

Back to the Basics

Why Bible Study is Necessary

Memory Verse:
1 Peter 2:1-2

The Purpose of Bible Study

Now that you are a Christian, you must work to keep yourself spiritually alive. Maintaining your spiritual life requires that you feed upon the Word of God, upon the Bible. You must engage in a daily diet of God's Word. The first reason why you should study your Bible is that Bible study will increase your faith in God. In Romans 10:17, Paul wrote, "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" (NKJV) Any person who chooses to have faith must study the word of God. A person cannot have faith in God without learning about God. Likewise, if a Christian wants his faith to be stronger, he must continue to study God's word.

The second reason for Bible study is that studying the Bible promotes spiritual growth. In 1 Peter 2:1-2, the apostle Peter wrote, "*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.*" (NKJV) As Peter made clear, every Christian should desire the pure (sincere) milk of the word. The pure milk of God's word will enable a Christian to grow, becoming stronger and more mature.

In Hebrews 5:12-14, the writer addresses a problem where some Christians had stopped growing because they had stopped studying God's word. How do we know that the recipients of the letter had stopped growing? Consider the passage: "*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*" (Hebrews 5:12-14, NKJV) According to this text, these people had been Christians long enough that they should have been teaching other people. Tragically, these Christians still needed someone to teach them the very basics of God's word. Had they been faithfully studying God's word, then they would have grown to spiritual maturity.

The third reason for studying your Bible is the stability it provides to your life. Take this opportunity to read Ephesians 4:11-15. One of the goals behind the Lord providing us with the teachings of the apostles and prophets through the written word is that we might be stable in our faith and obedience. According to Paul, the Lord has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers so that Christians might be:

Q Equipped for the work of the ministry. (v. 12)

- Q Edified or built up. (v. 12)
- Q Brought to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. (v. 13)
- Q Brought to the point of being a perfect (mature, full-grown) man. (v. 13)
- Q Brought to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (v. 13)
- Q Brought to the point where they should no longer be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. (v. 14)
- Q Brought to the point where they are speaking the Truth in love. (v. 15)

Pay close attention to verse 14. The Lord's will for you is that you should be stable in your belief in His word. You should not be "tossed to and fro" by every religious thought or notion that may drift in with the changing currents. By studying God's word, your foundation in His faith will grow stronger every day. You will learn how to tell the difference between man's words and God's words. Studying the Bible daily will help to stabilize you, both in your spiritual life and your physical life.

The fourth reason why you should study the Bible is that it helps you to know the difference between right and wrong. In 2 Timothy 2:15, the apostle Paul wrote, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (KJV) Part of "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" is understanding the application of God's word within your life. You will use the word of Truth to be able to distinguish between actions that are acceptable to God and actions that are not acceptable. You will be able to tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

The fifth reason for Bible study is that it will enable you to give a reason for your faith and obedience. The apostle Peter wrote, "*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*" (1 Peter 3:15, NKJV) Daily Bible study will equip you for the task of giving a reason for your faith and obedience.

The sixth reason you should study your Bible is that the Bible will show you how to live. Through studying the Bible, you allow the Lord's Word to be a light to your path. (Psalms 119:105) The benefit of God's Word lighting your path is that it tells you how to live. Consider Paul's letter to Timothy. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul wrote: "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" (NKJV)

As we examine 2 Timothy 3:16-17, here is what we find regarding the benefits of God's Word (all Scriptures):

- Q "Doctrine" refers to teachings and instructions. The teachings and instructions include doctrinal teachings such as salvation, the work of the local church, directions for the home, etc.
- Q "Reproof" refers to a proof or that which tests, proves, or convicts. In other words, as you study the Bible, any sin that might exist in your life will be brought to light. God's word will convict you of your sins.

