

# An Introduction to Studying the Bible

*A Practical Introduction on How to Study and Live By God's Word*



## **A Practical Doctrine Class for Bible Believers**

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## **An Introduction to Studying the Bible**

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Attend 80% of all classes
2. Fill-in the student notes
3. Memorize Psalm 119:1-8, word for word
4. The following typed Reports:
  - A. Two Word Studies, each one page long
  - B. Two 1-2 page summaries of two chapters of your own choice
5. Complete the Bible Reading Record, showing entire New Testament read before the Final Exam date
6. Pass the Final Exam with at least a 70% grade

### **Recommended Tools and Helps**

- Good quality, hard-backed, Notebook for Journaling and Note-taking
- Very good pencils, or mechanical pencils
- Various coloured biros/pens
- Variously coloured highlighters
- James Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
- Computer App with the Bible on it
- Good ones include:
  - E-Sword (works on PC's, Mac's, iPhones, iPads)
  - Pocket Bible
  - Webster's 1828 English Dictionary
  - Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

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## A Practical Introduction on How to Study and Live By God's Word

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* 2 Timothy 2:15

### I. Introduction

#### A. Why Study the Bible? Isn't it just for the "Theologians?"

1. There is NO other way to \_\_\_\_\_ – the Bible is food for the soul (Matthew 4:4)
2. There is no other way to \_\_\_\_\_ as a Christian (2Peter 2:2)
3. It is absolute \_\_\_\_\_ (John 17:17)
  - a. Divine revelation about things – God's revelation of things we otherwise could never know
  - b. Without any error – never been proven to contain one error about anything it talks about!
4. It is an \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. For any mere mortal to know God
  - b. To become ready with answers for the world's problems (1Pet 3:15)
5. It is \_\_\_\_\_ and compact
  - a. Just realize that the Bible is a compact Book containing ALL anyone needs to know God, and know the truth, and to learn more than anyone else ever could without it! (2Timothy 3:16,17)
  - b. ALL other forms of religion and philosophy requires countless books to be understood before their truth is grasped – but not so with the Bible!
6. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ (2Timothy 2:15)
7. It \_\_\_\_\_! The Word of God will accomplish what it promises. If God told you something will happen, and you wait, it will happen. Isaiah 55:11
8. It explains \_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrews 4:12) – better than any psychiatrist
9. It makes you \_\_\_\_\_ (Psalm 19:7)
10. It makes you \_\_\_\_\_ (Psalm 119:99)
11. And without it, the Holy Spirit cannot change you, or help you (Eph 4:17)!

#### B. Why Do We Call the Bible the Bible?

1. The word "Bible" comes from a Latin and Greek word which means "BOOKS," and that is exactly what the Bible is: A COLLECTION OF SACRED BOOKS.
2. Also, the Greek words Biblion (John 20:30; 21:25; 2 Timothy 4:13; Revelation 20:12) and Biblos (Acts 19:19; Philippians 4:3) are both translated "BOOK" or "BOOKS" (plural).]
3. God has given us a valuable and precious LIBRARY made up of 66 books and all bound in one volume! We call this library of 66 inspired books, "the Bible."

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### C. Just WHAT is the Bible? Bible Facts:

#### 1. Where the Bible Came From

- a. NOT out of the air, falling from the sky.
- b. NOT in some hole in the ground (like the book of Mormon)
- c. The human authors wrote each portion of the Bible by the "\_\_\_\_\_ of God" (2 Tim 3:16). This means God "breathed" (spoke) His very words into the human authors of the Bible as they wrote it - they were not invented by human imagination. They came directly from God (Mt 4:4)! They were actually "\_\_\_\_\_" by the Holy Ghost to speak and write what they wrote (2Pet 1:21).
- d. The Bible therefore came not by the \_\_\_\_\_ of man (2 Peter 1:21), and yet God chose to use over 40 human authors to pen the books of the Bible. So, no one just sat down and decided to write a book for the Bible. It was always directed, and controlled by God. Let's look at some of the "sub-authors" that God used to pen this Book of books:
  - 1) Deut 31:24-26 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) Luke 20:42 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) Proverbs 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) Isaiah 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) Romans 1:1,7 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6) 1 Peter 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. How SURE we are that we actually HAVE the very words of God

- a. According to Jesus Christ, "\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ shall pass away", but NOT God's word (Matthew 24:35).
- b. "*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand \_\_\_\_\_.*" (Isaiah 40:8)
- c. Over 1,000 times, the writers of Scripture actually say "*Thus saith \_\_\_\_\_*".
3. The Bible is superior to all philosophy because it was not given by man's \_\_\_\_\_ but by the teaching of the \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Corinthians 2:13).
4. The Bible is ONE Book made up of \_\_\_\_\_ separate books. In the Council of Trent (1563), the Catholic church added 7 more books called the Apocrypha, but they are not inspired like the other 66, and cause great confusion.
5. The Bible is now completed.
  - a. It was finished in about 95 AD, when the apostle John completed the book of Revelation. No one can \_\_\_\_\_ anything to it through personal revelations, visions, or prophecies, and no one can \_\_\_\_\_ from it (Rev 22:18,19) - anyone with any additional prophecies than contained in the Bible is of the devil!
  - b. The Bible is referred to as "*THAT which is perfect*" (1Cor 13:10).
6. The Bible is perfect, having no error because it is both inspired, and \_\_\_\_\_ by God (Ps 12:6,7).
  - a. God wrote the Scriptures through men (that's inspiration, 2Tim 3:16).
  - b. And then bound Himself to keep His word from error (that's preservation, Mt 24:35)!
  - c. That means God's word is still here today - it has not been lost or corrupted, or else Jesus was a liar!

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7. Overall, the Bible is divided into two main sections.
  - a. The first section is called the \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor 3:14).
  - b. The second section is called the \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor 3:6).
  - c. A "testament" is a written testimony about God's will in the form of a covenant (agreement).
8. The 39 Books of the Old Testament was written mainly in the **Hebrew** language, with a small portion written in Aramaic. The words are read from RIGHT to the LEFT.

מָזְמוֹר לְדוֹד יְהוָה רַעַי לֹא אֲחֵר : **Psa 23:1**

בְּנָאוֹת דְּשָׁא רִיבִּיצִינִי עַל־מֵי מִנְחֹות נִיחָלֶנִי : **Psa 23:2**

נֶפֶשׁ יְשׁוּבָב יְנַחַנִי בְּמַעֲנָלִי־צְדָקָה לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ : **Psa 23:3**

נִם כִּי־אַלְךְ בַּנְיא צְלָמוֹת לְאַ-אִירָא רַע כִּי־אַתָּה עַמְּדִי שְׁבָטָךְ וּמְשֻׁנְטָךְ הַמָּה יְנַחֲמֶנִי : **Psa 23:4**

תַּעֲרֵךְ לְפִנֵּי שְׁלֹחֵן נָדֵר צְדָרִי דְּשָׁנָת בְּשָׁמֶן רָאשֵׁי כּוֹסֵי רְוִיהָ : **Psa 23:5**

אָךְ טֹב וּחֲסֵד יְרַדְפָּנוּ כָּל־יְמִי חַי וּשְׁבָתִי בְּבֵית־יְהוָה לְאַרְךְ יָמִים : **Psa 23:6**

9. The 27 Books of the New Testament were written in the **Greek** language. The Greeks wrote LEFT to RIGHT like we do.

Joh 14:1 Μή ταρασσέσθω ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία· πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε.

