

The Old Paths

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“20 Rules For Bible Study”

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1. Realize that the Bible must be studied and “rightly divided” (1 Tim. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:16).

2. Realize that the Bible contains the mind and will of God (2 Pet. 1:16-21; 1 Cor. 2:1-13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Gal. 1:6-11).

3. Approach the Bible humbly and reverently, desiring to know its truths (Matt. 5:6; Jn. 8:31-32; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

4. Have a profound faith in ALL IT SAYS. One cannot accept only a PART of the Bible as being inspired. We MUST accept it all, or none at all! It isn’t a smorgasbord where we are free to pick and choose! (2 Tim. 3:16) *“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.”*

5. Let the Bible speak to you, not you to it! (1 Pet. 4:11; Gal. 1:15-16; Acts 5:29).

6. Study for profit with an earnest desire to know more of Christ’s will, not just to win an argument or endeavoring to “justify” yourself. (Ps. 1:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:16).

7. Be willing and eager to obey implicitly what Christ’s word commands of you (Matt. 7:13-21, 24-29; Lk. 6:46; Matt. 15:1-9).

8. Use common sense as you study God’s word. The same principles apply as one attempts to understand its message as any other documents! (2 Tim. 2:15).

9. Observe who is speaking. There are things recorded that Satan said!

10. Observe to whom each statement is addressed: Whether to alien sinners, or to unfaithful Christians, or to Old Testament covenant people, or faithful

Christians??? This will definitely have a bearing on the proper interpretation! (Jer. 31:31-34; Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 1:1-2; Jn. 16:12-13; Gal. 5:4).

11. Consider why each book is written. The first four books of the New Testament were written to produce faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The book of Acts records cases of conversion during the apostolic age as well as some history of the early church. The next 21 letters (epistles) are instructions to churches and to individual Christians instructing them in “all truth” needed to please Christ. The book of Revelation was written to encourage first Century Christians under severe persecution. It was foretelling to them things that were to “shortly come to pass.” This symbolic book was not written as a prophetic time table of things in our day or just before the return of Christ the final time. That which remains to be fulfilled is for Christ to return for His bride the church, and to execute final judgment. The book can be very reassuring for present day Christians as it was to those to whom it was addressed. Truth and good will prevail eventually, and those who “overcome” can “come over and be with Me says the Lord.” It also warns of “lukewarmness.”

12. Realize that there have been three (3) distinct dispensations of religion as God dealt with mankind—The Patriarchal (father-rule age from creation to Sinai). The Jewish or Mosaic (From Sinai to the cross). The gospel age (From the first Jewish Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Christ back to the Father to sit on David’s throne at His right hand, until the end of time). The New Testament of course is our guide for today. The Old is written for “our learning” and as “examples to us” (Rom.

15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-12; Jn. 12:48; Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 17:1-5).

13. Study the meaning of the very titles of each book! This gives clues to what the content is about. Examples: (Genesis, the beginning); (Exodus, the going out of Egyptian bondage of the Israelites). (Leviticus the priestly tribe of Levi). Numbers, the taking of a census of the people. (Deuteronomy; a second “giving of the law”). etc. etc., etc.

14. Though somewhat difficult to keep straight, study the chronology and history of each book. They aren’t in order in your Bible as they were written. Some not knowing this become hopelessly confused and give up on seeking to understand this greatest of all books, the Bible. God intends for us to understand what He has caused to be written and preserved for all people of all time (Eph. 3:1-11, 17; 2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 15:13; 1 Jn. 4:1-2; 2 Jn. 9-11; 1 Tim. 1:3; Jn. 8:31-32).

15. *“..God is not the author of confusion, but of peace..”* (1 Cor. 14:33). Therefore, the laws of hermeneutics (interpretation) demand that you do not place an interpretation on any passage of holy writ that makes it at odds with another. Also learn that when God specifies one thing in any passage, that excludes all other actions in the same class. For example: “Gopher wood” (Gen. 6:14). Today, for music, Christ specified “singing” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16, etc.) Noah could use no other wood for the Ark’s construction. We may use no other music in worship of God today! See?

