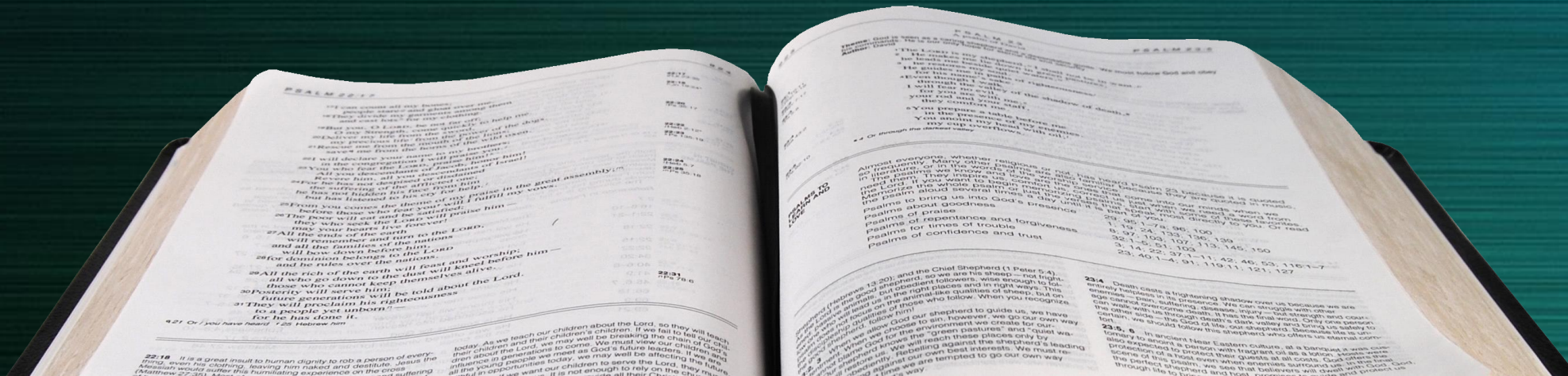


Basic Bible Study

Thirteen Practical Steps – Part Three



“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.
They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward.”

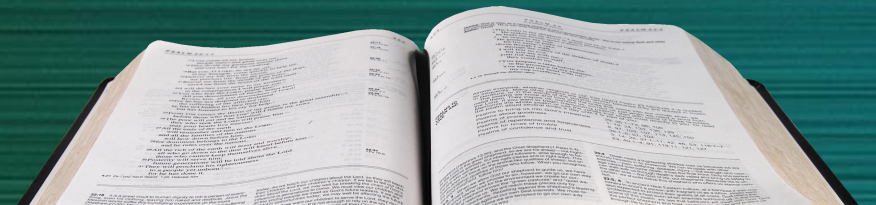
—Psalm 19:7–11

1. Acknowledge your need for truth.
2. Pray for divine assistance.
3. Choose the right translation.
4. Read the whole book.

Basic Bible Study, Pt 1

Steps 1–4

REVIEW



5. Consider the book's background.

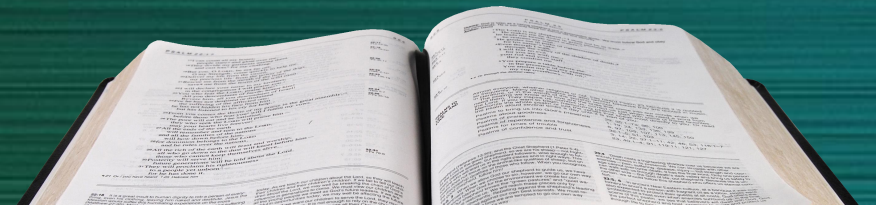
6. Identify the book's structure.

7. Study according to paragraphs.

Basic Bible Study, Pt 2

Steps 5–7

REVIEW



8. Compare good translations.

PRINCIPLE: The faithful study of Scripture benefits from the comparison of reliable translations.

The screenshot displays a digital Bible interface with two columns. The left column is titled 'English Standard Version' and the right column is titled 'New American Standard Bible'. Both columns show the text of John 1:1-4. The text in the English Standard Version is: '1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us-- 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.' The text in the New American Standard Bible is: '1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life - 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.'

