

# A Bible Study Help About "How To Study The Bible"

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1. First of all, everyone is capable of studying the Bible. The Bible is not a scientific book written for scientists and is what Paul meant when he says in 1Corinthians 1:26-27:



Brothers [and sisters]... Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (NIV)

This reminds me of the words of Abraham Lincoln "God must have loved the common man, because He made so many of them".

2. Secondly, the Bible is not a manual. Manuals are scientific books for dummies. The problem with manuals is that they are apparently objective and removed from the object and subject at hand. When I put a closet together I use a manual, but I don't have to. I can put the closet together the way I want to and when there are a handful of screws left the company is not going to take the closet back or throw me in jail for violating their manual. No, the manual is only a specialist suggestion, but actually removed from the real activity or reality. I can even use the wood to make a nice fire outside and they would not have a problem. This brings us to the next point.

3. The Bible is the Reality, not just about the Reality, we are all participating in. The story of the Bible begins at creation, progresses through the Fall of mankind, reaches its climax in Christ and ends at the restoration of God's presence back into this world. We're all participating in this story/Reality. In short, Bible study is to read ourselves into the Biblical narrative. By doing that, we become the Bible the world is reading and Bible study the discipline to internalise the Biblical narrative. Paul says in 1Corinthians 3:2-3:

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (NIV)

Mission is the heart of the Bible.

4. The Norm of the Bible is the presence of God. That simply means, the glasses we have to wear, when doing Bible study, are the presence of God. Adam and Even lost the presence of God when sin expelled them from the Garden of Eden. The rest of the Bible is the story of how God wants to restore His presence back into the world. Every covenant served and serves this purpose. That was the case, firstly, in the Sinai covenant

in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple. When this covenant failed, God sent His own Son to be with us. When His own Son had to go back to heaven to intercede for us, He sent the Holy Spirit to take His place. The last few chapters of the Bible bring the narrative to a close, this is when God will come back to this earth and the Fall of mankind will be reversed.

5. The Bible is a book of testimonies of how people interacted with the presence of God, in different cultures and contexts, and is therefore not a book that should scare us. Bible study is to figure out how the presence of God crystallized and reacted in every given circumstance. Even the prophesies, in the Old Testament, were only (inspired) sermons in a given context. They are not manual-like inscriptions.

6. The Bible was breathed/inspired by the Holy Spirit, but stays a dead book until the Holy Spirit inspires the one reading it. How many educated 'practical atheists' don't know the Bible better than the most common people and still are not saved yet? Bible study, in the continues inspiration of the Holy Spirit, should be done in and through prayer and in openness for the Holy Spirit to scrutinize us:

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (NIV)

7. Lastly, Bible study is a communal endeavor. It is the community, the body of Christ, that is being filled with Holy Spirit and not the individual, per say. This illustrates why most heresies are individual arousals (God's preferred way is not a 'Lone Ranger' way). The community includes study material like different translations, commentaries, dictionaries, word studies etc. Use them, if you can put your hands on them. These will give you very good bible study help.

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