Joh 14:2 ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρός μου μονὰς πολλαῖς εἰσιν· εἰ δὲ μή, εἰνπον ὅτι ὑμῖν· πορεύομαι ἐτοιμάσαι τόπον ὑμῖν·

Joh 14:3 καὶ ἔαν πορευθῶ καὶ ἐτοιμάσω ὑμῖν τόπον, πάλιν ἔρχομαι καὶ παραλήψομαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἐμαυτόν, ἵνα δύσι εἰμὶ ἐγώ, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἥτε.

Joh 14:4 καὶ δύσι ἐγώ ὑπάγω σὺνδατε, καὶ τὴν δόδον σύνδατε.

Joh 14:5 Λέγει αὐτῷ Θωμᾶς· Κύριε, οὐκ σύνδαμεν πού ὑπάγεις· καὶ πῶς δυνάμεθα τὴν δόδον εἰδένειν;

Joh 14:6 λέγει αὐτῷ δὲ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ δόδος καὶ ἡ ἀληθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δέ ἐμοι.

10. Is the Bible really unique and unequaled and in a category all by itself?

- a. In Romans 1:2 the Apostle Paul referred to the Bible (in this case the Old Testament) as "the \_\_\_\_\_" This is similar to what we find on the covers of most Bibles today: the HOLY BIBLE. The basic meaning of the word "HOLY" is "SET APART FROM ALL OTHER BOOKS."
- b. EXAMPLE: Suppose you had a bag filled with 100 small, ordinary, dirty stones that you found in a field or near a pond. How could you make one of those stones HOLY? They are all the same. Brownish, greyish, dirty. But, if you took one stone out of the bag, cleaned it, polished it and mounted it on a beautiful gold ring, you would have made the stone HOLY-completely set apart and different from all the other stones in the bag. It has been cleaned, and set apart from all the others simply because the new owner has given value to it and honoured it. God in His grace has done this to every person who believes on His Son. He has set us apart (sanctified us-1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11), made us SAINTS (holy ones, set apart ones-Romans 1:7; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 3:12) and made us different from those who do not know God in a personal, saving way.
- c. Likewise, the Bible is and always has been HOLY. It is completely set apart and different from all other books! It has words, and pages like all other books, but is pure, and clean, and true, and eternal. Here are some of the reasons the Bible is different and unique:

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### d. THE ONLY BOOK WHOSE ACTUAL AUTHOR IS GOD!

- 1) Apart from the Bible, can you think of any other books which have been authored by God? The Bible is the only divinely inspired book. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we learn that "*all \_\_\_\_\_ is given by \_\_\_\_\_ of God,*" Literally this means "All Scripture is GOD-BREATHED—breathed out from the mouth of God, as if God were actually speaking the very words. Whenever we speak we are breathing out words. If you do not believe this, try to say something while holding your breath! To say that all Scripture is God-breathed is the same as saying that all Scripture is the Word from the mouth of God (see Psalm 33:6 where the "*word of the LORD*" is equivalent to "*the breath of His mouth*"). God has breathed out the Scriptures, and the whole Bible is from the very mouth of God. No matter what verse you might read in the Bible, you should always realize that "*the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD hath \_\_\_\_\_ it*" (Isaiah 40:5). He's the Author! It's His Book! No other book is like it!
- 2) "I don't understand. We know that certain men wrote the Bible: Moses, David, Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, Peter, Paul and many others. If men wrote it, then how can we say it is the Word of God?" The answer is found in 2 Peter 1:21—"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God (such as Moses, David, Isaiah, and others) spoke as they were moved (carried along) by the Holy Ghost (Spirit)." In other words, the Holy Spirit moved and guided these men in such a way that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted them to write. These men were God's penmen. God was the Author, but He used these men to actually write down the words.
- 3) EXAMPLE: Suppose a father wants to leave a message for his family so that they will know what time he will return to his home. For some reason he decides to use seven different pens or markers to write his message. Even though he uses these different pens or writing instruments, it is still his message. And they still need to do what He said do.
- 4) In this very same way, God decided to use many different men to be His penmen, but what these men wrote was the very message that God wanted them to write. Their styles were very different, just as each of the writing instruments used in the above message is different. For example, the Apostle John often used very short sentences and Paul often used very long sentences, but John's short sentences and Paul's long sentences both communicated God's Word with 100 percent accuracy.
- 5) Consider David as one example of a man God used. David grew up and became a shepherd. One day as he realized the loving care and protection of the LORD, he wrote, "*The Lord is \_\_\_\_\_*" (see Psalm 23:1). God the Holy Spirit was moving David in such a way that the words that David wrote were exactly the words that God wanted him to write. Listen to what David himself said at the end of his life in 2 Samuel 23:2 "*The Spirit of the \_\_\_\_\_ spake by me, and \_\_\_\_\_ word was in my tongue.*" According to this verse, who was the One who really spoke? Whose Word was in David's tongue?

### e. THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY BOOK WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE!

- 1) Many books contain statements which are true and helpful, and there is much that we can learn and should learn from the books which men have written. The Bible, however, not only says things that are true, but the Bible is TRUTH ITSELF! The Lord Jesus Himself said, "*Thy Word is \_\_\_\_\_*" (John

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17:17). Thus, the Bible is the only book which is absolutely

### 2) INERRANT and INFALLIBLE!

- a) INERRANT means that the Bible is totally free from error of any kind. In God's holy Word there are no errors, no mistakes, no flaws, no contradictions, no discrepancies, no inconsistencies, no inaccuracies, no disagreements, no imperfections, no defects, no deceptions, no blunders, no misconceptions, no miscomputations (mistakes with numbers) and no misstatements. The Bible is absolutely "\_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_" (Psalm 119:160).
- b) INFALLIBLE means that the Bible is not liable to error (hence it is a synonym for inerrant). It is incapable of being wrong or mistaken or inaccurate or misleading. It is absolutely trustworthy and sure. The term is sometimes wrongly used of persons. Roman Catholics, for example, believe that the Pope is infallible when he makes official declarations. No Pope or Priest or Pastor or Professor is infallible, but God is infallible and thus His Word is infallible (John 10:35). People may err, but the Bible does not (Matthew 22:29).
- 3) The truthfulness of the Bible depends on the God of truth. God has an amazing reputation for truth. He has never failed to tell the truth. He cannot \_\_\_\_\_ (Titus 1:2). It is \_\_\_\_\_ for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). In the past, men who testified in court would put their hand on the Bible and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The Bible communicates the truth of God which men desperately need to understand.

