

BASIC GUIDE TO

Bible Study



Jeremiah 17:9 says “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked, who really knows how bad it is?” Our biggest problem is following our heart. As a result, we need an unchanging standard instead of being driven by our emotions or experiences (heart). The Bible is our instruction manual from our maker that tells us how to live life and to prepare for life to come (2 Peter 1:3-5) and it teaches us how to be wise, what is wrong, how to get it right, how to stay right and how to be ready (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

STUDY IT!

Paul writes in **2 Timothy 2:15** - *Present yourself to God as one approved...who correctly handles the word of truth.* We don't need a Holy man telling us, we have direct access. Here are a few good principles for Bible study:

1. BE PURPOSEFUL—Prov. 2:4-5 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. How?

a. **Consistent time;** See it as a priority/treasure; you hunt for it (Mt. 12:44).

b. **Pray**—Luke 24:45—Jesus prayed that their minds might be opened to understand scripture.

2. USE THE INDUCTIVE METHOD:

a. **Observation:**

Inquire—ask Who? What? When? Where? How? Don't be a lawyer trying to support your argument. Take a basic, literal understanding first, unless it is clearly symbolic.

Connect— find repetition, contrast, general to specific, cause and effect, and look for comparisons.

Relive—feel the passages ... emotions, smells, sights, feelings and images. Retell in your own words.

-use background history and word studies. Consider motives from that person's perspective

b. Interpretation:

Meditate on it: How? Read it over and over, asking the Holy Spirit to show you. Interact with the author by directing your questions to Him.

Rules for interpretation:

i. context (#1 rule in Interpretation): What does it say before and after? Never just read one verse but rather look at context as a whole. What is the theme of the book? What is the theme of the Bible? What is the immediate context of the verse.

ii. Scripture interprets scripture: What do other verses say on the subject? In particular, the law of first mention (first mention of the topic in the Bible) usually clarifies the understanding for the rest of the Bible.

Case Study: Many people justify their doctrine by verses out of context. Take baptism: some oddly baptize for the dead, some believe baptism is required for salvation. While Acts 2:38 says “Repent and be baptized...for the forgiveness of sins...”, looking at the whole context of scripture shows it is by grace we are saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9) and that many other verses just say repent and be saved (no baptism). Peter’s next two sermons in Acts 3 and 4 don’t even mention baptism. Paul tells the church at Corinth that he didn’t come to baptize. Therefore, we can conclude that salvation is by faith alone.

c. Application:

i. Personalize it: “What does this mean for me? How does this challenge my life? What is a behavior you want me to adopt, change, etc.” This step is key to Bible study!

ii. Memorize it: Psalm 119:9-11- Tells us the key to purity: hiding God’s word in our heart. This step will bear insane amounts of spiritual fruit and maturity.

4. COMMENTARIES—Our first action should be to follow accepted principles for studying the Bible and to hear God’s unfiltered voice directly. Once we have been a workman approved, it is very healthy to read what other respected leaders who have studied the original language, history, etc., have to say on a subject as protection against error.

5. MOTIVATION: Psalm 1 says Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord. Blessed in Hebrew means “Oh how happy!”. As a result, he meditates on it day and night (constantly thinking of it) because he knows that a loving Father, who is the source of all things good, made these laws for our blessing. It’s only when we understand the character and nature of a good God, that we can lovingly obey. When God’s law becomes duty, it becomes a burden. When God’s law is seen as a blessing, it becomes a delight.

A great way to grow in your faith is to join a small group Bible study. You can find our current studies on our website www.feathersoundchurch.com