- Q “Correction” means to restore to a right state, an improvement of life or character. Once any error or sin is revealed within your life, the Bible will tell you how to correct the problems. Correction involves a determination to repent and change.
- Q “Instructions in righteousness” refers to the education or training of a person to walk in a manner that is acceptable to God, to walk righteously or in the way that is right. The Bible is a wonderful blessing. It tells you that God expects His people to live righteously. It also tells you how to live righteously. The key to your success lies within your willingness to follow the instructions.
- Q “Complete” (perfect, KJV) means fitted, complete, or perfect. God’s word is intended to bring every Christian to the point of being complete in their understanding and service to God. This is seen in the last phrase of verse 17.
- Q “Thoroughly equipped” means to complete or to finish. The person who studies God’s word will be complete, ready to understand every good work in serving the Lord. This can be you, if you will continue in your efforts to study God’s Word.

Through this closer examination of 2 Timothy 3:16-17, you should begin to see that the word of God shows you how to live by giving you the necessary teachings and instructions, by convicting you when you are wrong, by showing you how to restore yourself to a right state when you are weak, and by training you to walk in a manner that is acceptable unto God. If you will study the Bible regularly and apply its teachings in your life, then you will be better equipped to serve God in every area of your life. You will know how to live your life as a Christian, a child of God.

Proper Attitudes Toward Bible Study

There are several attitudes which will help you in studying the Word of God and applying the studies in your life. The first attitude is to accept the Bible as the word of God. As we saw earlier in 2 Timothy 3:16,17, all scriptures have been given by the inspiration of God. That is to say that all the scriptures (both the Old Testament and the New Testament) have come from the mind of God. Without this attitude, your Bible study will become fruitless and pointless. If you will accept the Bible as God’s Word, you will then respect it and obey it.

You should also expect to understand the Bible. Any time God has given a command, it has been in words that man can understand. (See the chart to the left, *Understandable Commands*.) Even Jesus preached to the common people. The last part of Mark 12:37 reads, “. . . *And the common people heard Him gladly.*” (NKJV) When the apostles

Understandable Commands

Adam and Eve
(*Genesis 2:17*)

Noah and gopher wood
(*Genesis 6:22*)

Children of Israel.
(*Exodus 20:1-17*)

Jesus' teachings
(*Mark 16:16*)

wrote, they wrote with the intent of their words being read aloud. Paul told the brethren in Thessalonica to read the epistle aloud before the congregation. (1 Thessalonians 5:27) Paul's epistle to the brethren in Colosse was to be read to the church in Laodicea. (Colossians 4:16) While there are "meaty" parts to the Bible, if you desire to understand what you study, then you will understand. The more you study, the more you will grow, and the more your understanding will evolve and improve.

Another attitude needed in making your Bible study beneficial is a proper love for the word of God. Without love for the Truth, you will not obey the Truth. Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:10, "*and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*" (NKJV) There are those people who will not be saved because they did not obey. The reason for their disobedience was a lack of love for the Truth. In addition to disobedience, without the love for the Truth, you could also believe a lie. Continuing on from verse 10, we read, "*And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" (2 Thessalonians 2:11,12, NKJV)

If you want to truly love the Truth, then begin developing an attitude like that of King David. (See the chart to the left, *David's Love for God's Word.*) With such a loving and adoring attitude toward the Word of God, you will reap great rewards from your daily Bible study.

In addition to loving the word of the Lord, another important attitude is an open mind or honest heart. Consider the example of the parable of the sower. (Luke 8:11-15) In this example, the word of God fell upon the heart of one who was willing to receive it. This person was described as one with a good and noble heart. If a person's mind is opened (not closed with preconceived notions and ideas), then he will accept what the Bible teaches. Consider the example of the Jews in John 5:39-47. They should have accepted Jesus, but did not because of their closed mind.

Before we move to the next needed attitude, it is important that you understand that an open mind does not mean to be gullible. With an open mind, you should always search the scriptures to make certain that the Truth is being taught and practiced. Consider the excellent example of the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily to make certain that Paul was teaching the Truth. (Acts 17:10-11)

Another needed attitude in your daily study of God's Word is a proper motive. When you study the Bible, why do you study? Is it to prove your belief or to improve your belief? That is

David's Love for God's Word

And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love. My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, Which I love, And I will meditate on Your statutes.
(Psalm 119:47-48, NKJV)

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.
(Psalm 119:97, NKJV)

I hate the double-minded, But I love Your law.
(Psalm 119:113, NKJV)

You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross; Therefore I love Your testimonies.
(Psalm 119:119, NKJV)

to say, when you open your Bible and study, are you trying to prove something that you have already been taught? When you study the scriptures, you should study with the intent to learn what the Bible teaches. Let the Bible shape your belief and faith, not the other way around. You should never start or accept a practice and then study to support the practice. You should always study the Bible and then start or accept a practice.