16. Consider whether or not the language is literal or figurative! Everything should be taken literal if possible. However, when a literal interpretation would reduce the meaning to an absurdity, it should be obvious that a figure of speech is being used and it is not to be taken literally. Usually the context will show which is the case. Sometimes, when one takes a statement literally, it makes it contradict another plain and simple passage or principle, then one must view it as figurative. Example: Jesus said once, *“labor not for meat which perishes...”* (Jn. 6:27). Paul, speaking by the

Holy Spirit said, *"He who will not work neither let him eat"* and *"..labor working with his hands...to give to those in need"* (2 Thess. 3:10; Eph. 4:28). To take the statement of Jesus literal obviously produces a contradiction between the Son of God and an inspired Apostle! See? There is no contradiction. Jesus uses a hyperbole (pronounced hy-per-by-lee). Many metaphors are used in Scripture. Common sense helps here, too!

17. Do not read into the text something that isn't there! Take it for what it says and nothing more. Do not add your own "two cents worth" to divine revelation (Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9).

18. Seek to understand what God wants all to know from His holy word. Understand obscure passages in the light of those which are so plain that they cannot be misunderstood. A point made partially above.

19. Maintain a proper attitude about this greatest of books. It is God speaking to man. Respect how it teaches. Do not invade into the "silence of the Scriptures" (Heb. 7:14; 1 Pet. 4:11). Nothing is authorized by what God has NOT SAID! Since faith comes by hearing, nothing can be an act of faith for which there is no Bible information! (Rom. 10:17; Gen. 4:1-7; Lev. 10:1-3).

20. Each time you open this sacred volume, study it as if it fell directly from heaven into your hands alone. Study it as if you had never seen it or read it before. Lay aside all preconceived ideas or traditional beliefs and practices and see what God says about each matter under consideration. Man, unaided by the Holy Spirit, could not have written this book if he desired to. It teaches things about which he has no knowledge except as revealed herein. He would not have written it if he could have, for it condemns the very things he allows both religiously and morally! It is God's book and it will never pass away (1 Pet. 1:22-25; Matt. 24:35). It will be present on judgment day (Rev. 20:12:15).

"Russian Dies In Drinking Contest"

Jarrold Jacobs

A Reuters story came out recently which said that on November 20, 2003 a man in the town of Volgodonsk (southern Russia) died after winning a vodka-drinking contest!! Yes, that is correct. The "winner" died after drinking a liter and a half of vodka in 30-40 minutes. Five of the "runners-up" in the contest ended up in intensive care.

Had the man lived to enjoy his reward for winning the contest, do you know what he would have won? He would have won 10 LITERS OF VODKA!!!!

Does anyone else see the irony in this situation? A group of men were in a vodka-drinking contest competing for the prize of ... more vodka! Then, the man who won the vodka died because he drank so much vodka!! Is it any wonder Jeremiah said, *"it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23)?? Man, left to his own devices, will do things that are polar opposite of what he ought to do! Solomon said, *"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions"* (Ecc. 7:29).

May we not only see how ironic it is for a drinker to be competing for more drinks, and then die from the

drinks; let us also see the wisdom in God's word when he says, *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise"* (Prov. 20:1)? Can we see the wisdom in God's word when we read, *"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again"* (Prov. 23:31-35)? (Assuming you live through the experience!)

The Bible condemns drinking alcohol. The apostle Peter wrote to the Christians *"scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"* (1 Pet. 1:1) and reminded them of how they used to follow *"the will of the Gentiles."* They engaged in, *"lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine (wino, JJ), revellings (drunk enough to lose inhibitions, JJ), banquetings ("social" drinking, JJ), and abominable idolatries"* (1 Pet. 4:3). Peter made it clear that drinking alcohol for the purpose of getting drunk, "loosening up," being accepted in the business/social world, etc., is wrong. Children of God must stay away from that which harms the body or soul!!

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