Mt. Wade Baptist Church, Brookhaven

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Practical Methods

For Studying The Bible

***A Bible Study Training Course***

With the wave of false prophets and false teachings that are rising up in our society, it’s important that we know and understand the truth of Scripture. False prophets are not just those who teach against the belief I God; but it also includes those who teach God’s word incorrectly. With the ever increasing number false teachings, we should be studying the Word so that we can remain firmly planted and keep from being swayed. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:15 to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (KJV).”

So what does it mean to study? In antiquity, rather than referring to academic pursuit, it implies being diligent, eager, and making haste with effort. The Greek word suggests the ideas of hurrying, being zealous, and giving one's best. So the text actually would read, “Give your best to show thyself approved…”

The word “study” has changed its meaning somewhat in the last 414 years since the since the King James Bible was translation from the original writings of Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. Due to the language barrier, the word “study” in the English Dictionary refers to the mental effort put forth in an attempt to add to one’s store of knowledge and one’s ability to use that knowledge in an effective way. When we use the word “study,” we think of school, classrooms, teachers, and books. But the word is not so used this way in 2 Timothy 2:15. So where in the Bible does scripture encourage us to increase our knowledge if it’s not in the word study? In this context, believers are exhorted to be diligent workers who toil to the point of exhaustion in their approach to God's Word. We are to seek to know the “full counsel” of God’s word. The verse emphasizes seeking God's approval through earnest effort in accurately handling and teaching Scripture. This involves "rightly dividing" or “cutting straight" to the truth, which can be achieved through systematic study, which revolves around asking questions and seeking answers from the text itself. The ultimate goal of such study should be to learn and apply God's will as the supreme guide for one's life, approaching the Scriptures with reverence.

Some say the Bible is just another book. The Bible is not, not, not just another book. The principle of study applied to other books as it relates to literary and grammatical structure are the same in others as well as the Bible. But the Bile is a unique book that is to be treated for what it truly is, and that’s the Word of God. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NRSV) say, “We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers.”

Have you ever heard anyone say that the Bible is the breathe of God? 2 Timothy 13:16-17 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” The word “inspiration” (theópneustos) means to breathe, to blow. Paul used the word to describe that scripture is breath out of God (it is the very breathe of God). Many books of the Bible are titled after the penmen. Daniel was written by Daniel. Ezekiel was written by Ezekiel. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are more examples of book begin titled after the human penman. No man can take created for authoring scripture because the author of the Bible is God. The word of God is divinely inspired written by human hands.

When we set out to study the Bible, our task is to understand the mind and will of God. This requires greater insight than humanly possible. The human mind is finite; the mind of God is infinite. There is no limit to His wisdom, knowledge and understanding. John 16:13a says, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:” The divine word of God requires divine inspiration for accurate interpretation. When we commit to study, we open the door for God to speak to our spirit through the Holy Spirit.

We are also told to “give attention to reading, to exhortation, [and] to doctrine” in 1 Timothy 4:13.

* Give attention to reading was in reference to the public reading of scripture in the worship experience so that all may hear. Afterwards, someone would explain what had been previously read.
* Exhortation refers to encouragement that helps a person take the right course of action. In his letter to the Romans, Paul listed exhortation as a spiritual gift that benefits the church body as a whole (Rom 12:8). It can also refer to encouragement in the sense of comforting or lifting someone’s spirits (2 Cor 1:4).
* Doctrine refers to the art of teaching employed by those who study the law of God and counsel with others.

We are even warned in Jude 3–4 that we need to “contend earnestly for the faith” because of these false teachers creeping in; in other words, we are commanded to fight for the truth of Scripture, which can only be done by being prepared and studying the Word.

It’s important to understand that the only way to know the truth of Scripture is to be engulfed in the studying of it. On Sunday, we looked at the life of Ezra who immersed himself into the word of God. His goal was to learn the word, live the word and lead others to learn the word and live word so they can lead others to learn the word and live to word…. There’s no way in the world that we, as Christians, can testify against false teachings unless we know the Word for ourselves and know how to interpret it. We must be accurate in our understanding so that we can be accurate in our teaching.

Paul said to the church at Rome (Romans 10), “how can thy hear without a preacher.” The teacher preacher has the responsibility to introduce new teachings, explain challenging doctrines and equip believers to contend earnestly for the faith. Believers should be able to follow up in the Scripture after hearing the preacher/teachers message in order to make sure that everything they have said lines up with what is written (Acts 17:11, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.") There is no reason that church attendees should mindlessly follow after anything that sounds good; we should all be well versed in the biblical texts and know how to exegete (interpret) Scripture. We have to be wary of having itching ears and allowing ourselves to fall prey to false teaching just because it sounds good or makes us feel better about ourselves (2 Timothy 4:3).

* Just so we’re on the same page, this does not mean that you have to go to seminary or Bible college. You can learn to select a good study Bible, various commentaries, Bible Dictionaries, etc. so that you can correctly interpret scripture.

I want to share with you some free Bible tools that are available to help you study and show you how to use them.

Online “free” Bible Study website.

1. Blue Letter Bible - blueletterbible.org
2. Bible Hub - [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com)
3. Step Bible - stepbible.org
4. English Standard Version Online - [esv.org](http://esv.org) (Auto Reader)

Step One - Read the text (Read the entire subject or paragraph)

* What is the main thought of the passage (Central Theme)
* Who is the author (and recipient)
* Who are the main characters

Step Two - Identify Key Words

* Key words are words that if removed from the scripture, it changes the meaning or is no longer understandable.

Step Three - Learn the meaning of key words