Lastly in the discussion of needed attitudes, diligence is a must. There are no short cuts in learning. The learning process is a life long process filled with growth. In order to grow, you must study with all diligence, never giving up. Consider the example of Moses and the Israelites. Moses instructed parents to diligently teach their children God’s commands. Moses commanded, *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”* (Deuteronomy 6:6,7, NKJV) In Joshua 1:8, Joshua wrote concerning the Law of God: *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”* (Joshua 1:8, NKJV) Let us not forget Paul’s instructions to Timothy. Paul wrote, *“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”* (1 Timothy 4:13, NKJV)

Suggested Bible Study Methods

Book or Chapter Study	For a Topical Study:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a regular study pattern • Pick a Bible book or chapter to study • Start from the beginning • Establish the writer of the book, to whom the book was written, and the purpose of the book. • Keep each passage within its own context. Do not try to make a phrase, statement or verse fit a meaning to which the context does not point. • Recognize the difference between figurative language and literal language. • To help understand a particular word and how it is used in the context, use a Bible word dictionary and / or different (and reliable) translations. • Take notes to help you remember key points and passages. These key points and passages will help you to remember the purpose of the book or chapter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a regular study pattern. • Pick a topic. • Using either a concordance or a topical Bible, begin to research the topic. • Examine each verse referred to by the concordance or the topical Bible to make sure the passage fits a context which addresses the topic in question. • Recognize the difference between figurative language and literal language. • Make a list of each verse and its surrounding context. • Study each verse and its context in detail. • Put together a summary of all the verses you have studied. Keep the summary and the list of verses for later study. It may be that you will find more verses or passages that will fit the same topic.

Ten Questions

1. Faith comes by hearing the _____.
2. What should Christians desire? _____
3. To whom does “solid food” belong? _____

4. What did the Lord give to the church so that Christians could be equipped for the work of the ministry? _____

5. What did Paul tell Timothy to do so that he would not need to be ashamed? _____

6. What should be a light to your path? _____
7. If you do not love the Truth, then what will you not do? _____

8. In the parable of the sower, what type of person heard the word and received it? _____

9. With what type of motive should a person study the Word of God? _____

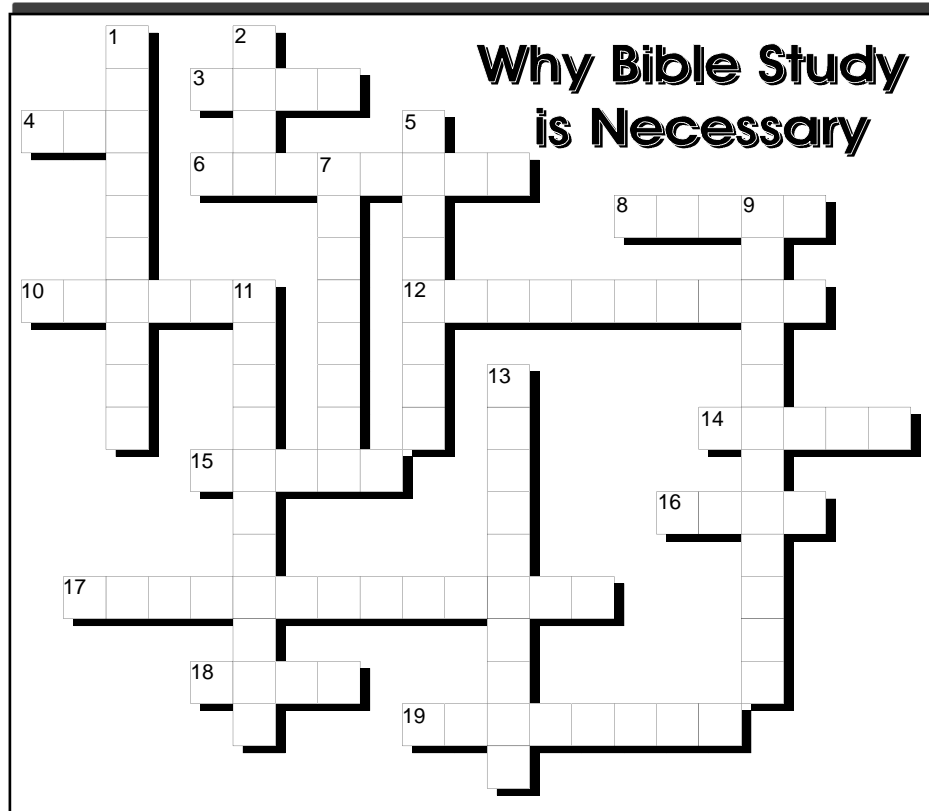
10. Moses told the Israelites to teach the commands of the Lord “_____ to your children.”

