

## I. Why Know the Bible

List five reasons for knowing God's Word.

- ◆ 2 Timothy 2:15 to be approved by God
- ◆ 1 Peter 2:2 to grow in salvation
- ◆ Psalm 119:11 to not sin against God
- ◆ Psalm 119:38 produces reverence for God
- ◆ Psalm 119:105 a light to my path; guidance

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We study Scripture because it is sufficient.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. —2 Timothy 3:16*

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## II. How to Know the Bible

### A. Hear It

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

1. Whom did Jesus say would be blessed (Luke 11:28)?

Those who hear the Word of God and observe it

2. In proclaiming the Word, what should pastors and teachers do (Nehemiah 8:7–8)?

Read the Word and give the sense, so that people understand.

### B. Read It

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things written in it; for the time is near” (Revelation 1:3).

1. Write Revelation 1:3 in your own words.

When you read and obey God's Word you will be blessed.

2. To what did Paul ask Timothy to give his attention (1 Timothy 4:13)?

To public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching

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If you do not have a daily reading plan, start with the Gospel of Mark or John. At the rate of two pages a day, you will complete the New Testament in 19 weeks!

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### C. Study It

When the apostle Paul left Thessalonica, he came to Berea and shared the gospel with unbelieving Jews. What he found was that they "were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Attitudes toward Bible study:

1. According to Acts 17:11, what two traits did the Bereans demonstrate as they received the Word of God?

With eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so

2. How should we search for wisdom or understanding (Proverbs 2:4)?

Like "silver" and "hidden treasures"

Bible study is more than just reading the Bible; it involves careful observation, interpretation, and application. Reading gives you the overall picture, but study helps you think, learn, and apply what you read to your life.

### D. Memorize It

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. . . . Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You" (Psalm 119:9, 11).

1. How did God command Israel to remember His Word?

a. Deuteronomy 11:18a By keeping it in their hearts and minds

b. Deuteronomy 11:19 By teaching children all day

2. Read Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.

a. During the three confrontations with Satan, what did Jesus do to overcome His temptations?

He quoted the Scriptures.

b. How might you apply this example to your own life?

If memorizing Scripture was important for Jesus, it is more important for Christians.

3. Write Psalm 40:8 in your own words.

The desire to do God's will happens when the Word is in our hearts.

It is easier to memorize with a purpose. Understanding the meaning or application of the passage will make memorizing easier.

## E. Meditate on It

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers” (Psalm 1:1–3).

Meditation is prayerful reflection on Scripture with a view toward understanding and application of prayerful thought to God’s Word with the goal of conforming your life to His will.

1. Meditation on Scripture can be done as you:

- a. Hear the Word preached.
- b. Read the Bible.
- c. Pray about what you are studying.
- d. Reflect on the verses you have memorized.

2. How does meditation assist you (Joshua 1:8)? It helps Christians to “be careful to do according to that is written in it.”

3. Do you think God’s Word can affect your speech and actions? How? (See Luke 6:45.) \_\_\_\_\_

(Answers will vary) You speak that which fills your heart, so we must fill our hearts with God’s Word.

4. Besides being diligent in learning God’s Word, what else should we do in order to understand it (Psalm 119:73, 125)?

We need to pray for understanding.

## III. The Bible Study Process

### A. Step 1: Preparation

1. What should we do before we approach the Scriptures (1 Peter 2:1–2)?

We must confess our sin.

2. What should be the content of our prayer as we prepare to study God’s Word (Colossians 1:9–12)?

Pray for wisdom and understanding.

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Spend a short time in prayer before each study. Confess any sin and ask the Holy Spirit, “Open my eyes, Lord, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18).

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## B. Step 2: Observation

"What is taking place in the passage? What do I see?"

1. Ask questions as you read, and *write them down*. Who? What? Where? When?
2. As you observe the passage, look for:
  - a. Key words
  - b. Key subjects (people, topics)
  - c. Commands (particularly verbs)
  - d. Warnings
  - e. Repeated words or phrases
  - f. Comparisons (things that are similar; things that are different)
  - g. Questions, answers given
  - h. Anything unusual or unexpected

*Note: These are just a few examples of things to look for when observing a passage.*

Warning: Take your time! Don't give up too soon!

## C. Step 3: Interpretation

"What does it mean?"

1. Scripture can be clear. Whom has God given to teach us (1 John 2:27)?

          The Holy Spirit          

2. Begin by asking interpretive questions.
  - a. What is the importance of:
    - (1) A given word (especially verbs)?
    - (2) A given phrase?
    - (3) Names and titles?
    - (4) Dates?
    - (5) Others?
  - b. What is the meaning of a particular word?
  - c. Why did the writer say this?
  - d. What is the implication of this word, phrase, or name?

1. Once we have heard the Word of God, what should our response be (James 1:22)? We are called  
to be "doers of the word."

2. A simple tool to help you apply what you have learned is to "put on the SPECS." Is there a:

Sn to forsake?

Promise to claim?

Example to follow?

Command to obey?

Stumbling block to avoid?

While there is only one correct *interpretation* of a given passage of Scripture, there are many *applications*.

### E. Step 5: Repetition

Bible study is a repetitive process. When studying a verse, steps 2, 3, and 4 are used over and over. *Observe*, then *interpret*, then *apply*. You may choose to do this for each word, phrase, or thought.

The more passes you make through the verse, the deeper its meaning is opened to you.

■ It is necessary to study the Scripture in order to be blessed. I don't know about you, but I like to be happy rather than sad. I'd much rather be happy than miserable. And I know that life is made up of miserable times and happy times. I also know this: The more I study the Word of God, the happier I am no matter what the circumstances are. The Word of God makes me happy.

That's really practical. When you see a miserable person, the first question to ask him is: Have you studied the Bible today? This simple question is the answer to their problem. Psalm 1:1-2 tells us, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." That's a happy man. A happy man is somebody who studies the Bible.

John MacArthur

#### IV. Study Exercise

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33)

#### Using Matthew 6:33 and the worksheet:

1. Make as many observations as you can, listing them in the “Observations” column below.
2. Write “Interpretive Questions” about your observations.
3. Write the meaning of your observation in the “Interpretations” column.
4. Once you have completed your observations and interpretations, fill in the “Application” section.

Note: The first six have been supplied as examples.

**“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).**

Observations	Interpretive Questions	Interpretations
1. The verse starts with the conjunction <i>but</i> .	1. Why does the sentence start with <i>but</i> ?	1. This verse is linked to the previous verses. Must read Matthew 6:32 for context.
2. Key word: <i>Seek</i>	2. What does it mean? What action does <i>seek</i> require?	2. It means to pursue or search for a command.
3. The verb <i>seek</i> is in the present tense.	3. What does present tense indicate?	3. I must seek <i>now</i> .
4. Note the use of the word <i>first</i> following <i>seek</i> .	4. What is the importance of <i>first</i> ?	4. Implies priority. Must seek with priority.
5. Next key word is <i>kingdom</i> .	5. What does the word <i>kingdom</i> signify?	5. It is a sovereign rule or domain over a specific realm or region.
6. The word <i>kingdom</i> is preceded by the personal pronoun <i>His</i> .	6. Whose kingdom is identified? To whom does <i>His</i> refer?	6. Looking back to verse 32, <i>His</i> refers to the “Father.” It is God’s kingdom.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.