

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

1.0 Introduction:

The Bible has been written and given to us so that through diligent study, we can know God personally and learn to live in a way that pleases Him.

God wants to bring us into intimate fellowship with Him. The relationship is like that of a father and son. All relationships develop into maturity by being together and interacting together continuously. Bible is the basis for our interaction with God. Through Bible, God reveals His personality to us. He gives insight, power, and guidance for meaningful living as children of God here on earth. He also gives the assurance for the future. It is a wonderful relationship. Through daily obedience we inherit the invaluable blessings from God. So we need to meditate on Bible portions daily and systematically study Bible books.

There are many ways to study the Bible. Among them two are very important. One is devotional Bible study, the other is detailed Bible study. Both have to go together in our life.

1.1 Devotional Bible Study: This is a daily discipline of having communion with God. Study portion / Meditation / Worship / Prayer / Renewal. This is also called as Quiet Time.

There are some useful guides for our devotions; like "Search the Scriptures", "This morning with God". They can immensely benefit us.

1.2 Detailed Bible Study: This is for Christian growth and maturity in addition to our daily devotions. There are many methods for detailed systematic study of the Bible. Among them inductive Bible study is the very important method for studying a book, chapter, topic, character, word, verse etc...

2.0 Inductive Bible Study:

Purpose and the essential qualifications: IBS is mainly related to book & chapter study but not restricted to them.

- To start with this is used for detailed Bible study but by practice can be used for devotional Bible study also.

In this camp the inductive study method is introduced which is helpful to:

1. Be equipped to study God's Word on our own and to grow in spiritual life
2. Grow in the knowledge of God, His will and ways.
3. Understand the Biblical truths in a proper way.
4. Meet the spiritual needs of others.
5. To overcome false teaching and cults.
6. Avoid dependence on others' interpretation
7. Be strengthened in personal faith
8. Recognize the authority of the inerrant word of God in your daily walk
9. Become increasingly aware of all that it means to be in Christ.

The Essential Qualification required to have PBS is:

- A new heart - 1 Cor 2:14
- A hungry heart - 1 Peter 2:3
- An obedient heart - Psalms 119: 98-10

- A Teachable heart - Isa 50:4
- A disciplined life – Mt. 7:7

3.0 Inductive Bible Study:

Survey and Outline preparation

Prayer is often missing element in Bible study. Yet apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, that's all it will – a method. It is the indwelling Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth, who takes the things of God and reveals them to us

Before Inductive study of the Bible we need to do some preparatory work. We should survey the book we intend to study.

There are many types of literature in the Bible we should first know what is the type of literature the book we intend to study belong to.

Type of Text / Literature.

1. Historical:-
 - History of creation - Genesis
 - The judges: - Judges
 - History of church - Acts
2. Biography: Biographical of Lord Jesus-Luke
3. Poetry: It centers on different feelings and moods of God's people at different phases of their life. - The book of Psalms
4. Proverbial - The book of Proverb
5. Prophetic - The book of revelation
6. Epistle - Letter to an individual
7. Combination: Combination of history and prophetic Eg: Daniel
8. Narrative: It centers around events happened at a particular place at a point of time (In the Old Testament first 17 books, in the NT first 5 books.
9. Discourse: It focuses central idea or theme: focus on a topic or heading (OT some parts of prophetic book, NT- Mathew, Epistles.
10. Parable: A parable is a story that teaches a moral lesson or truth.

Although it is not usually factual, a Parable is a story that is true to Life. It is designed to make one Central point, and every detail of the Parable will reinforce that main Point.

All books can not be studied in a same pattern. We use different methods to study English, social studies and science in the same way. Similarly books of different types of literature are to be studied in a different way.

But there are some common tools we can use they are elaborated here. They are to be properly used to study a book from Bible appropriately.

Survey and Outline:

Understand and identify the book and chapter themes.

Read the book or a logical portion (e.g. Sermon on the Mount) of a book in one sitting. The theme of a chapter will center on the main person, event, teaching, or subject of that section of Scripture.

Prepare Outline

Divide the passage into small structures based on the passage/chapter theme and the thought / event / place transitions. The small structure supports the theme of

the passage/chapter. For examples in Gospels the transition can be one place to another or one event to another. Whereas in the epistles/letters the transition can be one thought to another. In the historical portions the transition can be from one key leader to another. If we could note them

MEANING	STRUCTURE INDICATORS
Cause	For, because, since as
Reason	For, because, since, as, that
Result	That, so that, so, which, for
Purpose	In order that, which to, unto, until toward for
Means	By, from, through, out of, in
Time	Until, till, to, when, whenever, from, through, of, in, by, according to, against, with, concerning to out of.
Place	Where, wherever, from, in, through, into upon, with, concerning, till.
Manner	Just as, Just, as, with to.

Prepare outline for a Chapter/Book with

I - Major Marker

A. - Next level

1. Next level

a. Next level

(1)

(a)

Once we have surveyed the book we can study a Chapter or portion inductively. After detailed inductive study. We can revise and improve the first out line prepared also.

