

## How to study the Bible:

- 1) Prepare to study:
  - a. Schedule your Bible study time
  - b. Get the right tools (Bible, computer, notebook, Reference books, etc.)
  - c. Prepare your heart by praying to God for the right attitude and the Holy Spirit to help you understand
- 2) Read the passage carefully & ask broad context questions
  - a. Who wrote this? When? For whom? Why?
  - b. What format/genre is this passage? (ex: poem? Song? Letter? History?)
  - c. What historical background do I need to know? (ex: Wedding customs, traditions, cultural meaning, etc.)
  - d. What is the literary context? (i.e.: What is the author writing about right before and after?)
- 3) Use good tools to answer these questions
  - a. A good study Bible
  - b. Bible dictionary
  - c. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/study>
  - d. Bible commentaries (I personally recommend the NIV Application Commentary - worth the investment)
- 4) Re-read the passage & ask specific questions (tips on how to find the answers in parenthesis)
  - a. How does God interact with each of the characters? (read the story from each point of view)
  - b. Feel the story from each person's perspective (imagine the sounds, smells, sights, touch, taste)
  - c. Is there anything in the passage that is unusual or interesting? (pay attention to what is said as well as what is *not* said that you'd normally expect - look at each word carefully; read the verse several times & emphasise a different word each time you read it )
  - d. Is there any other story in the Bible that reminds me of this passage? (look for repeated words or phrases, themes, motifs, plots, characters, etc. and then compare & contrast)
- 5) Use good tools to find additional insights:
  - [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) (you can search how the word is used elsewhere in the Bible)
  - [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) (for meaning of words, customs, phrases)
  - Bible Commentaries
- 6) Get the main idea/principle
  - a. What does this passage tell me about God?
  - b. What does this passage tell me about humans and God?
  - c. What does this passage tell me about ME and God?
- 7) Apply it to your life
  - a. Ask, "How can I apply this idea to my life TODAY?"
  - b. Make sure the application is personal, achievable, & measurable.
  - c. Journal and reflect throughout the day - come back to it and see if you achieved it.
- 8) Pray & praise
  - a. Pray & thank God for what He has done for you through your study
  - b. Ask for His continued help in obeying what He has revealed
  - c. Ask for His help remembering it in times of need
  - d. Ask for an opportunity to share with someone else

- 9) Share with someone else
  - a. Share with your accountability partner
  - b. Share with someone who has the same need you had

Claim These Promises in Prayer:

- God's Word gives us life & salvation
  - o Philippians 2:16
  - o 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- God's Word produces growth.
  - o Isaiah 55:10,11
  - o 1 Peter 2:2
- God's Word sanctifies us.
  - o John 17:7
  - o Jeremiah 23:29
- God's Word gives us wisdom.
  - o Psalm 119:98
- God's Word shows us the way
  - o Psalm 119:105
- God's Word helps us resist temptation
  - o Psalm 119:9,10
- God's Word brings health & healing
  - o Proverbs 4:20-22

In a passage, try also looking for ESCAPE:

- Example to follow
- Sin to avoid
- Command to keep
- Advice to heed
- Promise to claim
- Expression to have

Miscellaneous Tips:

- If you're starting out for the first time, start in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John)
- It's ok to SKIP certain books & chapters - but make sure you come back some day!
- It's OK not to read in chronological order! (the Bible is actually not in chronological order)
- It's OK to read just a short passage - and you can read the same story over and over again for a week! (it's not a race to see how fast you can read - it's to see how deep you can go; but it is good to have read the whole Bible at least once so you know the Big Picture)
- The more research you do, the deeper you go, the more you pay attention, the MORE TREASURE you will find (archeological excavations aren't found by accident) - it's important to know the TIME/PLACE to understand the treasure you find.
- Ways to study: by themes, biographies, topical, word studies