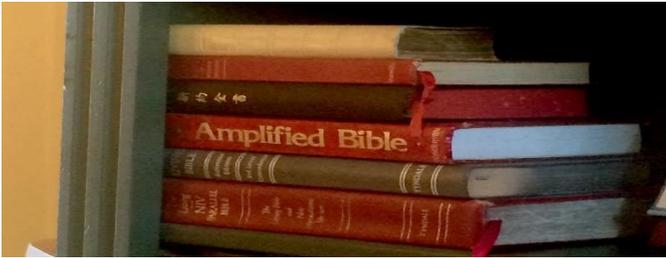


Topic 23: Bible Study and Reading *Being Rooted in God's Truth*

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

Psalm 119:105

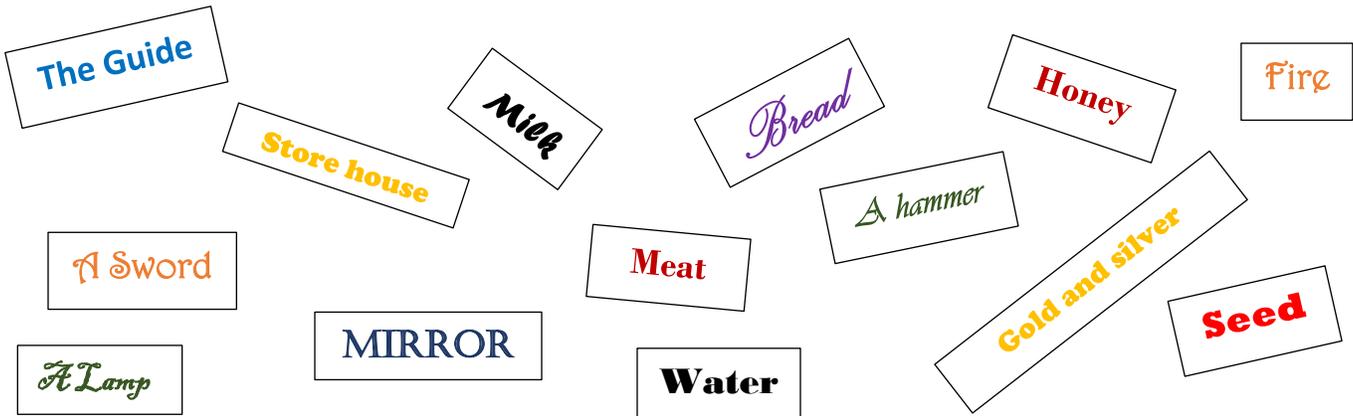
The Bible is the account of God's action in the world, and his purpose with all creation, which highlights His relationship with humankind.



It is God's Word

An indispensable, life-saving, life-changing, life enhancing revelation from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Bible likens itself to



- ❖ **A guide for living** life to the full. It gives us a road map for the perilous journey of life. Or to put it another way, on our voyage through life's ocean, the Bible is an anchor.
- ❖ **A storehouse** of wonderful stories for children and grownups. Remember Noah and the ark? Joseph's coat of many colors? Daniel in the lion's den? Jonah and the fish? The parables of Jesus? These stories emphasize the triumphs and failures of ordinary people.
- ❖ **A refuge** in trouble. People in pain, in suffering, in prison, and in mourning tell how turning to the Bible brought strength in their desperate hour.
- ❖ **A treasury** of insight as to who we are. We are not meaningless robots, but we are magnificent creatures of a God who loves us and gives us a purpose and a destiny.
- ❖ **A sourcebook** for everyday living. We find standards for our conduct, guidelines for knowing right from wrong, and principles to help us in a confused society where so often "anything goes."

From the International Bible Society

“Spiritual disciplines are the God given means we are to use in the spirit filled pursuit of godliness.” Donald Whitney

How God’s word impacts people’s lives

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

James 1:21-22

Receiving the word implanted

James 1:21

Hearing
Reading
Studying
Memorizing
Meditating
Praying

Being a doer of the word

James 1:22

Discipling
Teaching / Preaching
Obeying
Exhorting
Reminding
Empowering

Seven Ways to Read God’s Word

- ✓ **Prayerfully** Before you begin, ask God to speak. Ask him for “ears to hear.”
- ✓ **Expectantly** Believe that God wants to speak to you, even more than you want to hear from him. Then be alert for his voice.
- ✓ **Devotionally** See your Bible reading as a personal time with God rather than an assignment in trying to learn new information about God.
- ✓ **Slowly** Don’t be in a rush. It’s not a race. You don’t get a prize for finishing your reading quickly. Linger. Savor the words. Re-read them.
- ✓ **Comprehensively** You wouldn’t buy a best-selling novel (or a work of non-fiction), let it fall open to page 134, and start reading there. Or only read the final four chapters. Why do we do that with the Bible? Resist the urge to read randomly.
- ✓ **Regularly** Exercising once every three weeks is better than nothing. But such a sporadic training regimen isn’t likely to get you in great physical condition. In the same way, occasional Bible reading isn’t the optimal way to cultivate your relationship with God or prepare for helping others know God.
- ✓ **Obediently** Always read with a mindset of “I will do whatever God commands.”