True or False

1. T or F : Faith can come without hearing the Word of God.
2. T or F : A Christian should lay aside all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking.
3. T or F : Studying the Bible will help you to grow as a Christian.
4. T or F : Studying the Bible daily will help to keep a Christian stable.
5. T or F : Bible study will not help a person to distinguish between right and wrong.
6. T or F : All scriptures came from the mind of man.
7. T or F : The common people were unwilling to hear Jesus.
8. T or F : According to John 5:39-47, it is safe to say that the Jews had a closed mind.
9. T or F : Paul told Timothy to give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine.
10. T or F : God’s word is intended to make a Christian equipped for every good work.

A Little Fun

(Use the lesson text to answer these questions.)



Across

3. The Bible will equip a Christian for "every good _____."
4. Christians must accept the Bible as the Word of _____.
6. "For though by this time you ought to be _____, . . ."
8. "So then _____ comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
10. Possessing the right _____ is an important attitude in studying your Bible.
12. This has been given by the inspiration of God.
14. How often did the Bereans search the Scriptures?
15. Bible study will help you to know the difference between right and _____.
16. This is what a person will do when he studies the "pure milk of the word."
17. The Bible gives Christians "instructions in _____."

18. A _____ for the Truth will help Christians to obey the Truth.
19. Possessing an open mind towards God's word does not mean to be this.

Down

1. You can _____ the Bible.
2. Christians are to be ready to give a "defense" for the reason of the _____ that is in them.
5. God will send this to those who do not love the Truth.
7. Without Bible study, one will be like _____, "tossed to and fro" by "every wind of doctrine."
9. Paul told the brethren in _____ to read the epistle aloud.
11. Paul told Timothy to give attention to reading, to _____, and to doctrine.
13. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them _____ to your children, . . ."

Passages in this Lesson

Genesis 2:17	pg 21	Acts 17:10-11.	pg 22
Genesis 6:22	pg 21	Romans 10:17	pg 19
Exodus 20:1-17	pg 21	Ephesians 4:11-15	pg 19
Deuteronomy 6:6,7	pg 23	Colossians 4:16	pg 22
Joshua 1:8	pg 23	1 Thessalonians 5:27	pg 22
Psalms 119:47-48	pg 22	2 Thessalonians 2:10-12	pg 22
Psalms 119:97	pg 22	1 Timothy 4:13	pg 23
Psalms 119:105	pg 20	2 Timothy 2:15	pg 20
Psalms 119:113	pg 22	2 Timothy 3:16-17	pg 20,21
Psalms 119:119	pg 22	Hebrews 5:12-14	pg 19
Mark 12:37	pg 22	1 Peter 2:1-2	pg 19
Mark 16:16	pg 20	1 Peter 3:15	pg 20
Luke 8:11-15	pg 22	1 John 4:14-15	pg 14
John 5:39-47	pg 22	1 John 5:4-5	pg 11