- Comparing several good translations is especially helpful for those who cannot study the text in its original language.
- Finding differences piques interest and highlights areas for further investigation.

Comparing Translations – Romans 8:26

New American Standard	English Standard Version	Christian Standard Bible
In the same way the Spirit <u>also helps</u> our weakness; for we do not know <u>how</u> to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for <i>us</i> with groanings <u>too deep for words</u> ;	Likewise the Spirit <u>helps</u> us in our weakness. For we do not know <u>what</u> to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings <u>too deep for words</u> .	In the same way the Spirit <u>also joins to help</u> in our weakness, because we do not know <u>what</u> to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with <u>unspoken</u> groanings.

- “also helps” (NASB) vs. “helps” (ESV) vs. “also joins to help” (CSB)
- “how” (NASB) vs. “what” (ESV, CSB)
- “too deep for words” (NASB, ESV) vs. “unspoken” (CSB)

9. Ask the right questions.

PRINCIPLE: The faithful study of Scripture asks good questions—not with predetermined answers but with a sincere hunger for truth.



- The quality of Bible study often comes down to the quality of the questions asked.
- Nothing should be taken for granted; no detail should be assumed inconsequential.

“I Keep Six Honest Serving Men . . .” —Rudyard Kipling

I keep six honest serving-men
 (They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.

I send them over land and sea,
 I send them east and west;
But after they have worked for me,
 I give them all a rest.

I let them rest from nine till five,
 For I am busy then,
As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,
 For they are hungry men.

But different folk have different views;
 I know a person small—
She keeps ten million serving-men,
 Who get no rest at all!

She sends’em abroad on her own affairs,
 From the second she opens her eyes—
One million Hows, two million Wheres,
 And seven million Whys!

- Write the paragraph out on paper to allow for marking up the text and adding notes.
- Devise a system for marking the same kinds of details (main verbs, prepositional phrases, pronouns, etc.).
- Capture your key questions and observations.
- Do whatever it takes to increase inquisitiveness and resist the illusion of mastery.

- A “Journaling” Bible can be very helpful.
- Large margins provide space to record observations or questions.



- A "Loose Leaf Bible" provides even more space for note-taking.

the great deeds God has done" 2:12 All were astounded (and greatly confused) saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 2:13 But others (jeered at the speakers, saying, "They are drunk on new wine!"

Peter's Address on the Day of Pentecost

2:14 But Peter stood up with the eleven, raised his voice, and addressed them: "You men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, know this and listen carefully to what I say 2:15 In spite of what you think, these men are not drunk, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 2:16 But this is what was spoken about through the prophet Joel:

2:17 "And in the last days it will be," God says,

"that I will pour out my Spirit on all people, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 2:19 And I will perform wonders in the sky above, and miraculous signs on the earth below. Mood and dream and clouds of smoke. 2:20 The sun will be changed to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. 2:21 And then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

2:22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man clearly attested to you by God with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs, that God performed among you through him, just as you yourselves know. 2:23 This man, who was handed over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you executed by nailing him to a cross at the hands of Gentiles. 2:24 But God raised him up, having released him from the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held in its power. 2:25 For David says about him,

"I saw the Lord always in front of me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken. 2:26 Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced; my body also will live in hope, 2:27 because you will not leave my soul in Hades, nor permit your Holy One to experience decay. 2:28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of joy with your presence."

Characteristics:

- common consent
- devoted
- glad
- humble
- reverent awe
- prayerful

what they did:

- father in the temple
- learned from the apostles
- fellowship
- ate together, Eucharist
- prayed.