- Avoid Wrong Bible Interpretations
- Leave our presuppositions behind
- Resist getting overly creative.

Take into account historical, cultural, grammatical, and literary realities.

Step 3 - Applying God's Word

What do I need to do?

Applying the Bible is the final, crucial step of Bible study. This is where we put God's truth into practice.

Individual *applications* of biblical principle will look very different to everyone. For example,

To Find Good Applications

After you have carefully observed a Bible passage and prayerfully determined what truth God meant to convey through the passage, you need to state that truth in the form of a broad "now" principle

The What About Me

A lot of people (especially people who are upwards of 30 years old) are inclined to think *I can't memorize a bunch of Bible verses!*

Not true! Think of all the information, all the facts you've already got stored in your mind – computer passwords, pin numbers, funny lines from movies, phone numbers, important dates (like your anniversary – right, guys?), addresses, etc. And that doesn't include all the song lyrics you know by heart.

The truth is we *can* memorize Scripture. The only question is *will* we?

Why does Scripture memory matter?

Internalizing God's truth is life-changing! It:

- Gives us victory over sin. Psalm 119:11 says that when we hide God's Word in our hearts, it is a great defense against temptation. Jesus proved this in his own wilderness struggle against the devil (Matthew 4:1-11).
- Radically affects our lives by helping renew our minds (Romans 12:1)
- Helps us overcome worry; God promises to flood our lives with peace when our minds are fixed on him and his Word (Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:6-8).
- Gives us confidence when we share our faith (1 Peter 3:15). No longer will we feel tongue-tied or wonder what to say in a conversation about spiritual matters.

When is the best time to memorize?

Most people find the best times are probably just before going to bed, or when you first wake up in the morning. But it may be that your mind is sharpest at 2:15 in the afternoon, or around lunchtime. The point is, there is no "right" time. Just do it whenever you can really focus and concentrate.

NOTE: Some people like to memorize while running or walking (*Warning! You can twist an ankle doing it this way!*)

How much Scripture should I memorize?

Don't get too ambitious and try to memorize all four gospels the first week (at least not in Greek). Shoot for one or two verses per week, and keep reviewing them until you really have them down.

What is the "trick"?

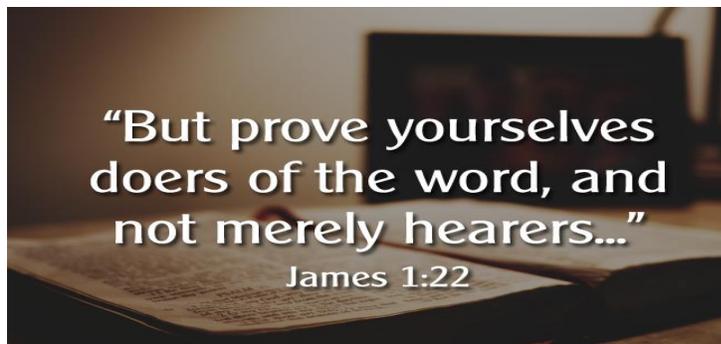
Now we get down to the nitty-gritty. Here are some tips for getting God's Word into your mind and heart:

- Pick out the verse you intend to memorize.
- Read the chapter that contains the verse so that you understand the context – what's going on in the background.
- Include the reference (example, Psalm 119:105) as part of the verse. Say this *before* reading the verse and again *after* you've finished. This is important because it helps you remember exactly where the verse is located. Then you won't get in situations where you end up saying, "Well, I don't remember where that verse is, but I know it's in the Bible *somewhere*."
- Read the verse several times out loud. This gives you the flow of the verse.
- Break the verse into chunks, memorizing phrase by phrase. Say the reference by itself. Then the reference and the first "chunk." Then the reference, the first, and the second part of the verse. And so forth, until you've said the reference, the whole verse, and the reference again.
- Carefully write the verse on an index card, note pad, or in your mobile phone, thinking about it as you go. This helps cement it in your mind. For visual learners, writing the verse works better than merely saying it over and over. Once you've written the verse down, take it with you everywhere you go and . . .
- Review your pants off! (Not *literally*, of course, but several times each day during the next two or three days).

That's all there is to it. Isn't that simple?

A FINAL REMINDER

God will help you as you memorize. He wants his Word to take root and bear fruit in your life even more than you do. (See Deuteronomy 6:6 and Colossians 3:16.) You can count on his help!



CLASSIC BIBLE STUDY

Application Questions:

- Is there an overt command here to obey?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a new truth about God in which I can trust?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a behavior to renounce?
- Is there an attitude to embrace?
- Is there an example to follow?