### f. THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY BOOK WHICH IS LIFE-CHANGING!

- 1) If the Bible is really different and unique and if it really contains the answers to life's most basic questions, then shouldn't my life be changed as a result of believing what this Book says and by obeying what this Book commands? In Hebrews 4:12 we are told that the Word of God is
- 2) QUICK and \_\_\_\_\_. The word "quick" means "LIVING." The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are \_\_\_\_\_" (John 6:63). Peter, who was sometimes confused about spiritual things, knew one thing very well:
- 3) "*Thou hast the words of \_\_\_\_\_*" (John 6:68). In fact, the Bible is even called "*the Word of \_\_\_\_\_*" (Philippians 2:16). Has your life been changed and transformed by the living Word of the living God? If the Bible is really different, then it ought to make you different! If you have not experienced a changed and changing life, don't blame the Bible, blame yourself! If you really want God's Word to work in you, WHAT MUST YOU DO? See 1 Thessalonians 2:13.
- 4) The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.
- 5) It contains **light** to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.
- 6) It is the **traveler's map**, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good the design,

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- and the glory of God its end.
- 7) It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. So, Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a gold-mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure.
  - 8) It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.
  - 9) "Scripture does not depend for its truth upon man's belief. It is true whether he believes it or not. Blessed forever is the man who believes; doomed forever is the man who refuses to believe, but the Word of God is settled in heaven, and it is to be received on its own authority, apart from all human thoughts for or against it."
  - 10) So, Prevent TRUTH DECAY; read your Bible every day! You can't break God's promises by leaning upon them!

### E. There is more to learning the words of the Bible than just the words

- 7. There is the \_\_\_\_\_ – where they work and fit into your life
  - a. To "apply" the Bible is like a person being hungry and there is food in the fridge. Just having food in the fridge will do him no good, unless he gets up, and opens the fridge and gathers specific foods, and cooks them and then EATS them!
  - b. To apply the Bible means you take what you are learning, and you let it guide you, and teach you and feed you, and help you navigate your life moment by moment.
  - c. Most Christians only learn the words of the Bible, and some learn the truths, but few learn how to fit the Bible into their thinking and feelings! THAT is applying Scripture!
  - d. It is vital that you discover whether certain Scriptures even apply to you at all, or to someone else (1Cor 10:32).
    - 1) What portion of Scripture easily applies to you, right now, as you are? \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2) What portion of Scripture in NO WAY applies to you, and has authority over you right now (i.e., no one can point to the verses and say you need to be obeying them) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Learning to \_\_\_\_\_. This is huge!
  - a. Why does God speak to man throughout history?
  - b. So that we can know God, and learn to TRUST Him – have faith in Him!
  - c. When I trust God's words, I am learning to trust the Author who wrote them!
  - d. Example of someone leaving notes to some hikers on a mountain on how to get safely down in a snow-storm. At first, the hikers may notice the notes, but not care that they are there, that is until a snowstorm moves in. Then, the hikers start looking for the notes posted on trees and rocks. As they read and follow the directions in the notes, they start to trust the author more and more that he or she knows what they are telling them about, and has their best interests at heart, and can be completely trusted, even when the instructions don't seem to make sense. The same is so true with God's words!
- 9. Digging the depth of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the words, stories, and results of people's decisions throughout the Bible

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- a. This is where you will have the most fun
- b. It is like a scuba-diver going underwater. There is much beauty looking at the waves and water of a vast ocean. But just under the surface there is a whole new world! And the deeper and further out you go underwater, the greater the treasures you will discover.
- c. The same is so true with learning the Bible
  - 1) Beauty of surface truths. List one surface truth from John 3:16:

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  - 2) There are truths that are learned only with time
  - 3) There are truths only learned through adversities and sorrows
  - 4) There are truths only learned by obedience – AS you do what God says to do
  - 5) And there are truths only learned by the Lord speaking to you as you read (Matthew 16:17), opening your understanding (Luke 24:45).
  - 6) And there are truths you will never learn – no one can ever learn ALL the truths and wisdom contained in the pages of the Bible!

### 10. The ways that God teaches you as you grow (John 16:12)

- a. You can force yourself to learn facts and names and places and words...
- b. But growth takes place in a Christian's life as they obey what they know
- c. And the more they obey, the more they grow
- d. And the more they grow, the more the Bible's meanings develop and expand
- e. THAT'S why the Bible is never the same to a growing Christian – always different, and always better than before!

## F. Will you ever understand everything in the Bible?

- 7. No.
- 8. The smarter a person believes they are, the more foolish they become (Rom 1:22)
- 9. The smartest we can ever become, will be \_\_\_\_\_ compared to God (1Cor 1:18-25)
- 10. That's why there will **always** be some confusion, always more questions, and so many things we will have to leave to our trust in the goodness and wisdom of God!
- 11. Hence the need for faith!

## G. What is so special about the books of the Bible?

- 7. The Bible Has the Answers
  - a. There are three ultimate questions which every person needs to answer, as early as possible:
    - 1) Where did I come from? Am I an accident, a robot, a miracle, etc?
    - 2) Why am I here? What is my purpose and reason for living?
    - 3) Where am I going? Is there more than this brief life?
  - b. Only the Bible, God's Word, can answer these questions. A professor in college cannot help you answer such questions, unless he consults God's Book. A philosopher can never provide solid answers to these questions because human reasoning and human thinking and human logic are not sufficient to find answers to life's most important questions. A scientist is very limited because he was not personally present when the world began and he also has no way to tell what the

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- future holds or what lies beyond the grave. Man by himself does not have the answers to such questions, but God does.
- c. God was present when the world began and God certainly knows where man came from.
  - d. "Where wast thou (where were you) when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding" (Job 38:4). Each of us would have to answer, "Lord, I wasn't there. I have no direct knowledge of these events. In order to understand my origin, I need to listen to the God who was there in the beginning, and take Him at His Word."
8. God knows WHY we are here.
- a. God had a purpose for putting us on this earth and we will never find out the reason for our existence unless we find it out from God. God also knows where I am headed. He knows all about my future. He knows all about what lies beyond the grave. He knows all about where I will be five million years from now. If we are to find out about our destiny, we will have to find it out from God.
  - b. The answers to life's most basic questions are not a secret. They have been revealed. God has spoken. God has told us all about the past, the present, AND the future. He has told us about our origin, our purpose and our destiny. We don't need to be in the dark about these things. God has given us a unique Book which answers these questions. We simply need to believe what God has said.
  - c. So, GOAL number 1 for learning the Bible, is to know the answers to life.
9. Beware of Counterfeit Bibles and False Authorities
- a. There are real 20 euro notes, and there are counterfeit 20 euro notes. The counterfeit bills were made by dishonest men who desire to deceive people into thinking that their fake and phony notes are genuine. They want you to think that their bills are real and valuable, but in reality they are counterfeit and worthless.
  - b. In the same way, there are men and women who have written books about God that are counterfeits. These books claim to be a message from God, but they are not from God at all. These authors want to deceive people into thinking that these books are the real thing: i.e., A REVELATION FROM GOD. Many are deceived into thinking that these counterfeits are really true.
  - c. One such counterfeit is called **The Book of Mormon**, considered to be God's Word by those of the Mormon religion. Jehovah's Witnesses have distributed millions of copies of a small book entitled The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life. However, what this book tells a person to do to have eternal life contradicts what the Bible tells a person to do to have eternal life. Both books cannot be true; one must be a counterfeit. If one has the truth that leads to eternal life, then the other must have error that does not lead to eternal life. What does the Bible say a person must do to have eternal life (John 6:47)?
  - d. The counterfeit "Bible" of the Mohammedans or Muslims (the religion of Islam) is called the **Koran**. Mary Baker Eddy, who founded the Christian Science cult, wrote Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures. Keys not only open up things, they also lock up things, and sad to say, Mary Baker Eddy's book has locked up the truth and hidden it from many people. There are other books that claim to be holy books which bring God's message to man. Beware of counterfeits. Is there a



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- difference between the Bible and all these other religious books?
- e. Besides these, there are dozens and dozens of new "bibles" for sale in Christian bookstores, that are NOT God's word, but perversions, and paraphrases, but not true translations. More about this in a later session.

### H. The Absolute Truthfulness of God's Word

7. Augustine said, "I have learned to yield such absolute respect and honor to the canonical books of Scripture, that I most firmly believe that the authors thereof were completely free from any error."
8. Martin Luther, "The Scriptures have never erred. The Scriptures cannot err."
9. John Wesley, "If there be any mistakes in the Bible there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that Book it did not come from the God of truth."
10. Charles Spurgeon, "Come, search, ye critics and find a flaw; examine it from Genesis to Revelation and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold."
11. J.M. Frost (founder and first Executive Secretary of the S.S. Board of the Southern Baptist Convention), "We accept the Scriptures as an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, and insist upon the absolute inerrancy and sole authority of the Word of God; We recognize at this point no room for division, either of practice or belief, or even sentiment. More and more we must come to feel as the deepest and mightiest power of our conviction that a 'thus saith the LORD' is the end of all controversy."
12. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). The example of Jesus regarding the inerrant Scriptures has been followed by faithful men through the ages. Those who come after them must not forsake their Godly heritage. The Bible stands!
13. GOD SAID IT! I BELIEVE IT! THAT SETTLES IT!

## What Can God's Precious Word Do For Me?

*"For the word of God is quick [living], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (Hebrews 4:12).*

*"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:7-8).*

### God's Word is able to do the following:

1. It is able to make me **wise unto salvation**: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).
2. It can powerfully **work in me**: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13).
3. It is able to **nourish** me and help me to grow: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).
4. It is able to **build me up**: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32)
5. It is able to **keep me on God's path** (in God's will): "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

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- instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).
- 6. It can make me **strong**: "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14).
  - 7. It can give me **assurance**: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).
  - 8. It can **keep me from sin**: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee....Order my steps in Thy Word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me" (Psalm 119:11,133).
  - 9. It can **keep me from error**: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29).
  - 10. It is able to **warn** me: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition [warning], upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:11-12). As Bible readers and Bible believers we ought to be looking for a command to obey, a promise to believe, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, a bad example to shun, and a warning to heed.
  - 11. It is able to **protect** me: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17 and compare Matthew 4:1-12).
  - 12. It is able to **pierce my soul**: "For the word of God is quick [living], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).
  - 13. It can keep me from **fearing the future**: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet....Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:6,35).
  - 14. It is able to give me a **song** in my heart: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).
  - 15. It is able to give me **joy**: "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:8 and see Psalm 119:111).
  - 16. It can encourage me and cause me to "**keep on keeping on**": "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).
  - 17. It can **make me free**: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).
  - 18. It can make me **holy**: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17).
  - 19. It can save (**deliver**) my soul: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).
  - 20. It will **honour Jesus Christ**, the object of saving faith: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John 20:31).

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### II. What is Most Important

#### A. What Bible to Use

1. Recognizing Counterfeit Bibles - Not Everything that calls itself a Bible IS a Bible
2. Jesus said His very words would be here always (Mt 24:35). So, find them, learn them and obey them!
3. More about this later

#### B. Study takes effort and \_\_\_\_\_ (2Tim 3:14-17; John 8:31)

1. Remember taking Algebra Class?
2. It was totally unnatural to learn – but learn it we all had to!
3. And the only way was to just plough ahead, step by step

#### C. There are Many Good **Bible Study Helps and Tools**

1. English Concordance – James Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
2. Older English Dictionary – The 1828 Webster's Dictionary
3. Bible Handbook – explains Bible customs, weights, and background on people, places and cultures.
4. Bible Study Computer Programs – E-Sword
5. Bible Commentaries

#### D. \_\_\_\_\_ is More Important than just Knowing (Luke 8:15)

1. Too easy to just “learn” something in the Bible
2. You will only deceive yourself (fool yourself) if you live that way (James 1:22)
3. Live what you find God teaching you – obey what you discover God telling you to do

#### E. Give Attention to \_\_\_\_\_ (1Tim 4:13)

1. Read, and read, and read your Bible!
2. Just read, and let it do the following
  - a. Wash through you – through your thoughts and conscience (Eph 5:25,26)
  - b. Stablish – stabilize you – anchor you (Col 2:7)
  - c. Speak to you (John 8:47; 10:27)
  - d. And then finally teach you
3. "**Blessed** is he that readeth" (Revelation 1:3)

Here are some practical suggestions that might help you to get more out of your Bible Reading:

#### 4. **READ REGULARLY!**

- a. To insure good physical health we generally have three meals each day. How often do we feed on God's Word (see 1 Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12)? How often do we hear people say, "I'm so busy today that I do not have time to eat lunch and supper"?
- b. Perhaps you think you do not have time to read the Bible every day. A man once made this excuse to the great evangelist, D.L. Moody. He answered, "My friend, if you are too busy to read the Bible every day you are busier than Almighty God ever intended any human being should be, and you had better let some things go, and take time to read the Bible."

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- c. It is good to set aside a special time during the day for your reading. Many Christians find the morning to be the best time because they can start the day by hearing from God. Others read in the evenings or during some quiet time during the day (some mothers might wait until after the children have gone to school in the morning). You need to choose a time that will work best for you.
5. **READ SLOWLY!** What really counts is not how much of God's Word you go through but how much of God's Word goes through you! It is much better to read and understand one verse, than to read three chapters and not remember anything that you read in those chapters! A little read with the understanding is better than much that is read in haste. According to 1 Corinthians 14:19, Paul would probably want us to read five words with our understanding, rather than read ten thousand words so hastily that we do not get anything out of our reading! Likewise, you can get more from the Lord in five minutes spent unhurriedly than in thirty-live minutes with your eye on the clock!
6. **READ SYSTEMATICALLY!**
  - a. Many people do not know where to start reading in the Bible, so they sometimes use the "lucky dip" method. They say, "Lord, show me where you want me to read" and randomly open their Bible and start reading wherever the Bible happens to open. Sometimes the Lord will bless this method, but in general it is not the best way to read His Word.
  - b. To show you some of the dangers in the "lucky dip" method, consider the following illustration: The story is told of a man who used this method. The first verse he happened to turn to was Matthew 27:5 which says Judas "went and hanged himself." Since he was not sure how this verse applied to himself, he flipped to another passage and the Bible fell open to Luke 10:37: "Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." The man was quite upset and he did not know how he could ever obey that, so he decided to turn to one more place. Again he opened the Bible at random and to his horror his finger fell upon John 13:27: "Then said Jesus unto him. That thou doest, do quickly." As you can see, this method could easily cause a person to take verses out of context!
  - c. When we read a short story, we generally start at the beginning and read through until we get to the end. This is how the writer wrote it, and this is the best way to read it. We usually read letters in the same way. The same should be true with the books of the Bible. The best way to read is to start at the beginning of a book and continue until you get to the end. When Paul wrote the book of Romans, he did not write chapter 13 first and then chapter 8. He began with chapter 1 and then wrote chapter 2, etc. If he wrote it this way, shouldn't we read it this way?
  - d. Have you ever thought of reading the Bible all the way through? Many believers have found this to be of great blessing. To assist you in this, Bible reading schedules have been published. Most people can read the Bible through in one year if they read for about one half hour each day. The Bible reading schedule will tell you how much to read each day. See the Bible reading schedule at the end of this lesson.
7. **READ CAREFULLY!** Pay close attention to every word. Do not overlook any details. Be a good detective and see what you can discover! Sometimes we miss what God has for us because we fail to see what is right before our eyes! Also, be careful not to let your mind start to daydream. (To check this you can always ask yourself: What did I just read?)

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### 8. READ LOVINGLY!

- a. Think of a young woman in love with her fiancé who is separated from her by many miles. How do you suppose she would read his love letters? As soon as the letter arrives in the mail she would rip it open and quickly read it all the way through with great interest. Then she would read it again, this time very slowly. She would think about every word. She would lovingly meditate upon every phrase and think to herself, "I wonder why he said this?" Even after she finishes reading the letter she would remember much of what was contained in the letter and she would continue thinking about it throughout the day.
  - b. We need to read the Bible in that way! And if you think about it, is not the Bible God's love letter to us? (Read 1 John chapter 4.)
9. **READ PRAYERFULLY!** Depend upon the Holy Spirit to teach you. Make it a habit to pray before you read. Psalm 119:18 is a good example of such a prayer. Why is this important? It is the Lord that gives understanding (2 Timothy 2:7). When your time of reading is through, the real spiritual exercise has just begun. Now you need to go out and put into practice the truth that you read. J. Wilbur Chapman has given us the following suggestions for how we can get the most from the Word of God:
    10. **Study it through.** Never begin a day without mastering a verse from its pages.
    11. **Pray it in.** Never lay aside your Bible until the verse, or passage you have studied, has become a part of your being.
    12. **Write it down.** The truth that God teaches you, put in the margin of your Bible or in your notebook.
    13. **Work it out.** Live the truth you get in the morning through each hour of the day. Pass it on. Seek to tell someone else what you have learned.

May the reading of God's Holy Word be a constant source of joy and delight to your heart!

"Never let good books take the place of the Bible. Drink from the Well, not from the streams that flow from the Well" - Amy Carmichael.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

"THUS ON THY HOLY WORD,  
WE'D LIVE AND FEED AND GROW.  
GO ON TO KNOW THE LORD,  
AND PRACTICE WHAT WE KNOW!"  
"I am standing on the Word of God.  
'Tis full of life divine;

God's Spirit lives in ev'ry word And moves in ev'ry line." - E.M. Wadsworth  
Martin Luther said that he studied the Bible as he gathered apples. First, he shook the whole tree, that the ripest might fall; then he climbed the tree and shook each limb; and then when he had shaken each limb; he shook every branch. After that he examined every twig, and looked under every leaf. In other words, search the Bible as a whole, study each book, then study each chapter, study each verse, and finally study each word!

It's not how much of God's Word you go through that counts, but how much of God's Word goes through you!

### 14. Johann Bengel's 3 Rules for Bible Study:

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- a. Let the Bible be your source - not books, not great men, not public opinion, but only and alone the whole Bible.
- b. Read nothing into the Bible; this shows an unbiased and childlike way of studying Scriptures [ just let the Word say what it says].
- c. Do not ignore anything in the Bible, for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16).

F. \_\_\_\_\_ any Revealed Sin (Matt 13:20-23)

1. Sin in your heart will choke out the words you are trying to learn
2. Confess and forsake every sin that you become aware of
3. OR... you are wasting your time!

G. Leaning on the Best Teacher – the \_\_\_\_\_ (John 16:13)

1. Pray constantly for God to open your eyes and understanding to what you are reading
2. Ask Him to show you things to come
3. Ask Him to guide you through confusion
4. Ask Him for wisdom and understanding
5. Let Him teach you the way HE thinks best – often THROUGH trials and troubles instead of only by books and classes.

H. \_\_\_\_\_ Questions

1. Always go deeper
2. There are "surface truths"
3. And there are deeper, richer truths – unfathomable (Rom 11:33)
4. God gives us hard things to understand, so that we mature and grow AS we understand those deeper things (Matt 13:34,35; 1Cor 2:9,10; Prov 25:2)
5. Search for the greater truths, the wiser wisdom of God (Prov 2:1-6)
6. Let God search YOU as you study (Psalm 139:23,24; Heb 4:12)
7. So... READ INQUISITIVELY! As you read the Bible, always be asking questions such as these: Who is the author or speaker? To whom is the passage written or who is the speaker addressing? What are the main ideas? Who do the pronouns ("he" "she" "they" "it" "you" etc.) refer to? Some other key questions that will help to bring out the meaning of the passage as are follows:
  - a. Is there any command to obey?
  - b. Is there any promise to believe?
  - c. Is there a good example to follow?
  - d. Is there any sin to avoid?
  - e. Do I learn anything about God?
  - f. Do I learn anything about man?
  - g. Is there anything I can thank God for?
8. Questions such as these will help make the passage real to you. J.G. Mathieson tells of a little boy who was in the habit of attending the preaching of the Gospel every Lord's day. Being unable to attend one evening, he decided to go to his room and read his Bible. His mother was upstairs caring for the little ones and did not know what her boy was doing. However she noticed he was very quiet. Thinking perhaps he was up to some mischief, she called to him, "What are you doing?" He replied, "I am watching Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead!" He was reading from John chapter 11. He was so involved and careful with his Bible reading, it was as if he were actually there

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watching this great miracle! It was all very real to him.

### I. Be Always \_\_\_\_\_

1. Don't think you have ever "arrived" at the final absolute and exact and perfect understanding of spiritual things
2. Listen to other people's conclusions
3. The only person who ever lived who didn't need to adjust, was Jesus

## III. Learning to Walk Through the Word

### A. Things to know when you start reading a King James Bible

1. There are some older words that have important meanings to know
  - a. "Thou" and "Thee" – are words for 'you' but are spoken in a serious tone towards a single individual, see Genesis 3:9 "And the LORD God called unto Ad-am, and said unto him, Where art \_\_\_\_\_?" (Where are you?)
  - b. "Ye" – The plural word for 'YOU' as in "you all", see Matthew 3:2 "And saying, Repent \_\_\_\_: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (repent all of you...)
  - c. "Hath" and other words ending in "th" is the older way of having an 's' on the end. Just replace the 'th' with an 's' and it will be the same as today!
    - 1) See Proverbs 28:13 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"
    - 2) It is the same as "He that COVERS his sins shall not prosper: but whoso CONFESSES and FORSAKES them shall have mercy."
2. Other words that you are unfamiliar with, like Propitiation, Salvation, Justification, etc., should be looked up in a Dictionary, so that you don't miss what God is saying in any Scripture.
  - a. Look up the word "wot" and "wit" \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Look up the word "churlish" \_\_\_\_\_
3. Psalm 119:140 says, "*Thy word is very \_\_\_\_\_: therefore thy servant loveth it.*"

### B. Marking Your Bible – reflecting your journey/walk

1. Using a pen or pencil
2. Coloured Highlighters
3. Coloured pens
4. What your Bible will end up looking like →→
5. What your Bible ends up looking like will determine what your LIFE will end up looking like!
6. Let's experiment with Marking Your Bible
  - a. Underlining important words
  - b. Circling special words
  - c. Boxing an entire verse
  - d. Stars, arrows, side-bars
  - e. Highlighting a verse



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7. Just be careful not to over do it
8. But then again, who cares... it is YOUR expression of awe at what you are finding, and what you want to remember!

### C. Writing Chapter Summaries

1. Reading the Bible often means reading several chapters at a time.
2. After you finish reading each chapter of a Book of the Bible, stop and think about what you read, and then, in a notebook that purchased specifically for Summaries, write a 1 or two paragraph summary of what was taught, done, learned from that chapter.
3. Questions for Study of Bible Chapters:
  - a. What is the main subject of this chapter?
  - b. What is the main thing I should learn from this chapter?
  - c. Who are the principal persons in this chapter?
  - d. Where is this chapter taking place?
  - e. When is it occurring?
  - f. What does the chapter teach concerning Jesus Christ?
  - g. Is there, in this chapter, any example for me to follow? Something I should now be doing?
  - h. Is there in this chapter, any error or sin for me to avoid?
  - i. Is there, in this chapter, any duty for me to perform?
  - j. Is there, in this chapter, any promise for me to claim?
  - k. Is there, in this chapter, any prayer for me to echo?
4. As an example, look at Psalm 23
5. Read all six verses, twice
6. In the space below, summarize what David was saying. Get right to the point, with no fluff. Try and say using as few words as possible what David wants the reader (you and me) to understand from this Psalm:

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7. Now read Matthew chapter 2 and do the same in the space below:

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### D. Memorize, and Meditate on Scripture (Joshua 1:8)

1. Scripture Memorization – the storing away in our hearts and minds the words of God so that we can meditate on them for strength, wisdom, direction, and comfort.
2. Scripture Meditation – the thinking-through the meaning of every word of a Scripture so that we understand it, and so that we can obey it. It simply is you focusing on what God is saying one word at a time, asking yourself what it is saying to YOU, and how to obey it. Think about the words of a verse throughout your day, allowing it to be opened up by the teaching power of the \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ (John 16:13). You will never be able to meditate on the words of Scripture unless you have memorized it. God calls it “hiding it away in our heart”
3. Memorize and Meditate on one verse at a time
4. Some people go on to memorize Larger portions of Scripture
5. Even Entire chapters (Psalm 19, 1Corinthians 13, etc).

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### E. Searching the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11)

1. How to search the contents of the Bible and find actual answers to questions and issues you are facing
  - a. Decide the word you want to better understand
  - b. Use 'heart' as an example
  - c. You will discover it occurs 875 times in the Bible!
  - d. It will be very hard to look up and read every verse where heart is mentioned
  - e. Start in some of the key places, and look up heart in them
  - f. Like in Genesis, Psalms, Matthew, John and Romans
  - g. Write out each verse reference, and what you discover about the word heart from that Scripture
  - h. By the end, you will have a much better understanding of what God means, when he refers to our hearts!
2. In the mouth of two or three witnesses (2Cor 13:1)
  - a. Make sure your conclusions are based on several Scriptures saying the same thing
  - b. Just having a word appear in one verse only one way should be avoided
  - c. Let the Bible speak clearly before you make a decision clearly
3. Make conclusions, decisions, judgments
  - a. But, make sure they are "testable" conclusions – more about this later
  - b. Do not become arrogant and proud of your knowledge that you are gathering!
  - c. Stay teachable
  - d. Use discernment (see later notes)

### F. Next... How to Do a Word Study

1. Tools Needed
2. Methods
3. Recommended words to study and learn well

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### Word Studies

#### I. The Importance of Word Studies.

- A. See Matthew 4:4; 24:35; 1 Tim. 6:3; Rev. 22:18-19. Every word that proceeded from the mouth of God is of utmost importance! So, learn what each and every word means!
- B. Consider such important words as FAITH, GRACE, JUSTIFY, LOVE, REDEEM, SANCTIFY, GOSPEL, CONFESS, HOLINESS, etc. We need to understand how God defines these crucial terms.
- C. Doing a word study is a helpful Bible study practice; however, it involves more than just looking up all the verses where a word is used in the Bible.
- D. It involves discovering which meaning is being used in a given context. People sometimes make the mistake of thinking that a word has the same meaning in every instance. Consider, for example, the Jehovah's Witnesses explanation of the meaning of "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15:
  - 1. In what sense is Jesus Christ the "firstborn of every creature"?
  - 2. Does it mean:
    - a. That He is created?
    - b. That He is the first created, amongst all creation?
  - 3. According to the customary meaning of "firstborn," it would seem to mean that Jesus is the eldest in Jehovah's family of sons
  - 4. How could you validate THAT meaning, or discover the actual meaning of "firstborn"?
  - 5. That's what we are going to learn!
- E. Doing a word study also involves considering the word in its original language. You may not have any formal training in the biblical languages (like Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic), but you can still study some things about the original biblical words. Anyone who has access to some basic reference materials can do this.
- F. Your Goal: To determine the meaning of a word within its biblical context.
- G. Two Important Guidelines:
  - 1. Word studies must always be based not merely on your own understanding of the English text, but on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the words in English and in their original language.
  - 2. Ultimately, the \_\_\_\_\_ must determine the precise meaning of the word under consideration. So these word studies can only take the student "so far" – you will have to look at the meanings of the words surrounding the words you are studying.
  - 3. In other words, good communication only occurs when both parties actually understand what each other are saying – no guessing, and no misunderstandings.

#### II. Some Helpful Study Tools:

- A. An Exhaustive concordance of the words of the Bible
- B. An 1828 Dictionary of the English Language (Webster's)
- C. Vine's Expository Dictionary (Vine)
- D. New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Colin Brown)
- E. Word Studies in the New Testament (Vincent)
- F. New Testament for English Readers (Alford)
- G. Various topical indexes (Nave's)

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### H. Various commentaries

## III. The Eight Steps Of A Word Study.

- A. After you have identified the word that you want to study
- B. Title your Study Note with this word as its Heading
- C. Include the location of the Scripture in which this word appears
- D. The word we will study here is firstborn.

### E. Step One: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Ask questions like, Why is this word important? Is it a key word in the passage?
  2. Jehovah's Witnesses use this word to argue that Jesus is not God, but is part of creation—literally the first (oldest) of Jehovah's created sons.
  3. Answer this... Why is this word (firstborn) important to understand? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### F. Step Two: LOOK UP IN \_\_\_\_\_

1. Look up the possible meanings of the word in the 1828 Dictionary – there may be many. Include any obscure meanings, or older meanings
2. Write them down
3. Circle the probable meanings of the word that jump out at you so far – this is not the end, but only the beginning of your study, but you are learning to start noticing things

### G. Step Three: OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ THAT USE THE SAME WORD

1. Look up the English word in *The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.
2. Take note of other Scriptures in both the Old Testament and New Testament that use the same word (sometimes a word is only used in the Old or the New Testament)
3. Determine whether this is a common word used often, or rarely. The rarer the word, sometimes, the harder to define.
4. Choose several of those other Scriptures and write them out to help broaden your understanding of how the word was used throughout Scripture
5. Circle the Scriptures that help you understand the word better so far, just by looking at the various contexts that you find the word used in.

### H. Step Four: LOCATE ITS HEBREW / GREEK MEANING

1. *Strong's* lists each English word used in the Bible and every verse in which it appears.
2. Next to each verse listed is a number. *Strong's* assigns a number to the main form of each original word in the Bible, and many Bible reference materials use *Strong's* numbers to help identify words.
3. *Strong's* number for firstborn in Colossians 1:15 is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Next, turn to the Greek dictionary in the back of *Strong's* and find the entry with that number.
5. If the word you are studying is an Old Testament word you will use the Hebrew/Chaldea Dictionary (containing numbers 1 through 8674). If you are studying a word in the New Testament you will use the Greek Dictionary (containing numbers 1 through 5624). The Hebrew Dictionary is located before the Greek

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- Dictionary in the back of Strong's Concordance.
6. The numbered entry will tell you the LEXICAL FORM of the Greek word in that verse. The lexical form is the main form of the word, the form that is found in a Greek lexicon (dictionary).
  7. *Strong's* number 4416 points to the Greek word \_\_\_\_\_.
  8. Besides the LEXICAL FORM of a word, there is the TEXTUAL FORM of the word - how the word appears in a particular verse because it may differ from the lexical form. A word may have several variations (called inflections) depending on how it is being used in a sentence. In English, for example, the words *talked*, *talking*, and *talker* are inflections of the word \_\_\_\_\_.

### I. Step Five: \_\_\_\_\_ THE STRONG'S CONCORDANCE MEANING

1. After you find your number, examine the five pieces of information to the right of the number you have selected:
  - a. The Hebrew/Greek word in original letters
  - b. The Hebrew/Greek word transliterated into English letters
  - c. The pronunciation of the Hebrew/Greek word
  - d. The definition of the word (along with derivatives and root forms)
  - e. A complete list of ways the Hebrew/Greek word is translated in the King James Bible (listed in alphabetical order after the “:-” symbol).
2. Write down *Strong's* definition of the original Hebrew/Greek word you are studying (see d. above).
3. Take time to examine any other numbers that are listed in *Strong's* definition.
4. The italicized portion of the definition is the primary definition of the word; the other words in regular type are used to explain the primary definition. (Abbreviated words within the definition are explained at the beginning of the dictionary.)
5. Using the “rule of three,” compare *Strong's* definition with the definitions found in two other books that use the same *Strong's* numbering system.

### J. Step Six: HOW ELSE THE WORD WAS TRANSLATED

1. Write down the different English words used to translate the original Hebrew/Greek word (see Step 5.e. above).
2. Go back into the concordance and locate each word and the number you have been using.
3. Write down the passages where these words are used, and you will have a list of all the places where this original Hebrew/Greek word is used in the Bible.
4. Examining each passage will give you parallel passages and will help you understand how this word is used and what it means.

### K. Step Seven: GREEK / HEBREW DICTIONARY MEANING

1. Look up the word in a proper Greek dictionary and discover its range of meaning.
2. The standard dictionary for the Greek New Testament is A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Walter Bauer.
3. Our word, prototokos, can be found in the third edition of Bauer's dictionary on page 894.

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4. Jehovah's Witnesses claim that this word can mean only that Jesus "is the eldest in Jehovah's family of sons."
5. Bauer's dictionary, however, indicates that prototokos has two broad ranges of meaning:
  - a. Literally pertaining to birth order;
  - b. And pertaining to having the special status associated with a firstborn, even if one is not literally the firstborn.
6. The word, therefore, does not always have the literal meaning that the Jehovah's Witnesses insist it has.

## L. Step Eight: \_\_\_\_\_ DEFINITIONS

1. Compare the 1828 Dictionary meaning of the English word in your Bible with the original definition of the Hebrew/Greek word and make sure you understand how they are similar and how they are different.
2. You will usually select a meaning for the English word in your Bible that best matches the definition of the original Hebrew/Greek word.

## M. Further Steps:

1. Cross-Referencing
2. Bible Commentary Explanations
3. Using an Interlinear New Testament to find the TEXTUAL FORM of the word you are looking up
  - a. It will show the Greek text of the New Testament with an English translation below it.
  - b. Find the verse and the particular English word (or phrase) you are studying, then look at the Greek word above it. Look closely at the letters in the Greek word, even if you don't know what they are, so that you can visually identify that word in Step Four.
  - c. In Colossians 1:15, above the English word firstborn is the Greek word prototokos. This is the textual form, which happens to be the same as the lexical form.
  - d. Identify the parsing information for the textual form of the word. The parsing information explains how a word is functioning grammatically in a sentence, such as whether it is a noun or a verb, singular or plural.
  - e. A good tool to help you discover this information is The Analytical Lexicon by William D. Mounce.
  - f. This is a special dictionary that lists the parsing information for each textual form found in the New Testament. Mounce numbers the words according to a different system than Strong's, but includes an appendix that cross-references the two numbering systems.
  - g. To find a word, first look in the appendix and find the Strong's number that you identified in Step Four.
  - h. Next to Strong's number will be the corresponding number that Mounce uses. Turn to the lexicon section and find that number next to one of the main entry words in bold (it is the first number inside the brackets). The word in bold is the lexical form and under it is all its variations. Visually identify which one of these

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- forms matches the textual form you found in Step Five. The textual form of our word in Colossians 1:15, again, is the same as the lexical form: prototokos.
- i. Finally, look next to the form you have identified to find its parsing information. Our word prototokos is a nominative, singular, masculine adjective. A nominative adjective modifies a certain type of noun or pronoun. In this instance, the adjective prototokos is attributing a quality to the subject, which is "He" (Jesus). It is saying that He is prototokos (firstborn).

## IV. Another Example

- A. Example: The English word "*perish*" in John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
- B. Define the English word using an English dictionary
  1. Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines it as:
    - a. To die; to lose life in any manner; applied to animals. Men perish by disease or decay, by the sword, by drowning, by hunger or famine, &c.
    - b. To die; to wither and decay; applied to plants.
    - c. To waste away; as, a leg or an arm has perished.
    - d. To be in a state of decay or passing away.
    - e. Duration, and time which is part of it, is the idea we have of perishing distance.
    - f. To be destroyed; to come to nothing.
    - g. Perish the lore that deadens young desire.
    - h. To fail entirely or to be extirpated. 2 Ki 9.
    - i. To be burst or ruined; as, the bottles shall perish. Luke 5
    - j. To be wasted or rendered useless. Jer 9.
    - k. To be injured or tormented. 1 Cor 8.
    - l. To be lost eternally; to be sentenced to endless misery. 2 Pet 2.
  2. Webster's New World Dictionary (1988) defines perish as:
    - a. "to be destroyed, ruined, or wiped out"
    - b. "to die; esp., to die a violent or untimely death."
  3. Note: We're not actually defining the Greek word at this point, but merely gaining insight into its English equivalent(s).
- C. Using an Exhaustive Concordance, locate any other passages in which the English word (perish) is used by the same Bible writer (John).
  1. The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance shows that perish appears again (in the KJV text) in:
    - a. John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.
    - b. John 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.
    - c. Those additional texts may shed more light on our word's meaning. In some cases

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we'll have many additional verses; sometimes we'll have none. But at this stage of our research, it's best to study perish only in John's writings, even though perish is used by other writers. Other writers may use it in a way that has no direct bearing on John 3:16, but normally a writer will use the same word in the same way in the same book.

2. Also, if we're researching a common word, the task of tracing it throughout the entire Bible could be overwhelming and yield little fruit for our efforts. In our next step, when we're researching the actual Greek word, then it may be productive to trace it more extensively.

### D. Define the word in its original language

1. Use a lexicon or other reference source to find the root meaning of our word. A lexicon is a dictionary of the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek). Most exhaustive concordances contain lexicons.
2. For example: The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance tells us that "perish" in John 3:16 is translated from the Greek word apollumi. The Greek Dictionary section of the same concordance adds that apollumi is a combination of the Greek preposition apo, and the Greek verb ollumi, that means "to destroy." The preposition intensifies the verb action, therefore together they convey the idea of utter destruction.
3. In the King James New Testament, appollumi is translated
  - a. perish, 25 times
  - b. destroy, 19
  - c. lose, 17
  - d. lost, 13
  - e. destroyed, 7
  - f. perished, 5
  - g. perisheth, 3
  - h. die, 1
  - i. loseth, 1
  - j. marred, 1
4. Other tools, such as Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, will give us additional information to help understand the definition of our word.
5. When we've completed this step, we'll have a lexical (generic) definition. A Bible writer may use a word in its strict lexical sense, but the context in which the word is used must be the final determiner of its precise meaning. It's a mistake to impose a lexical definition on to a word each time it appears in Scripture.
6. You also can TRACE the origin of the word
  - a. We can use other study tools like Colin Brown to trace the historical development (etymology) of our word, paying particular attention to any information that directly relates to our passage.
7. Consult commentaries for any additional light they may shed on the passage
  - a. Commentaries can be wonderful aids to study, and can help confirm our findings.

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But the joy of discovery is enhanced when we derive a word's definition ourselves rather than relying solely on commentaries. Sometimes we may discover that a commentary writer has been unduly influenced by his or her theology, or simply hasn't research the word thoroughly.

### V. Word Usage Changes With Time.

- A. Word usage is not constant through time. Changes in meaning often occur. Language is in a state of constant flux as long as the language is living (still being used). Dead languages (such as Latin) never change!
- B. Example:
  1. The King James Bible was published in 1611. Since that time many English words that were then used have changed their meaning and may not be used very often. Some of these obsolete words are as follows:
    - a. "wot" (Romans 11:2) means to know or understand
    - b. "let" (2 Thessalonians 2:7) means to maintain control
    - c. "Ghost" (Matthew 28:19) is the spirit of someone
    - d. "every whit" (John 13:10) means every part, or completely
    - e. "agone" (1Sam 30:13) means \_\_\_\_\_
    - f. "armhole" is used for "armpit" (Ezekiel 13:18)
    - g. "besom" is the word for \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 14:23)
    - h. "choler" means \_\_\_\_\_ (Daniel 8:7)
  2. Can you think of others?

### VI. The Same Word Cans Be Used In A Variety of Ways.

- A. Consider the word 'up'. It is easy to understand up toward the sky or toward the top of a list. But when we waken, why do we wake up? At a meeting, why does a topic come up, why do participants speak up, and why are officers up for election? Any why is it up to the secretary to write up a report?
- B. Often the little word isn't needed, but we use it anyway. We brighten up a room, light up a cigar, polish up the silver, lock up the house, and fix up the old car. At other times, it has special meanings. People stir up trouble, line up for tickets, work up an appetite, think up excuses, get tied up in traffic. To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed up is special. It may be confusing, but a drain must be opened up because it is stopped up. We open up a store in the morning and close it up at night. We seem to be mixed up about up.
- C. To be up on the proper use of up look up the word in your dictionary. In one desk-size dictionary up takes up half a page, and listed definitions add up to about 40. If you are up to it, you might try building up a list of the many ways in which up is used.. It will take up a lot of your time but, if you don't give up, you may wind up with a thousand.

### VII. Example of a Word Study: "Fellowship"

- A. Under "fellowship" we find one main word-group, \_\_\_\_\_ (abstract noun), koinonos (concrete noun= 'sharer'), koinoneo (verb).
- B. An index of Greek words shows that koinonia is variously translated as

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1. 'communication' (used once),
  2. 'communion' (4 times),
  3. 'contribution' (used once),
  4. 'distribution' (used once),
  5. 'fellowship'(12 times).
- C. koinonos and koinoneo yield a similar range of translations, though 'partaker' and 'partner' occur as noteworthy additions.
- D. To be comprehensive, each of the terms in the koinonia group should be searched under the English equivalents listed. However, restricting this to 'fellowship', 'communion', 'partaker', and 'partner' is likely to save time and produce more relevant results.
- E. From this it emerges that koinonia is not primarily something that you do but rather signifies a state of affairs understood by the word 'partnership'. **It means sharing, belonging together, togetherness.** Those who have become God's people by faith are joined at the deepest level. They have koinonia with Christ and with God.
- F. In the context of the NT, koinonia can be a matter of money. Christians are intended to share not only in spirit but in kind. In the New Testament, 10 out of 45 occurrences of the word refer to this material aspect of sharing; and 5 others make it likely that it was being referred to.