

How to Study a Passage or Verse of the Bible:

There is nothing more important than the study of God's Word. As Jesus says, "Sanctify them in the truth. Your Word is truth." (John 17:17) Paul adds that we must "work hard to present ourselves as those approved by God as workers who do not need to be ashamed because we accurately handle the Word of truth." (2Timothy 2:15) Here is how to do a personal Bible study:

1. *Keep your Bible and concordance in an easily accessible place.* The more accessible they are, the more likely you are to use them.
2. *Find a quiet place where you can work. Have a pen, paper (or computer), Bible, and concordance at hand. Pray, committing the time and study to God.* Ask God for His wisdom, guidance, and direction. Maintain a prayerful attitude throughout – praying, talking to Him, talking with Him, listening for Him, etc.
3. *Write down your text at the top of the page and refer back to it as you study. Carefully and attentively read your text and the surrounding passage (i.e. context) several times.* A biblical text needs to be read over and over again. Try to understand how your text relates to the surrounding passage (context).
4. *Think/meditate on your text* (always in the context of the surrounding passage). *Write down ALL your thoughts and questions*, even if

you think they might not be relevant. You do not know what thoughts you might find helpful later on in your study. You will have to carefully think through your text. Ask yourself:

- What is being said?
 - What is meant?
 - What is the context of your text?
 - What comes before and after your text?
 - Are there any illustrations, images, or symbols being used? If so, think of everything you know about that illustration, image, or symbol and how it can relate to the way it is being used in your text.
5. *Use a Bible with cross references. Check every relevant cross reference* connected to your text. Have you found an OT cross reference that helps explain your NT text, or a NT cross reference that helps explain your OT text?
 6. *Notice the key words in your text.* Look up each word in Strong's concordance in order to find *the Greek or Hebrew reference number of the word.* Look up this number in the back of the concordance to find the meaning of the word in its original Greek or Hebrew. Strong's will tell you if the original word is derived from another word (and if so which word), and the English words that have been used in the Bible to translate the original Greek or Hebrew word.
 7. *Find where else in the Bible each original (key) Greek or Hebrew word is used.* Do this as follows:

- a. Look up in Strong's concordance each of the English words that have been used to translate the original word.
 - b. Under the English word in the main body of the concordance is a list of the Bible verses that contain that English word. Go down the list and identify those verses having the same reference number as the original word you are investigating. This indicates that it is the same original word that is being used and not another.
 - c. Keeping in mind your text (which you have written at the top of your page), skip the verses that do not apply, and look up in your Bible all the other verses. Record these verses. Look at the context in which *these verses* are being used. Write down what they mean and how they connect with your text.
8. *Notice the illustrations, images, or symbols being used in your text.* Choose one or two key words from the illustration, image, or symbol. Use these words, variations of these words (e.g. sun, sunshine, sunny), and your concordance to find out where else in the Bible such an illustration, image, or symbol is used, and how it is used.
 9. *WRITE everything down.* WRITE down all your thoughts and observations after each verse related to the original word. At the end of *all* the verses related to that word, write down a summary of your results. *TAKE YOUR TIME.* There is no reason to rush through the study of God's Word.

10. Review your study. Summarize your observations. Write down your conclusions. Do not read in ideas that are *not* in your text. Do not ignore ideas that *are* in your text. Focus only on what is actually *in* your text. *Finish this part of your study by writing a brief summary theme of your text. Close in prayer.*

Application: *Think of what you have learned and how it applies to your life TODAY, right NOW, and how it is relevant. God's Word is relevant. Reflect on what you have learned and how it relates to your life as you go about your day and your other responsibilities. Put the fruit of your study into action TODAY. Remember: TODAY is your life... make it count!*

Well done! You have just completed a study of God's Word! Be blessed, edified, encouraged, strengthened, and changed!



Note 1: You can also do a similar study with a theme or a topic in the Bible.

Note 2: You do not necessarily have to complete your study in one sitting. At a point of closure, temporarily end your study, and think about it as you go about your other responsibilities. MAKE SURE you return and continue your study until it is completed.

Note 3: In addition to studying the Bible as it has been outlined in the above 10 points, every day read some other portion of the Bible. At these times as well, you should be training yourself to think about the text you are reading. Consider how these texts as well as your study text applies to your life. It is important to come to see that all reading of the Scriptures necessitates some level of thought and meditation, even if you are not doing a 10 point Bible study. Spend time in prayer regarding your understanding and application of your text.

Note 4: Our Bible study is personal and private. It will be unseen and unknown by other people. God knows. God sees. God blesses. Our time and effort spent on personal Bible study will never be wasted. Our life *will* change. Whatever else may be, people will see that change. They will also be recipients of blessings that impact them from our changed life. This is biblical discipleship. It comes from living out the results of our biblical study day by day, and encouraging and instructing others in such study and such life.

Note 5: Studying takes time. It is not easy. 2Timothy 2:15 calls us to the "hard work" of Bible study. However, the only way we will change is by studying the Bible and applying it to our life. Remember: Anything that is worth doing takes time, diligence, and hard work. If we hope to experience growth, we must be engaged in in-depth personal Bible study. Let us not wait until we have some "extra time." We need to take the time. We need to make the time. We need to determine to spend our time in this way. It is

worth putting our time and effort into in-depth personal Bible study. Remember: This is God's Word. This is His instruction manual. This is His battle plan. This is His Word of comfort. This is His Word of encouragement. This is His directive for our life to be blessed and become more and more like Jesus. Doing in-depth personal Bible study is worth everything it takes, and more!

Let our motto be: ***"for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus!"*** (Revelation 1:2)

For a free download of good Bible software containing various Bible translations, Strong's reference numbers and concordance, etc.: www.e-sword.net

A website containing good (but non-downloadable) lexical materials, as well as excellent and useful Bible study tools: www.blueletterbible.org