2.3 Study:

Inductive study, a method, involves development of three skills namely observation, interpretation and application with proper attitude searching learning and obeying with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4.0 Inductive Bible Study Observation, Interpretation and Application.

4.1 OBSERVATION: Discover what it says!

ASK The "5W's & An H"

As you study any passage of Scripture, any book of the Bible, train yourself to constantly ask: Who? What? When? Where? Why? & How? - Building blocks for our observation.

We must careful not to distort the scriptures to our own destruction (2 Pet.3:16)

1. Who:

Who is speaking?

Who is this about?

Who are the main characters?

a) Example: Jude v.1, Roman 1:1, &al.1:1 James Paul Paul.

b) To whom is he speaking Ref. Sanctified Rome Galatians

c) Mark the author and recipients. Author - □(Incl. Of pronouns) Recipients - o

2. What:

- What is the subject or event Covered in the chapter?
- What do you learn about the people The event or the teaching from the Text?
- What instruction is given?
- What type of literature - used?
 - a. Example: Jude, I Pet.5: 2,

b. Mark the key words/Key phrases Keywords are vital to understand the meanings of the text. A key word may be Noun, Descriptive word, and Action word.

GOD LOVE LAW REPENT
 FAITH HUMILITY GRACE
 GOD GLORY CHRIST
 HOLY SPIRIT SUFFERING
 SIN WICKEDNESS

Prophecy

Promise

Command

Message from God

3. When:

When is the subject or events occurring?

When did or will something happen to a particular person, people or nation?

a. Example: Jude v.7, I Pet. 5:4

b. Mark the expression of time

4. Where:

Where did or will this happen? Where was it said?

a. Example: Eph. 1:1, -Ephesus

b. Mark

5. Why:

Why is something being said or mentioned?

Why would or will this happen? Why at this time?

a. Example: I pet. 5:12-They may stand firm, Jude v. 20-23.

b. Mark the purpose:

6. How:

How wills it happen?

How is it to be done?

How is it illustrated?

a. Example:

I Pet. 5:2 - According Gods will

Jude v.21 - Mercy of God

LOOK FOR LISTS

Making lists of interrelated things in a text can be one of the most enlightening things you do as you study a section of Scripture. Lists reveal truths and highlight important concepts.

a. Example: 2 Tim. 1

God:

Made Paul an apostle (v.1)

Gives grace and mercy (v.2)

The Father (v.2)

Gives gifts (v.6)

Doesn't give spirit of timidity (v.6)

Spirit of power, love, and discipline (v.7)

Power for suffering (v.8)

Saved us (v.9)

Called us (v.9)

CONTRASTS / COMPARISONS

A contrast is an evaluation of things that are different or opposite in the context being viewed. Many times contrast is noted by the word "BUT"

2 Tim. 1:7. For God has not given us a Spirit of timidity but of power and love and discipline

As you look for contrasts remember the contrast is not necessarily between the actual words. It can be a contrast within the thought or body of truth conveyed by the words in that particular context.

Night - day

I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.

COMPARISON

A comparison always refers to thing that is similar or alike. Many times the words like and as signify a comparison.

2 Tim. 2:3. Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Psalms 42:1 - As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God.

Identify Figures of speech

These are used to add beauty / vividness or emphasis to the language. They help to express the truth of God more effectively. If any such things are there identify them.

- **Metaphor** : implied comparison - Jn. 1:29; Ps. 23:1
- **Simile** : Comparison expressed - Job 41:24; Hos. 6:4
- **Anthropomorphism**: Is: 59:1; 65:5; Ps. 32:8; 89:13; Ex. 32:14; I Sam 15:35
- **Personification** : It is to speak about (not speak to) a non living or non personal thing as though it is a person (E.g. Ps. 98:8 - Let the floods clap their hands)
- **Allegory**: extended parable (eg. Jn. 10:15)

TERMS OF CONCLUSION

Terms of conclusion usually follow an important sequence of thought and include words such as therefore, for this reason, and finally.

Example: I Pet. 5:6, Therefore.

- a. Marking the terms of conclusion
 - Therefore
 - For
2. Next level
 - b. Next level
 - (1)
 - (A)
 - A. He would teach the Lord' s ordinances.

4.2 INTERPRETATION: Discover what it means!

While observation leads to an accurate understanding of what the Word of God says, interpretation goes a step further and helps you understand what it means. When you accurately interpret the Word of God, you will be able to confidently put its truths into practice in your daily life.

As you seek to interpret the Bible accurately the following guidelines will be helpful.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Remember those context rules

The word context means “that which goes with the text.” To understand the context you must be familiar with the Word of God. If you lay the solid foundation of observation you will be prepared to consider each verse in the light of.

- The surrounding verses
- The book in which it is found
- The entire Word of God.

As you study ask yourself

- Is my interpretation of a particular section of Scripture consistent with the theme, purpose, and structure of the book in which it is found?
- Is it consistent with other scripture about the same subject, or is there a glaring difference?
- Am I considering the historic and cultural context of what is being said?

- a. Example: 2 Tim. 2:16 - Avoid worldly and empty chatters.

