**STUDY SUGGESTIONS**

When it comes to having a study program for learning the Word of God, it appears there are “different strokes for different folks.” One size doesn’t seem to fit all. With this in mind, I would like to suggest a number of different study models which have been a blessing to me.

1. ***THE SHIELD OF THE FAITH*** – This whole idea comes from Ephesians 6:16, where a developed framework of basic doctrine acts as a shield to Satan’s fiery darts of temptation , doubt, and confusion. There is a copy of this with and without the answers in the Study Materials on the church website. A suggestion is that you attempt to fill in the blanks first to see where you are with your “shield.” Then, you can work on the areas which need absorbing.

For Example: don’t panic! print off the blank version, and fill it out to your best ability. Taking “a bite at a time,” (how does one eat an elephant? Answer: one bite at a time), committing to “over-learning “ a little at a time, you will eventually find yourself filling out the entire” shield.”

2. ***ROMANS*** – The Book of Romans is the basic framework of New Testament biblical thought given by the Holy Spirit to the Apostle Paul. All other New Testament books are to be interpreted in view of this basic framework. There are a multitude of studies which may be helpful. We have at Sagecreek Church two workbooks. One is he ROMANS DAY BY DAY, the simpler version, and the other is A STUDY OF ROMANS, the more extensive version.

For Example: Read through the Book of Romans several times, trying to get a “feel” for its flow. Try to master the 7 section titles, and their references after the introduction. Then take each section, do needed word studies on each verse, and see how it supports the section you are studying. Try not to “lose the forest for the trees,” that is getting so involved in a small area that you forget how it fits into the whole.

3. ***PROVERBS*** - The Book of Proverbs is conveniently divided into 31 chapters. With a month with 31 days, this could correspond to the day of the month. Solomon, the basic human author of Proverbs is declared to be the wisest human being, other than Jesus Christ, who ever lived, 1 Kings 3:12. A suggestion is: you read the chapter for the day, then choose one verse that seemed to “speak” to you, and do a word study on that verse. The next time through that chapter, you could choose a different verse.

For Example: On the 13th of a month, I will be reading Proverbs 13. I may be “intrigued” by 13:10, which deals with pride and wisdom. I would look up such words as “pride,” “contention,” “well advised,” and “wisdom.” Then I would put the verse back together, even writing it out in my own words, and then ask God to apply it to my soul.

4. ***FRUIT OF YOUR PASTORS’ LABORS*** – God said, “I will give you pastors, according to My own heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and understanding,” Jeremiah 3:15. Leading your pastors, and sometimes even in spite of them, God supernaturally uses them to give you what He wants you to learn and apply. A reasonable challenge is for you to master the material your pastors give you each week. Bring your Bible, notebook and paper, or for some, your electronic “device,” and be sure to take sufficient notes to spend the week absorbing what was taught.

For Example: Acknowledging first of all that God has given you the Pastor you are under, acknowledge second of all that God has given him what he is teaching at that particular time. Realizing that this opportunity to hear what God has to say to you may never come again, treasure that time above all there is to be treasured. Be committed to master the material and lessons given.

5. ***THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*** – Psalms 119. This has been one of profound blessing to me for several years. The process is: (1) starting with Psalms 119:1, do a word study on the verse; (2) note the specific word used in that verse for the 10 Commandments with your “*Hebrew Words for the 10* *Commandments*” sheet ; (3) summarize the verse in view of that specific word; (4) list each of the 10 Commandments, applying each one in view of your summary of the verse.

For Example: Psalms 119:156 uses the Hebrew word *mishpat,* when referring to the 10 Commandments, which emphasizes the decision for the consequence or blessing of violating or keeping the Commandment. After having studied the verse you might apply each of the 10 Commandments after this heading: “God is showing His compassionate mercies to me by expressing the following decisions:”

6. ***WORD STUDY*** – (1) Pick a word which “intrigues” you, such as grace, love, joy, peace, mercy, etc., (2) research the meaning of the word to your personal satisfaction; (3) using what is called an “Englishman’s Concordance” follow that word through the entire Old or New Testament, or both, and attempt to summarize how the Holy Spirit uses the word in all the Bible. Note: An Englishman’s Concordance is a book which lists every time the actual Hebrew or Greek word is used in the Bible, regardless of how those who did the translating chose to list that word.

For Example: Let’s say that you have picked the word “peace.” Using a Strong’s Concordance you will see that it lists the primary word as #1515. It goes on to say that it comes from a primary word “to join,” and has the meanings of prosperity, one, peace, quietness, rest, from being at one again. You may want to access other studies, especially which are abundantly supplied on good web sites. Terry would be an excellent source for the best web sites. With the meaning of the word as clear in your mind as possible, and when you are personally comfortable with what you know about it, begin tracing the word as it is used by the Holy Spirit through the Bible. You will see in the New Testament *that “peace with God,” “*the *peace of God,” “peace with others*” are all applications of the word. Write down what each verse where “peace” is found says for each area of application.

7. ***WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW AND WHY?*** – This may appeal to some. Simply choose a verse, or group of verses which interest you, and answer each of the above questions. You can do a specific verse, but also do it answering the questions in view of the larger context as well.

For Example: John 11:35 (a short one)

Who: Our Lord Jesus Christ, and secondarily Lazarus.

What: Jesus as He is just about to raise Lazarus from the dead, weeps.

When: sometime after the Feast of Dedication, 10:22, and before the Passover, 12:1.

Where: Bethany

How: not applicable, except Jesus expressing His humanity and emotions.

Why: open to conjecture. One answer is: Jesus’ infinite grief over the very fact of death (for the time being).

One can see that much can be learned by these observations, producing blessing to the soul.