

Why Study the Bible?

⁷ “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹ the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.” (*Psalms 19:7-10*)

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (*Psalms 119:105*)

“All Scripture is breathed out by God...” (*2 Timothy 3:16*)

How to Study the Bible

I. Know what the Bible is:

A. The Bible is *a book*

1. The Bible is an *old* book: it was written for you, but not to you

“Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna.” (*Psalms 83:5-11*)

2. The Bible has *many authors*

“For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” (*Romans 3:28*)

“A person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” (*James 2:24*)

3. The Bible has *many genres*

“He will raise a signal for the nations
and will assemble the banished of Israel,
and gather the dispersed of Judah
from the four corners of the earth.” (*Isaiah 11:12*)

⁴ “Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself.

⁵ Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.” (*Proverbs 26:4-5*)

4. Meaning is shaped by the *context*

“A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text” - Anonymous

B. The Bible is *the Word of God*

1. The Bible is *authoritative*: so we must submit to it
2. The Bible is *true*: it is free of error and contradictions
 - Read the Bible with biblical presuppositions
 - Let Scripture interpret Scripture
3. The Bible is *sufficient*: it contains all we need for salvation and godliness
4. The Bible is *clear*: so the truth it communicates is knowable

II. Avoid Common Mistakes

- A. Despair: “I *can't* understand what it means”
- B. Subjectivism: “this is what it means to *me*”
- C. Soapboxing: majoring on something minor

III. ROIMAP (Read→Observe→Interpret→Meditate→Apply→Pray)

- **Read** | Get your eyes *on* the text—read it!

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.” (*Revelation 1:3*)

- **Observe** | Identify what is *in* the text

→ What's the genre? (historical narrative, poetry, wisdom, apocalypse, epistle, Gospel)

- What's the context? (literary, canonical, historical)
 - ◆ *Literary*: Where is this passage in this book? What's the passage before this one about? Who is this book written to? What's the setting? Are there any major themes in the book so far?
 - ◆ *Canonical*: Where is this passage in the Bible? What stage of redemptive history are you in (e.g. wilderness wanderings, exile, post-resurrection, etc.)?
 - ◆ *Historical*: Was there anything going on at that time that might be relevant?

→ Are there any repeated words or a consistent theme/focus in the passage?

→ Is there anything that surprises you or stands out?

→ How would you describe the passage's structure? Is there a thematic turn at any point?

→ What details seem especially important?

- **Interpret** | Identify the text's *message* to it's original audience

→ What is the passage saying?

→ Is there a part of the passage that feels like the author's main point?

→ If you were to interview a member of the original audience, what would they say this passage is about?

- **Meditate** | Fill your mind with the "*big truths*" the text communicates

- **Apply** | Identify how you should *respond* to the text in your own life

Is there a...

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| → Sin to confess? | |
| → Promise to cling to? | → Prayer to pray? |
| → Attitude to change? | → Error to avoid? |
| → Command to obey? | → Truth to believe? |
| → Example to follow? | → Something to praise God for? |

What...

- Delight should be in my heart?
- Doctrine should I believe?
- Deeds should I do?

- **Pray** | Respond to the God who has spoken to you in his Word

IV. Practice | 1 Peter 4:12-19

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

(1 Peter 4:12-19)