

Church of God

Sunday School

Study ^{the} Bible



THE CHRISTIAN'S TOOLBOX — BIBLE STUDY

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Bible study brings understanding (Proverbs 2:1-6; 2 Timothy 3:14-17).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** A lack of knowledge brings spiritual destruction (Hosea 4:6; Isaiah 5:13).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Ask God what you should study (Matthew 7:7-8; James 1:5).
- ❑ **Thursday:** God wants us to study His Word (Isaiah 34:16; Ezra 7:10; Acts 17:11).
- ❑ **Friday:** Study so that you will know what you believe (2 Timothy 1:12; John 20:30-31).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Study so that you will be ready to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15).

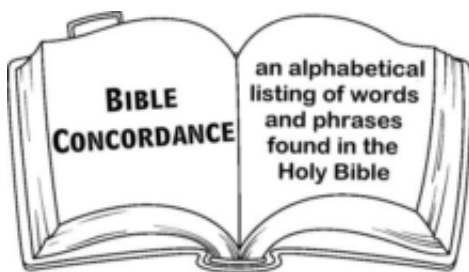
MEMORY VERSE: *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*
—2 Timothy 2:15

Is Studying the Bible Different From Reading the Bible?

In the previous lesson we learned that daily Bible reading is vital for the Christian. Is Bible study the same as daily Bible reading or is it something different? Some people have made this comparison: Bible reading is like looking for gold on the ground or perhaps in a stream. Some gold will be found, but the "mother lode" (abundance of gold) is found by digging deep. Daily Bible reading will give you spiritual strength and guidance, but the deep truths that God wants to share with you are found through Bible study. Both are necessary if you want to continue to grow spiritually.

How is Bible study different from Bible reading? By looking at the definition of the word "study," you can see that it is much more than just reading a verse or a chapter. Just as digging in the earth for gold requires much more time and effort than just bending over and picking up gold, so Bible study will require more time and effort than your daily Bible reading. It is important you realize that both are necessary, and one does not replace the other.

Definition of "study":
The pursuit of knowledge, as by reading, observation, or research. To read carefully; to memorize; to give careful thought to; to examine closely.



Preparations for Bible Study

If you were going to search for gold, what would you need? Could you dig through the dirt with just your hands or would you need tools? It is the same with studying the Bible. Before beginning a Bible study, you should consider gathering some tools that will help you. First, you need your Bible. Next, you might want to get a notebook and a pencil or pen to write down what you are studying. Does your Bible have a concordance? Many Bibles have a concordance in the back. This is a great study tool that will help you look up words and phrases in the Bible. Also, a dictionary is useful for looking up the definitions of words.

After gathering the basic tools, the next question is what to study and how to study. There are many different ways to study the Bible. You might try one approach, and if that does not work, try another. Or you might want to change study styles to help you learn in different ways. Most important, do not feel that you have to study the Bible like other Christians. God will help you to find the way that is best for you.



How to Know What to Study

No doubt there are hundreds of subjects you could study in the Bible. How do you know which one to choose? Again, it is similar to mining for gold. Do you just begin digging anywhere? Or would it be wise to speak to a geologist (someone who studies what the Earth is made of and how it was formed)? Before beginning a Bible study, wouldn't it be best to speak to the One who knows exactly what the Bible contains (the Author)? Ask Him to guide you in finding the right Bible study for you.

Another tip when searching for gold is to talk to people who have found gold. How did they know where to look? How did they go about digging out the gold? What were their favorite tools? God has placed spiritual people in your life (parents, a pastor, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders) who know how to search out the deep treasures of God's Word. Ask them to share the way they study the Bible, how they know what topics to study, and what their favorite Bible study tools are.

Bible Study Ideas

TOPICAL STUDY: this is a Bible study of the Scriptures on a specific subject. You might look in your concordance to find all the Scriptures listed about a topic, such as *hope* or *faith*. Write the Scriptures out in your notebook. What do these Scriptures mean to you? Write down your thoughts about these verses. Ask God to show you how these verses can be applied to your own life. This is called *application*. There are some study Bibles that have an alphabetical list of topics that you might find helpful.

BIBLE CHARACTER STUDY: this is a Bible study of one specific person in the Bible. Once you have decided which Bible character to study, look for all the Scriptures that mention your Bible character. (An unabridged Bible concordance can be helpful. Also, some study Bibles have a list of character studies.) What can you learn from this person's life? What were his or her attitudes and actions concerning God and His will for his or her life? How did he or she help others to know about God (or hinder others)? Write down the Scriptures about this Bible character, and also write down anything you have learned from this study.

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE STUDY: this is a study of one Book of the Bible. It will help your understanding of the verses written in a book if you know who wrote the book, when it was written, and the circumstances occurring when the book was written. Look at the beginning of the book you have chosen. Some Bibles will tell you who possibly wrote that book. Look up other verses in the Bible about that author. Some study Bibles have an analysis of each book of the Bible. (An analysis is an explanation of the nature and meaning of something.) Some Bibles have notes in the margin or above each chapter to help you understand what the verses are about. You might find other ways to study the background of why and when that book was written. Then, as you begin to read the chapters and verses of that book, you will have a new appreciation for it. Write down the Scriptures you are reading and what you have learned.

QUESTIONS: this is a study of your questions. It might be helpful to write down the questions that come to you during the preaching or during Sunday school or while doing another Bible study. Are there things about God, the church, or even yourself that you do not understand? Questions such as: Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? Does God really care about me? Use one of these questions as your next Bible study. Look up one or two key words in your concordance. For instance, you might look up the words *care* or *value* and find that God "careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7) so much that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30). Write down the Scriptures and what you have learned in your notebook.

The Importance of Bible Study

There will be times in your life when you will need to know what God's Word says and what it means. You might be questioned by others concerning what you believe. Do you *know* what you believe? Knowledge comes from studying your Bible. Understanding comes from letting God talk to you about what you have read. Then, when someone asks you what you believe or why you believe it, you will "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).



Bible Quiz



1. Is Bible study the same as Bible reading? Why or why not?

2. What is the definition of "study"?

3. What are some of the tools you might need for Bible study?

4. What is a Bible concordance?

5. Whom should you ask for help in determining what to study?

6. How could spiritual leaders help you know what to study?

7. What is a Topical Study?

8. Name one topic that you are interested in studying:

9. What is a Bible Character Study?

10. What Bible character might you be interested in studying?

11. What is a Books of the Bible Study?

12. Name one Book of the Bible you would like to study:

13. What is a Questions Study?

14. What question would be a good study topic?

Sample Bible Study

The Prodigal Son

Where is this story found in the Bible? (Tip: think of key words in the story, and use a concordance.)

What is a parable? (Use a dictionary) _____

Although the word "prodigal" is not found in the Bible, look it up in the dictionary to see why this son was called a prodigal. Write down the definition: _____

This parable was told with two other parables. What were they? _____

What do you think Jesus was trying to say when He told these three parables? What is a common theme?

CONTEXT

Who wrote this parable? _____ To whom was Jesus speaking when He told this parable? _____

Look at the verse before Jesus began telling the parable. What was Jesus accused of? _____

(Note: It is important you understand to whom Jesus was speaking and what the conversation was about.)

This is just the beginning! Continue through this parable, reading each verse closely. Look up the definitions of words you are unsure of. Ask yourself questions, such as: What is the spiritual lesson Jesus was trying to teach? What brought about the change in the Prodigal Son? Why did the older brother act resentful? How is the Prodigal Son's father like our Heavenly Father? and What spiritual lesson can I learn from this parable?