

A FEW HINTS ON HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Select the translation that you believe is useful and accurate and that you prefer.

Study Prayerfully; Study in Context (read all the passage or book, not just taking a sentence or verse out of it's context. Study linguistically- try to understand what each word or sentence means in definition. When available, find a word picture it might represent in the original Greek.

When studying a subject, use a topical Bible or Concordance to find all the passages on that particular issue...i.e. all the passages on prayer, or all the passages about repentance, forgiveness, the church, baptism, fruit of the spirit, sins, faith, etc. Study by having in mind the difference in the Old Testament –the Mosaic law and prophecy to Israel in preparation for the coming of Jesus; the time Jesus was here on earth; then the New Testament or New Covenant, after Jesus death, burial and resurrection. Realize the divisions of the Bible and whether the book is history, poetry, epistles, biography of Jesus, prophecy, etc.

In each reading, determine who is speaking and to whom they are addressing their words. (Is it to the unsaved or is it directions and admonitions to the Christian and the church?) When coming across a matter that seems to relate to the culture of that day, have a good commentary handy that might steer you as to what it meant to the people then and how that applies to today. Find the key principle that you can apply.

Try to determine the real theme of passages and also important and powerful verses. Practice committing some of these to memory.

Allow Scripture to explain Scripture.. If the meaning of a passage isn't clear , seek out other Scripture on the topic to put it all together. Also, always determine if what you are reading in literal or is figurative language (apocalyptic). Other literal passages can help explain those that are figurative in nature.

Realize that the Bible is accurate and you are dealing with the revelation from God. Seek guidance from the Holy Spirit. If understanding is difficult, come back to that topic or verses later. You can find many Bible helps—concordances, Greek Lexicons, commentaries and other books. But, take caution that commentaries are opinions and not necessarily always accurate...look at the source and use it mainly to help interpret words or phrases. It may help to ask others who study the Bible, what they can see if a passage or subject seems confusing to you. Make notations, underlines and other means to help your remember.

Certainly, don't be a Hearer or Reader of the Word only, but take it and put it into practice in your life. This is the purpose of Study—to gain wisdom for living. Don't be a "surface reader" with shallow understanding. Remember that you want to give as much time and attention, for in-depth study of the Bible more so than any other book.