- held things in common
- shared
- praised God
- enjoyed the goodwill of all
- the Lord added to their number.

the Lord offers to imitate faith in each scene of life - so that each matters equally in eternity... not matter how insignificant they seem... Bible hits, puts

ACTS 3:1

Peter and John Heal a Lame Man at the Temple

3:1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time for prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 3:2 And a man lame from birth was being carried up, who was placed at the temple gate called "The Beautiful Gate" every day so he could beg for money from those going into the temple courts. 3:3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple courts, he asked them for money. 3:4 Peter looked directly at him (as did John) and said, "Look at us!" 3:5 So the lame man (and attention to them, expecting to receive something from them, Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, stand up and walk!" 3:7 (Then Peter took hold of him by the right hand and raised him up, and at once the man's feet and ankles were made strong. 3:8 He jumped up, stood and began walking around, and he entered the temple courts with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 3:9 All the people saw him walking and praising God. 3:10 And they asked for donations at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with astonishment and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Addresses the Crowd

3:11 While the man was hanging on to Peter and John, all the people, (astounded), ran together to them in the covered walkway called Solomon's Porch. 3:12 When Peter saw this, he declared to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Why do you stare at us as if we had made this man walk by our own power or piety? 3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate after he had decided to release him. 3:14 But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a man who was a murderer be released to you. 3:15 You killed the Originator of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this fact we are witnesses! 3:16 And on the basis of faith in Jesus' name, his very name has made this man whom you see and know - strong. The faith that is through Jesus has given him this complete health in the presence of you all. 3:17 And now, rulers (brothers) know you acted in ignorance, as your rulers did too. 3:18 But the things God foretold long ago through all the prophets - that his Christ would suffer - he has fulfilled in this way. 3:19 Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out, 3:20 so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he may send the Messiah appointed for you - that is, Jesus. 3:21 The heaven must receive until the time all things are restored, which God declared from times long ago through his holy prophets. 3:22 Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must obey him in everything he tells you. 3:23 Every person who does not obey that prophet will be destroyed and thus removed from the people.' 3:24 And all the prophets, from Samuel and those who followed him, have spoken about and announced these days. 3:25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.' 3:26 God raised up his servant and sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each one of you from your iniquities."

4:1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the commander of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, 4:2 angry because they were teaching the people and announcing in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 4:3 So they seized them and put them in jail until the next day (for it was already evening). 4:4 But many of those who had listened to the message believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

4:5 On the next day, their rulers, elders, and experts in the law came together in Jerusalem. 4:6 Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others who were members of the high priest's family. 4:7 After making Peter and John stand in their midst, they began to inquire, "By what power, or by what name, did you do this?" 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, replied, "Rulers of the people and elders, 4:9 if we are being examined today for a good deed done to a sick man - by what means this man was healed - 4:10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, this man stands before you healthy. 4:11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, that has become the cornerstone. 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other (name) under heaven given among people by which we must be saved."

4:13 When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and discovered that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized these men had been with Jesus. 4:14 And because they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say against this. 4:15 But when they had ordered them to go outside the council, they began to confer with one another, 4:16 saying, "What should we do with these men? For it is plain to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable miracle was done through him, and we cannot deny it."

4:17 So they decided to threaten them, saying to them, "From now on, you must not speak or teach in the name of this man (Jesus), lest you incur the same fate as the others who have perished. 4:18 But since you are uneducated and ordinary men, you must listen to the priests, for this is the law of Moses and the prophets, 4:19 that you fear the Lord, for this is the way you will prosper and have peace, as long as you do what we command you. 4:20 Otherwise, you will be destroyed, you and the man with whom you are standing. 4:21 So now leave this man and the others, and warn them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, lest they incur the same fate as the others who have perished. 4:22 So they let them go, after threatening them, saying, "We will examine you again on this matter."

4:23 Peter and John, however, did not pay attention to their threats, for they considered it more important to obey God than men.

4:24 In Jerusalem, however, the high priest Annas was plotting with the Sadducees and the Pharisees to kill Peter and John. 4:25 But the apostles were continuing to teach and preach in Jerusalem, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was increasing greatly.

4:26 At that time, a certain man named Theophilus was a member of the church in Iconium. 4:27 He came to Antioch and brought with him some of the brothers from Iconium. 4:28 So they went to Antioch, and they began to teach the people there. 4:29 And the church in Antioch grew greatly, and many people were added to it. 4:30 So the apostles decided to send Barnabas and Paul to Antioch. 4:31 So they wrote letters to the churches, saying, "We have chosen Barnabas and Paul as apostles to the Gentiles. 4:32 So we have sent them to Antioch, with Barnabas and Paul, and they have been working there for some time. 4:33 So they have decided to send them to you, with Silas and Timothy. 4:34 For they have been working hard, and they have been teaching the people there. 4:35 So they have decided to send them to you, with Silas and Timothy. 4:36 For they have been working hard, and they have been teaching the people there. 4:37 So they have decided to send them to you, with Silas and Timothy. 4:38 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10. Resist reading between the lines.

PRINCIPLE: The faithful study of Scripture focuses on what is written, not on what is absent.

- Curiosity is essential for Bible study.
- But readers must trust that what they need is what God has written, and not what God has hidden.
- Reading “between the lines” is as dangerous as taking a text out of context.

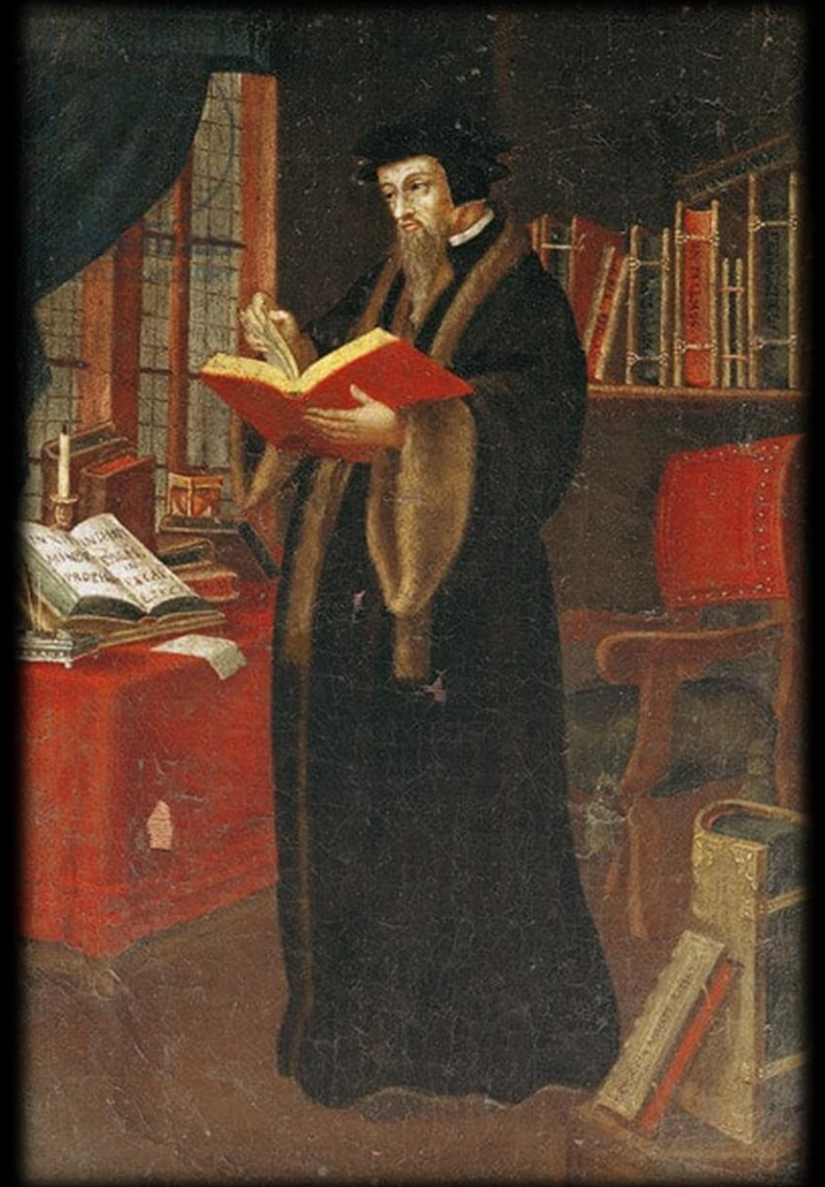


- **Deuteronomy 29:29** – “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”
- **1 Corinthians 4:6** – “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.”



“Let us remember here, as in all religious doctrine, that we ought to hold to one rule of modesty and sobriety: not to speak, or guess, or even to seek to know, concerning obscure matters anything except what has been imparted to us by God’s Word. . . .

“For this reason, if we would be duly wise, we must leave those empty speculations which idle men have taught apart from God’s Word concerning the nature, orders, and number of angels.



“I know that many persons more greedily seize upon and take more delight in them than in such things as have been put to daily use. But, if we are not ashamed of being Christ’s disciples, let us not be ashamed to follow that method which he has prescribed. Thus it will come to pass that, content with his teaching, we shall not only abandon but also abhor those utterly empty speculations from which he calls us back.”

—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.14.4



“Do not try to pry further than God hath revealed; your thoughts must be still bounded by the word. There is no duty that a fanatic brain is more apt to abuse than meditation.

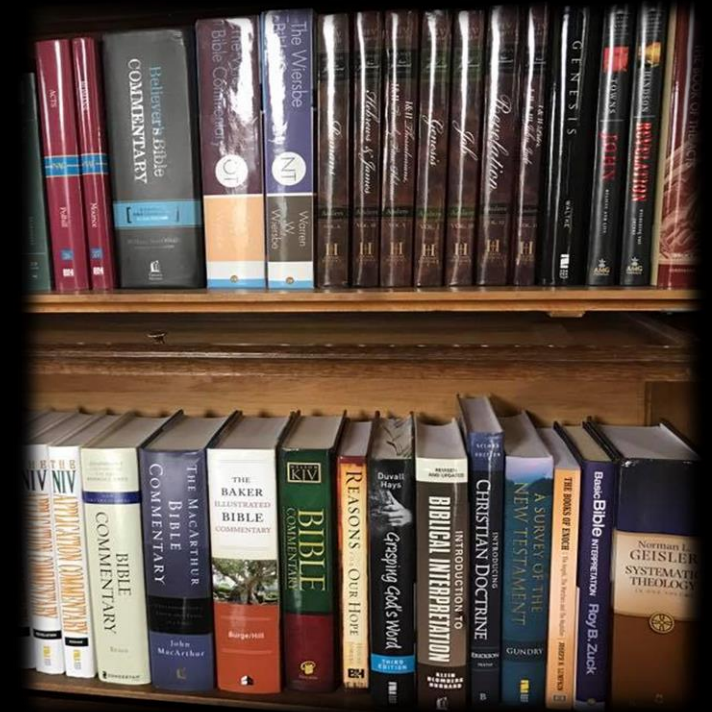
When men are once able to raise their thoughts, they soar too high, and being puffed up with their fleshly mind, intrude themselves into things that they have not seen.”

—Thomas Manton, “Sermons upon Genesis 24:63,”
Works, 17.278

11. Consult the best commentaries.

PRINCIPLE: The faithful study of Scripture appreciates the efforts of gifted pastors and teachers throughout history and incorporates the fruit of their labors.

- Key resources include Study Bible notes, sermons, and commentaries.
- Get recommendations from trusted teachers. Avoid reliance on a single resource or author.
- Use these resources to deepen, correct, or affirm your understanding of the text.



“And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

—Ephesians 4:11–13



“Some, under pretense of being taught of the Spirit of God, refuse to be instructed by books or by living men. This is no honoring of the Spirit of God; it is disrespect for Him, for if He gives to some of His servants more light than to others—and it is clear He does—then they are bound to give that light to others, and to use it for the good of the church. But if the other part of the church refuses to receive that light, to what end did the Spirit of God give it? This would imply that there is a mistake somewhere in the economy of God’s gifts and graces, which is managed by the Holy Spirit.”

—Charles Spurgeon, *Words of Counsel
for Christian Workers*, 111

12. Be accountable to others.

PRINCIPLE: The faithful study of Scripture takes place in the context of the local church.



- Scripture is clear enough to be interpreted by every believer.
- But the rejection of a single interpreter for the church—a pope—does not then imply that any interpretation of the Bible is good since it is done by the individual.
- Ignorance, inadequate study, incorrect hermeneutics, and the influence of sin necessitate the involvement of other believers—especially elders.

“The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see whether these things were so.*”

—Acts 17:10–11



“Reading the Bible with fellow believers helps us to gain insights that we would otherwise miss. Also, our brothers and sisters can guard us from straying into false interpretations and misapplications.”

—Plummer, *Forty Questions about Interpreting the Bible*, 105

13. Obey what the text teaches.

PRINCIPLE: The faithful study of Scripture must be followed by the faithful application of its message.

- Accurate application is dependent upon accurate interpretation.
- Bathe your interpretive results in prayerful obedience, to the glory of God.
- “Heart appropriation, not merely head apprehension is the true goal of Bible study” (Roy Zuck).



⇐ LIVE it OUT ⇒

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

—James 1:22-25

Helpful Questions to Guide in Application

1. Is there a truth in this text to believe about God?

2. Is there a truth to believe about some other doctrine?

3. Is there a command to obey?

4. Is there a promise to claim?

5. Is there an example to follow?

6. Is there an error in behavior or thinking to avoid?

7. Is there a condition to meet?

8. Is there a wisdom to shape a Christian's life?

9. Is there a principle to follow for making decisions?

10. Is there a prayer to pattern?



“Scripture can rule us only so far as it is understood, and it is understood only so far as it is properly interpreted. A misinterpreted Bible is a misunderstood Bible, which will lead us out of God’s way rather than in it. Interpretation must be right if biblical authority is to be real in our lives and in our churches.”

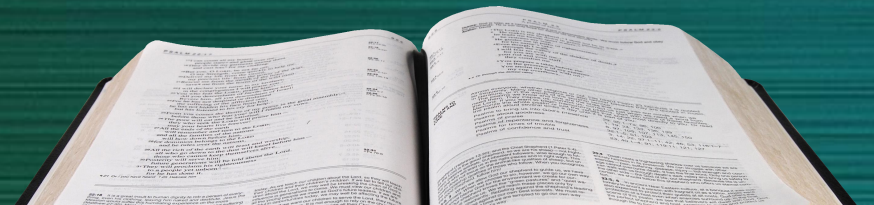
—J. I. Packer, “Give Me Understanding,” 104

1. Acknowledge your need for truth.
2. Pray for divine assistance.
3. Choose the right translation.
4. Read the whole book.

Basic Bible Study, Pt 1

Steps 1–4

REVIEW



5. Consider the book's background.

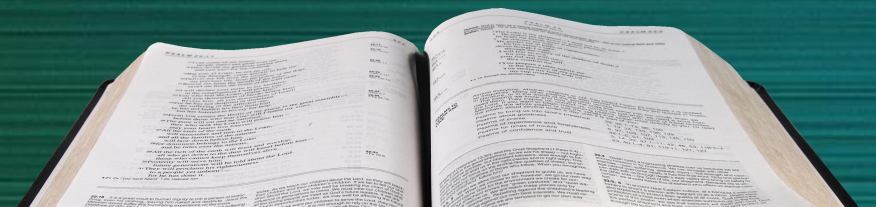
6. Identify the book's structure.

7. Study according to paragraphs.

Basic Bible Study, Pt 2

Steps 5–7

REVIEW

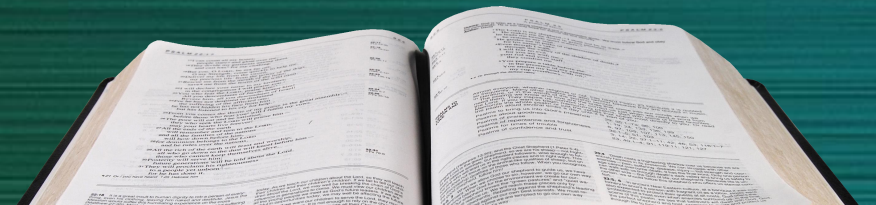


8. Compare good translations.
9. Ask the right questions.
10. Resist reading between the lines.
11. Consult the best commentaries.
12. Be accountable to others.
13. Obey what the text teaches.

Basic Bible Study, Pt 3

Steps 8–13

REVIEW



Recommended Resources for Beginners

Basics of Bible Study:

- Richard Mayhue, *How to Study the Bible*.
- Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*.

Meditating on Scripture:

- David Saxton, *God's Battle Plan for the Mind*.