Interpret according to the correct meaning of the word

Many words are having the same meaning. The meaning of the word differ according to the context

- a. Example:

Trunk - Box to put a clothes
Elephant nose.
Main stem of a tree.

Interpret according to the grammar of the sentence or passage.

Interpret according the whole purpose of the Bible.

Interpret scripture by scripture. By regular and disciplined Bible reading we can get the knowledge of the whole Bible. The OT and NT explain the truth with one another. Bible will never contradict itself.

- a. Example:

Lk. 14:26, Mt. 10:37 - first love
Mt. 10:34, Lk.12:51-53, Mk. 13:12 Division

We can apply the above principles according to the situations.

Sovereignty of God
Responsibility of man

Interpret Scripture literally

The Bible is not a book of mysticism. God spoke to us that we might know truth. Therefore, take the word of God at face value - in its natural, normal sense. Look for the clear teaching of Scripture, not a hidden meaning. Understand and recognize figures of speech and interpret them accordingly.

Historical	Acts
Prophetic	Revelation
Biographical	Luke
Didactic	Romans (Teaching)
Poetic	Psalms
Epistle	2 Timothy
Proverbial	Proverbs

Donut base your convictions on an obscure passage of Scripture

An obscure passage is one in which the meaning is not easily understood. Because these passages are difficult to understand even when proper principles of interpretation are used, they should not be used as a basis for establishing doctrine.

INTERPRETING FIGURES OF SPEECH

Use the following principles:

- Notice whether the point of comparison is mentioned in the verse or context. If it is mentioned, take that as the key for interpretation. (e.g. 1 Kings 12:4)
- If it is not mentioned, consider the object of comparison and take the natural meaning as the most likely one. E.g. Is. 1:30; garden without water (next verse confirm the meaning of destruction).
- Use passages, if there are any that fit, remembering that an object may have different meanings in different similes. Do not use a free imagination to arrive at strange interpretations
- Use the context and the situation in the passage to arrive at the figurative meaning. (E.g. Dt. 19:15. the mouth of two witnesses)

HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

- Understanding the type of literature, authorship, date, relation of one to the other, the recipient's etc. are important in interpretation.
- *Archaeology*: It provides valuable help by giving a general background to the history of the Bible and so enables us to understand much more clearly the significance of things said and done.
- *Date*: The development of the idea of God can be a determining factor for the date of the book.
- *Psychological situation of the author*
- *Purpose of the book (E.g.)* - Gospel writers differ in their purpose
- Difference in Chronicles and Kings though written in the same period.
- *Original Readers*: The meaning of a text hinges on what it meant when it was written, not on what it may at first glance seem to mean today.
- *Occasion and Tendency*:
- *Revelation*: Persecution of Christians
- 2Thes.: Return of the Lord delayed
- *Life setting*: Matthew 23: Tension between church and synagogue.
- *Historical* (Lk. 19; 9); *Geographical* (Jn. 4:4); *Cultural* (Lk. 9: 59, 60)
- *Social* (Lk. 9:23) & Religious background.

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Relationship between the part and the whole.

Unity and diversity

There is no contradiction - Lk. 14:26; Mt. 10:37

Scripture interprets Scripture

Scripture is essentially one revelation - giving one message about God

Every part of Scripture has its own contribution to make to the whole. (Eg. Esther)

2. Bible will be seen as practical

Not just an academic exercise but has practical value to the day-to-day living.

3. Bible will be seen as unifying: Eph. 4:1-16

4. Role of faith in interpretation: Faith is not a prerequisite but result.

5. Role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation.

Men inspired by the Spirit of God wrote the books of the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the primary author. So the same Holy Spirit should help a person to interpret the Scripture.

His role is...

- To replace man's foolish desire for ego fulfillment with the reasonable well advised desire as God to stand by His promise
- To overcome our preferences
- To cause us to accept the obvious facts
- To make us own up the inescapable truth (I Cor. 4:7)
- To change the heart of the interpreter.
- Help us to have and maintain that humble and contrite Spirit.

SOME MORE PRINCIPLES

- Seek the full counsel of the Word of God
- Scripture will never contradict Scripture
- Don't base your convictions on obscure passage of Scripture

APPLICATION: DISCOVER HOW IT WORKS**DISCOVER LESSONS FOR LIFE**

In the process of observing the text and seeing how God instructed people and Dealt with various individuals, the Holy Spirit will bring to your attention truths that God wants you to be aware of and live by in your own life.

- a. Example: Jude v.3-contend for the faith
- b. Mark the expression *LFL*

APPLICATION

Application means "Personally accepting and actively responding to the truth learned. The final end of a true understanding of the Bible is a life live to the glory of God. God may speak in many ways.

- Teachings
 - Commands
 - Promises
 - Encouragement's
 - Warnings
 - And the lives of biblical character And God' s dealing with man.
1. Insights on applying Scriptures
What does the Scripture teach?
Is it general or specific.?
 2. Does this section of Scripture expose any error in my beliefs or in my behavior?
 3. What is God' s instruction to me as his child?

Observation, interpretation and application lead to transformation. This is the goal of our study of the Word of God. Through it we are changed from glory to glory into the image of Jesus.
