

## KEYS TO STUDYING THE BIBLE

### Introduction

#### I. MEMORY VERSE: Acts 17:11

#### II. Why encourage studying the Bible?

- A. This is an expedient way to obtain a thorough knowledge of the word of God.
  - B. Studying will help folks to “*rightly divide*” (hand accurately, handle correctly) God’s word (II Timothy 2:15).
  - C. Reading, in contrast to studying, requires different methods, and different degrees of effort.
    - 1. **Read:** “*to peruse and apprehend the meaning of (something written, printed, etc.)*” (Webster’s).
    - 2. **Study:** “*application of the mind to the acquisition (gaining possession) of knowledge, as by reading, investigation, or reflection*” (ibid.)
      - a. Biblical word for study = “meditation.” Examples: Psalm 1:2; I Timothy 4:15 (“*Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them...*”, NAS)
      - b. While reading is involved in studying, when one reads, he is not necessarily studying!
      - c. Some helps that could get you started: A Guide To Bible Study by J.W. McGarvey; How To Study The Bible by R.A. Torrey; Guide To Bible Study by James Tolle; Effective Bible Study by Howard Vos.
  - D. Studying God’s will is making an extra-concentrated effort to learn His will more perfectly!
- III. For many, the question boils down to, “How do I study God’s word?”

### Discussion

#### I. OBSERVE WHO SPEAKS:

- A. Yes, this is an elementary point, but many fail to do this, and confusion is the result!
- B. It is very important that we know who is speaking in the material we are studying. Why?
  - 1. Because some are lying: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Because some are teaching valuable lessons we must apply to ourselves: (Mark 16:16; Philippians 4:8; I Timothy 5:22; I Thessalonians 5:17; I John 5:2-3; Jude 3)
  - 3. Because some speak from arrogance/haughty mind: (Daniel 4:30; Luke 18:10-14)
  - 4. Because some speak from humility: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. When we discern between the words of Satan, Paul, Christ, an Angel, the Publicans, the Pharisees, etc., we’ll be on our way to a better understanding of the Bible.

#### II. OBSERVE TO WHOM A COMMAND IS GIVEN: (To whom is God speaking??)

- A. Some things are commanded in the Bible, but we are not expected to do them today.
  - 1. Examples:
    - a. Genesis 6:14: \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. John 2:7: \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. Joshua 6:2-5: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Yet, there are some commands we must obey. (Ephesians 6:1-4; Romans 13:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:17-18, 21-22; I Corinthians 11:24-25)
- B. When we study the Bible, such observations are important so that we do not jump to the wrong conclusion!

#### III. STUDY THE CONTEXT (SETTING):

- A. This is key to determining whether or not we will be “*rightly dividing the word of truth*”!
- B. **Context:** “*the parts of a written or spoken statement that precede or follow a specific word or passage, usually influencing its meaning or effect*” (Webster’s).
  - 1. In studying the context of a Bible passage, you may have to read the verses before and after the

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- one you are studying. You may have to read the paragraph, chapter, or entire book to truly grasp the context.
2. Sometimes, just reading one or two extra verses throws a whole new light on the subject:
    - a. Read: John 6:44 — then verse 45! \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Read: Galatians 3:26 — then verse 27! \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. Read: Romans 10:13 — then verses 14-16! \_\_\_\_\_
- C. If we ever wish to know God’s word completely, and apply it accurately, we need to understand the context of the passage.

### **IV. UNDER WHICH DISPENSATION ARE WE READING?**

- A. Dispensation: “*a divinely appointed order or age*” (ibid.)
- B. There are three dispensations (ages, periods of time) in the Bible: \_\_\_\_\_
  1. Patriarch age - 2500 years (Adam-Moses); Mosaic age - 1500 years (Moses-John); Christian age (The cross to the end of time — often called, “the last days”)
  2. Hebrews 1:1 says God spoke in various means/ways to the people. Examples: \_\_\_\_\_
3. When we determine the dispensation, we can know whether we are reading commands/ examples applicable to us, or valuable lessons presented to gain knowledge (Romans 15:4).
- C. If there is not a careful understanding of the dispensation, we can get into trouble!
  1. Examples — Under which dispensation did the following occur?
    - a. Noah built an ark (Genesis 6:14-17, 22) \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. David used mechanical instruments (Psalm 81:4; II Chronicles 29:25) \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. Acts 2:42 \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Therefore, let us respect the distinctions of the dispensations, and apply them accordingly!

### **V. USE GOOD COMMON SENSE:**

- A. We cannot read a verse, or chapter and hope to know it all in a few minutes. It takes time and effort. Anything worthwhile takes time and effort (Ecclesiastes 12:12).
- B. When studying the Bible, please notice:
  1. Who the writer is/Who is speaking. (Some are obvious, some are not. Sometimes we won’t know the earthly author, though we know the One behind it all is \_\_\_\_\_.)
  2. What topics are addressed.
  3. Whether God was pleased or displeased with the people.
  4. Is this an Old Testament book, or a New Testament book?
  5. The other rules we studied.
- C. We need to understand that what we study, and what we learn, must be in harmony with the rest of the Bible. This shows good common sense.
  1. A good way to study is to work on the easier things, and consider the harder passages in light of what we already know to be true.
  2. The Bible is its own best commentary, use it!
    - a. Study by finding everything the Bible says on a subject; and then read and accept it!
    - b. Read the Old Testament in light of the New, and vice versa.

**ASSIGNMENT:** (Hint: Assignments increase in difficulty. While some may not be able to answer each question, please challenge yourself and do the best you can!)

1. Do you know the books of the Bible? (You should know Genesis-Proverbs. Memorize the next 10 books of the Bible.) Do you know the Judges? Do you know the sons of Israel?
  2. Use the rules of study (point #5, B) to study the following: Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:38; Genesis 6:14; Psalm 117; Jeremiah 6:15-16; Hebrews 8
- Jarrod Jacobs