This is a great disaster in the sight of God. Galatians 6:3 *For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. **Just knowing a lot about the Bible DOES NOT MAKE THE PERSON SPIRITUAL! It is only by obeying what you know of the Bible that makes God pleased with that person.*** Jeremiah 23:11 *For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD. God rebukes the "experts in Bible knowledge" because knowing so much, and supposedly ministering for God, they did not put this knowledge into practice in their own lives. **The spiritual rule is that these people know nothing if they are not examples in their own lives of these principles that they pretend to know so well.*** Luke 6:46 *And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and **do not the things which I say?***