

Leadership Tips on Bible Study

A publication of
Leadership Development and Church Ministries
Open Bible Churches
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Fall-Winter 2005

QUOTES

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15

“Good Bible study is basically just the application of common sense to the words of Scripture. God made the Bible to be understandable to man. God made man to be a knower, capable of understanding His revelation.” Ron Julian, David and J.A. Crabtree, teachers and authors

“Although the Bible is a collection of 66 books written by many authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it was written one book at a time. And each book of the Bible has its own unique purpose and message.” Kay Arthur, teacher and author

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man [and woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” II Timothy 3:16-17

“Scripture does not yield its fruit to the lazy. Like any other discipline of life, Bible study pays in proportion of how much of an investment you make. The greater the investment, the greater the reward.” Howard Hendricks, teacher and author

“It takes work (a lot of work!), and some are more gifted at it than others, but in principle anyone can learn to interpret the Bible...” Ron Julian, David and J.A. Crabtree, teachers and authors

“Christians must not only become familiar with the rules of interpretation, but they must apply these rules to a life-long habit of Bible study.” Walter Henrichsen and Gayle Jackson, teachers and authors

“Effective [Christian] leaders should have an appropriate, unique, lifelong plan for mastering the Word in order to use it with impact in their ministries.” J. Robert Clinton, teacher and author

“Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.” Psalm 119:133

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Uniqueness of the Bible

- A. Production
1. 66 books (39 in OT; 27 in NT)

2. More than 40 authors
 3. Written over a span of 1500 years (1400 BC to 100 AD)
 4. Written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek)
- B. Proclamations
1. Theological
 2. Prophetic
 3. Historical
- C. Product
1. Transformed lives
 2. Influenced societies
 3. Impacted history

Overview of Books of the Bible

Old Testament (39 books in 5 sections)

- A. Pentateuch (creation through the Exodus) – 5 books
- Genesis
 - Exodus
 - Leviticus
 - Numbers
 - Deuteronomy
- B. Historical (Promised Land through the return of the remnant) – 12 books
1. Theocratic books (1405-1043 BC)
 - Joshua
 - Judges
 - Ruth
 2. Monarchical Books (1043-586 BC)
 - I & II Samuel
 - I & II Kings
 - I & II Chronicles
 3. Restoration Books (605-536 BC)
 - Ezra
 - Nehemiah
 - Esther
- C. Poetical (emphasizes a life-style of godliness) – 5 books
- Job
 - Psalms
 - Proverbs
 - Ecclesiastes
 - Song of Solomon
- D. Major Prophets (parallel historical books) – 5 books
- Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Lamentations
 - Ezekiel
 - Daniel
- E. Minor Prophets (parallel historical books) – 12 books
- Hosea
 - Joel

- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

New Testament (27 books in 3 sections)

- A. Historical – 5 books
 - 1. Gospels
 - Matthew
 - Mark
 - Luke
 - John
 - 2. Acts
- B. Pauline Epistles – 13 letters
 - 1. Churches
 - Romans
 - I & II Corinthians
 - Galatians
 - Ephesians
 - Philippians
 - Colossians
 - I & II Thessalonians
 - 2. People
 - I & II Timothy
 - Titus
 - Philemon
- C. Non-Pauline Epistles and Revelation – 8 letters and Revelation
 - 1. Non-Pauline Epistles
 - Hebrews
 - James
 - I & II Peter
 - I, II & III John
 - Jude
 - 2. Revelation

Introduction and Overview adapted from
Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible
 by Walter Hendrichsen and Gayle Jackson

CANONIZATION AND AUTHENTICITY

How Did We Get the Bible? _____

- I. Process of Canonization
 - A. Old Testament
 1. Law was canonized first (early in the period after the return from the Babylonian exile – see Nehemiah 8:1-9, 38)
 2. Prophets were canonized next (late in the third century BC – see Jeremiah 7:25, Ezekiel 38:17, Zechariah 1:4, 7:7 and Daniel 9:2)
 3. Writings were last (end of the first century AD at Council of Jamnia in 70 AD)
 4. Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) – earliest references between 250-150 BC (used by Greek-speaking Jews) – included Hebrew Bible and some non-canonical materials (53 total books)
 5. Dead Sea Scrolls (found in 1947 at Qumran near the Dead Sea) – about 500 documents which were written during the two centuries prior to 70 AD (100 of these documents being copies of books of the Hebrew Bible – copies of all books except Esther)
 - B. New Testament
 1. Early Church – Marcion (140 AD) listed 11 NT books (Luke and 10 Pauline letters) as accepted early Christian documents. Irenaeus (130-202 AD) listed the 4 Gospels, 13 Pauline letters, 3 non-Pauline letters and Revelation as accepted Christian documents.
 2. Old Latin version (150-170 AD) included the 4 Gospels, 13 Pauline letters, 4 non-Pauline letters and Revelation.
 3. 4th Century – Eusebius of Caesarea (325-340 AD) differentiated accepted, disputed, rejected and heretical books. His list included 4 Gospels, 13 Pauline letters, Hebrews, I Peter, I John and Revelation as accepted (James, II Peter, II & III John and Jude were disputed). Athanasius (367 AD) was first to list all 27 NT books as accepted.
 4. Third Council of Carthage (397 AD) – Western church officially accepted 27 books as “canonical” books.
 5. Latin Vulgate (404 AD) – official Roman Catholic Bible (designated at Council of Trent in 1546 AD) authored by Jerome established order of NT books.
 6. Early Manuscripts – John Ryland manuscript, 130 AD, Chester Beatty papyri, 155 AD, and Bodmer papyri, 200 AD.
- II. Criteria for Canonization
 - A. Old Testament
 1. Acceptance in the Jewish community
 2. Acceptance by Christ
 3. Acceptance by the Apostles
 - B. New Testament
 1. Apostolic authority – written by an Apostle or someone closely associated with an Apostle.
 2. Antiquity – written during the Apostolic age
 3. Orthodoxy – teaching consistent with Apostolic faith
 4. Catholicity – accepted by the wider church
 5. Tradition – accepted by wider church over the years
 6. Inspiration – recognized by wider church as having been inspired by the Holy Spirit

How Did We Get the Bible? adapted from
The Canon of Scripture by F. F. Bruce

Is the Bible Reliable? _____

- I. Critical Issues of Authenticity
 - A. Are the books of the Bible historically credible?
 - B. Did Jesus actually live?

C. Was Jesus who the Bible claims him to be?

II. Did Jesus Actually Live?

A. Biblical evidence

1. Bibliographical test – over 22,000 copies of NT manuscripts in existence today (more manuscript authority than any other literature from antiquity)
2. Internal evidence test – written by eyewitnesses (i.e. Luke 1:1-3, 3:1; John 19:35, II Peter 1:16; I John 1:3)

B. External evidence

1. ancient secular writers – Thallus' (52 AD) and Phlegon's (140 AD) references to the crucifixion are quoted by Julius Africanus in his historical writings (221 AD)
2. Josephus – 3 passages in his *Antiquities* (completed in 93 AD): chronology, John the Baptist, James and Jesus
3. Early church fathers – Eusebius (130 AD) makes reference to NT authors and their writings (John, Mark, and Peter) and Irenaeus (180 AD) makes reference to NT authors and their writings (Matthew, Peter, Paul, Mark, Luke, and John)

III. Was Jesus Who the Bible Claims Him to Be?

A. Prophetic evidence

1. Fulfilled OT Messianic prophecies (322 prophetic predictions literally fulfilled)
2. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah (79 of 80 “son of man” references in NT refer to Jesus, also see Luke 4:14-29)

B. Empty tomb

C. Apostolic evidence

1. Eyewitness accounts (Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:8, 2:24, 2:32, 3:15, 4:33, 5:32, 10:39, 10:41, 13:31, 22:15, 23:11, 26:16; I Corinthians 15:4-9, 15:15; I John 1:2)
2. Convinced of his life, death and resurrection (Luke 1:1-4)
3. Died for their beliefs (Peter, Andrew, Philip, Simon, James, son of Alphaeus, Bartholomew – crucified; Matthew and James, son of Zebedee – sword; Thaddaeus – arrows; James, brother of Jesus – stoned; Thomas – spear; John – natural causes)

D. Evidence demands a verdict – Jesus was either:

1. A liar
2. Crazy
3. Who he claimed to be

Is the Bible Reliable? adapted from
He Walked Among Us
by Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson

BIBLE STUDY SKILLS

Basic Bible Study Skills

I. Observation

A. Definition – “The recording of what may be seen in a selected method of Bible study.”

B. Right mental attitude

1. Act of the will
2. Persistence to know
3. Patience
4. Diligent recording

5. Caution
 - a. Don't lose yourself in details
 - b. Don't stop with observation
 - c. Don't give equal weight to everything
- C. Basic questions
 1. Who
 2. What
 3. Where
 4. When
 5. Why
 6. How
- D. Form or structure of the passage
 1. Relating the way things are
 2. Admonition or exhortation
 3. Teaching
 4. Parables
 5. Narrative
 6. Other: poetry or prophetic
- E. Find the key words and define them
- F. Consider comparisons and contrasts
- G. Investigate the use of OT references
- H. Note progression of idea or thought chain
- I. Be alert for proportions
- J. Record repetitions
- K. Visualize the verbs
- L. Picture the illustrations
- M. Examine the explanations
- N. Be sensitive to connecting words
- O. Be willing to change your viewpoints
- P. Mark your Bible as you read [or write notes on a separate paper]

II. Interpretation

- A. Definition – “Understanding the meaning of what has been observed in the Bible.”
- B. Purpose – why the writer is writing the book/why the person is saying what he/she is saying?
- C. Key thought – what is “big idea,” theme, topic?
- D. Flow – how does the writer/speaker arrive at his/her conclusion?

III. Correlation

- A. Definition – “Relating what is being studied with other portions of Scripture and within the section itself.”
- B. Cross-references
 1. Words
 2. Parallel verses
 3. References to other passages
 4. Compatible ideas
 5. Contrasting ideas
- C. Different translations/paraphrases
- D. Detailed outline
- E. Charts
 1. Horizontal
 2. Vertical

3. Pyramid
4. Illustrative
5. Combination

IV. Application

A. Definition – “Implementing what has been studied to daily Christian living.”

B. Procedure

1. Use principle of observation
 - a. Example to follow?
 - b. Command to obey?
 - c. Error to avoid?
 - d. Sin to forsake?
 - e. Promise to claim?
 - f. New insight to gain?
2. Follow rules of interpretation
3. Be prayerful and selective
4. Be specific
5. Be personal
6. Write out application
7. Set up check-up procedure

C. Example

1. State problem
2. Give example
3. State biblical solution
4. Describe specific action steps

Basic Bible Study Skills adapted from
Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible
 by Walter Hendrichsen and Gayle Jackson

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

I. Interpretation is for Everyone

A. Assumptions

1. The Bible is authoritative
2. The Bible contains its own laws of interpretation
3. The primary aim of interpretation is to discover the author’s meaning
4. Language can communicate spiritual truth

B. Review of four basic parts in studying the Bible correctly

1. Observation – “what do I see?”
2. Interpretation – “What does it mean?”
3. Correlation – “How does this relate to what the rest of the Bible says?”
4. Application – “what does it mean to me?”

II. Principles of Interpretation

A. General principles

1. Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative
2. The Bible interprets itself; Scripture best explains Scripture
3. Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary for us to understand and properly interpret the Scriptures

4. Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in light of personal experience
 5. Biblical examples are authoritative only when supported by a command
 6. The primary purpose of the Bible is to change our lives, not increase our knowledge
 7. Each Christian has the right and responsibility to investigate and interpret the Word of God for himself
 8. Church history is important but not decisive in the interpretation of Scripture
 9. The promises of God throughout the Bible are available to the Holy Spirit for the believers of every generation
- B. Grammatical principles
1. Scripture has only one meaning and should be taken literally
 2. Interpret words in harmony with their meaning in the times of the author
 3. Interpret a word in relation to its sentence and context
 4. Interpret a passage in harmony with its context
 5. When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement may be considered figurative
 6. When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement may be considered figurative
 7. The principal parts and figures of a parable represent certain realities. Consider only these principal parts and figures when drawing conclusions
 8. Interpret the words of the prophets in their usual, literal and historical sense, unless the context or manner in which they are fulfilled clearly indicates they have a symbolic meaning. Their fulfillment may be in installments, each fulfillment being a pledge of that which is to follow
- C. Historical principles
1. Since Scripture originated in a historical context, it can be understood only in the light of Biblical history
 2. Though God's revelation in the Scripture is progressive, both Old and New Testaments are essential parts of this revelation and form a unit
 3. Historical facts or events become symbols of spiritual truths only if the Scriptures so designate them
- D. Theological principles
1. You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically
 2. A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it sums up and includes all that the Scriptures say about it
 3. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as scriptural in the confident belief they will resolve themselves into a higher unity
 4. A teaching merely implied in Scripture may be considered biblical when a comparison of related passages supports it

Principles of Interpretation adapted from
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 by Walter Hendrichsen and Gayle Jackson

PRINCIPLES OF APPLICATION

- A. Foundational Principles
1. Application must be focused on pleasing God rather than pleasing others
 2. