

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Keys to Bible Study

Text:

Introduction:

1. Our first lesson reminded us of the power and simplicity of the Bible.
2. Hopefully, it motivated us to desire to study and learn the Word of God.
3. Our last lesson began a practical look at studying the Scriptures, by focusing on tools that will help in our studies.
4. Tonight, we will notice three essential keys to studying the Bible.

I. Observation

- A. What does the passage say? What is contained in it?
- B. Observation begins with reading
 1. "Have ye not read?" (Matthew 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31)
 2. "How readest thou?" (Luke 10:25-29)
 3. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:26-31)
 4. "Give attendance to reading." (1 Timothy 4:12-16)
- C. Sadly, many have forgotten how to read.
 1. Grammar (Acts 17:30)
 2. Structure (Romans 11:33-36; Malachi)
 3. Terms ("believe" –99 times in John; "better" –13 times in Hebrews)
 4. Style
 - a. Narrative
 - b. Poetry
 - c. Apology
 - d. Parable / Allegory
 - e. Apocalyptic
 5. Context
- D. Keys to reading Scripture
 1. Repetition
 - a. The dangers of familiarity...
 - b. Each time, read with fresh eyes
 - c. Listen to recordings of the Bible
 - d. Read out loud
 2. Recording (*take notes*)
 3. Reflecting
- E. How to read the Bible
 1. Read Regularly
 2. Read Thoughtfully
 - a. Be willing to dig deep (Proverbs 2:4; Psalm 19:10)
 - b. Define terms
 - c. Notice style and theme
 3. Read Analytically
 - a. Who?

- b. What?
 - c. Where?
 - d. When?
 - e. Why?
 - f. Wherefore? (Or, what does this mean?)
4. Read Patiently
- a. Look for things that are emphasized (*baptism in Acts*)
 - b. Look for things that are repeated
 - 1. Judges 21:25
 - 2. Philippians 4:4
 - c. Look for things that are related (Rom. 6:1; etc.)
5. Read Prayerfully (Psa. 119:12, 18, 27, 34, 36, 130-133, 169, 176)
6. Read Acquisitively
- a. Make it your own.
 - b. We remember 10% of what we hear; 50% of what we see and hear; and 90% of what we see, hear and do.
7. Read Expectantly

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Keys to Bible Study

- II. Interpretation
 - A. Observation lays the foundation for our study; interpretation begins to build the structure.
 - B. Challenges in interpretation
 - 1. God's Word is "settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).
 - 2. Thus, we must "rightly divide" the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - 3. It is possible to handle God's Word deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2).
 - 4. It is possible to pervert the Gospel (Galatians 1:7).
 - 5. It is possible to wrest the Scriptures unto destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).
 - 6. It is possible to allow prejudice to hinder interpretation (John 5:39; 2 Corinthians 3:14-15).
 - C. Interpretation is asking, "What does this mean?"
 - 1. First, what did it mean to the author when originally written?
 - 2. Second, what does it mean in the grand scheme of Scripture?
 - 3. Third, what does it mean to me? *{This leads into application.}*
 - D. Overcoming barriers to interpretation
 - 1. Literary barriers
 - 2. Language barriers
 - 3. Cultural barriers
 - E. Five keys to interpretation
 - 1. Content
 - 2. Context
 - a. Literary context
 - b. Historical context
 - c. Cultural context
 - d. Geographic context
 - e. Scriptural context
 - 3. Comparison – *Let the Bible interpret the Bible*
 - 4. Culture
 - 5. Consultation – *Dictionary, concordance, atlas, commentary, etc.*
 - F. An example – Luke 4:28-31

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Keys to Bible Study

- III. Application
 - A. The three keys to Bible study
 - 1. Observation – *reading* – What does this say?
 - 2. Interpretation – *comprehending* – What does this mean?
 - 3. Application – *practicing* – What should I do?
 - B. James 1:21-25 – A biblical description of application
 - C. Four steps of application
 - 1. Know
 - a. Know the text
 - b. Know yourself
 - 2. Relate
 - a. Where do I fit into the text?
 - b. What timeless principles do I learn?
 - c. What is the moral of the story?
 - 3. Meditate
 - 4. Practice
 - D. Questions to ask to aid in making application
 - 1. Is there a command to obey? (Acts 2:38)
 - 2. Is there a condition to meet? (Matthew 6:14)
 - 3. Is there an example to follow? (Genesis 18)
 - 4. Is there a sin to avoid? (James 1:19-20)
 - 5. Is there a promise to believe? (John 14:1-4)
 - 6. Is there a prayer to practice? (Luke 22:44)
 - 7. Is there an error to mark? (Galatians 1:6-9)
 - 8. Is there a challenge to face? (Mark 16:15-16)
 - 9. Is there a verse to memorize?
 - E. Keys to getting started and sticking to personal Bible study
 - 1. Determine your objective / Set SMART Goals
 - a. Specific
 - b. Measurable
 - c. Attainable
 - d. Realistic
 - e. Timely (on time)
 - 2. Determine your priorities / How bad do you want it?
 - 3. Develop a plan / Set a schedule
 - 4. Develop discipline
 - a. Gus Nichols studied four hours a day, rising early.
 - b. Franklin Camp, upon learning of Gus Nichols' habit, determined to study six hours a day.
 - c. Alexander Campbell often studied 14 hours a day, beginning at 4:00 a.m. {*Sometimes, 16 hours a day!*}
 - 5. Share what you have learned

Conclusion: Don't give up! There are great rewards for determined efforts.