

How to Study the Bible Part 2 (Intermediate)

Here are some guidelines for studying the Bible effectively:

The following rules should be reviewed thoroughly alongside the Scripture references to help the Bible student benefit the most.

1. Every word should accurately relate to the biblical subject it addresses.
2. All scripture is essential and can be understood with careful study and diligent effort. 2 Tim. 3:15
3. Nothing in Scripture can be hidden from those who ask in faith without wavering. References include Deut. 29:29; Mt 21:22; Jas 1:5-6.
4. To understand doctrine, collect all relevant Scriptures on the topic. Let each word influence your understanding, and if you can develop your theory without contradictions, you are likely correct. Isa. 28:10; Lk. 24:27.
5. Scripture must be its own interpreter, since it is self-explanatory. If you depend on a teacher to explain it to you, and he guesses at its meaning, or desires it to be so because of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom becomes your rule, and not the Bible. Ps. 119:104-105; 1 Cor. 2:12-13.
6. God has revealed things to come through visions, figures, and parables. In this way, the same things are often revealed again and again, either through different visions or in different figures and parables. If you want to understand them, you must combine all of them.
7. Visions are always described as such.
8. Figures always carry a figurative meaning and are often used in prophecy to symbolize future things, times, and events. For example, mountains represent governments; beasts denote kingdoms; waters signify people; lamps stand for the Word of God; and day represents a year. References include Dan. 2:38-42; 7:4-7; Rev. 17:1,15; Ps. 119:105.
9. Parables serve as comparisons to clarify topics and should be explained similarly to figures, using the subject and the Bible, as seen in Mk. 4:3-4, 14-15.

10. Figures can have multiple meanings, as seen with the word "day," which is used figuratively to denote three different time periods. These include: • Indefinite, • A literal day, or a day representing a year, and • A day symbolizing a thousand years. If this interpretation aligns with the context and is correctly constructed, it will correspond with the Bible and make good sense; otherwise, it won't. Relevant references include Ezek. 4:6; 2 Pt. 3:8.

11. How to determine if a word is used figuratively: If it makes good sense as-is and aligns with natural laws, it should be understood literally. Otherwise, it is figurative.

12. To understand the true meaning of figures, follow your figurative word through the Bible. When it is explained, note it alongside your figure. If it makes good sense, you can stop there; if not, continue searching.

13. To determine whether a historical event is the fulfillment of a prophecy: If you find that every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is fulfilled, you may know that the event is the true fulfillment. But if one word remains unfulfilled, you must look for another event or wait for its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy agree, so that the true, believing children of God may never be ashamed.

14. The most fundamental rule is that you must have faith. This faith demands sacrifice and, if tested, would be willing to give up the most precious things on earth—worldly desires, character, livelihood, friends, home, comforts, and honors. If any of these prevent us from trusting any part of God's word, it reveals that our faith is empty.

We can never truly believe as long as any of these motives reside in our hearts. We must trust that God will never abandon His promise. We can be confident that the One who notices the sparrow and counts the hairs on our heads will protect His word, set a barrier around it, and ensure that those who sincerely trust in God and have full confidence in His word will not stray far from the truth, even if they do not speak Hebrew or Greek.

These are some of the most important rules I believe the Word of God compels us to adopt and follow. Overall, I find the Bible to be one of the simplest, clearest, and most understandable books ever written, containing proof of its divine origin and filled with all the knowledge our hearts could desire. It is a treasure that the world cannot buy. It offers peaceful reassurance through faith and steadfast hope for the future. It supports the mind during adversity and teaches humility in prosperity.

It prepares us to love and do good to others, recognizing the value of the soul. It encourages us to be bold and brave for the truth, strengthening our resolve to oppose

error. It provides a powerful tool to combat infidelity and reveals the only remedy for sin. It guides us on how to overcome death and break the bonds of the tomb. It informs us about future events and the preparation needed to face them. It enables us to converse with the King of kings and demonstrates the greatest set of laws ever established.

This only offers a brief insight into its value; yet many lost souls ignore it or, worse, consider it an unknowable secret. Prioritize it in your studies. The divine knowledge taught in our schools is often rooted in sectarian beliefs. A truly open mind won't settle for others' opinions but will investigate and verify what is being taught.

Study like the Bereans, who listened to Paul but verified by examining the Scriptures themselves to ensure understanding.

Acts 17:11 states, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so." I encourage you to do the same.