

Helps for Bible Study

SEVEN WAYS TO STUDY THE WORD OF GOD

1. Word Study

Just looking up a word from a verse can help give a better understanding of that verse. You can look up words in a regular dictionary (such as Webster's) or in a Bible dictionary (such as Unger's).

Example:

Luke 9:56 *"For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."*

Webster's defines "save" as: to deliver from sin; to rescue or deliver from danger or harm; to preserve or guard from injury, destruction, or loss. So now when I read that *"the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them"*, I know that it means God desires to keep me from harm and danger. God desires to keep the enemy of my soul from taking advantage of me in any way. Isn't that awesome?!

2. Character Study

Each Bible character had good and bad experiences that we can learn from. *"...all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition..."* (**1 Corinthians 10:11**). Many Bibles have a concordance (an alphabetical listing of names and key topics) in the back. By using the concordance, you can look up all Scriptures pertaining to a certain Bible character. Many Bibles also have a subject chain reference (a reference that links all Scriptures that have something in common).

Example:

Pick a character like Moses. Look up and read all Scriptures referenced to him. As you read these Scriptures, ask yourself questions such as: Why is he important? What did he do right? What did he do wrong? What kind of man was he? How did he start out? How did he end?

3. Background Study

Study the customs and cultures of the different time periods in the Bible. When was the passage written? Who was it written to? Many Bibles have cultural summaries, and there are also many simple-to-understand books about Bible customs.

Example:

John 10:3-4 *“To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”*

In the book Bible Customs, George W. Knight explains that in the culture of Bible times, shepherds did not use dogs to keep their sheep in line. They relied on verbal commands. By using their voice, the shepherd would call straying sheep back and would lead them to water and grass. Just understanding the culture helps emphasize the principle behind this verse. We need to know the voice of our Good Shepherd Jesus Christ who leads us.

4. Repetition

When reading and studying the Bible, see if certain topics are addressed more than once. I would always tell my students that if I ever repeated anything, they could count on that being on a test. Well, I have found in studying God’s Word that there are many topics repeated. I believe the principle holds true today that if the Bible repeats concepts and lessons, then God really wants us to engrave it into our minds.

Example:

How many times is prayer mentioned in the Bible? What about the kingdom of God? Where are they mentioned?

5. Personal Reflection

Regardless of what type of study you select, it is important to ask yourself, “How does this passage apply to me? What is God saying to me?” The lessons of God’s Word cannot help us become more like Him if we are not willing to apply the Scriptures to our daily lives.

6. Practical Suggestions

Read passages from different translations of the Bible. For an explanation and listing of different versions of the Bible, check out <http://www.mardel.com/bible-translation-guide.aspx> My personal preference is the King James Version only because that is what I started reading 30 years ago. However, I also use other translations like the New International Version on a daily basis.

7. Personal Notes

One of the best ways to learn from the Bible is to keep a record of what you’ve read and what you’ve learned. Keep a notebook handy while you read to jot down notes and favorite verses. When a passage or verse really means a lot to you, write it down on an index card for future reference. Use colored pencils or highlighters to mark certain verses that mean a lot to you.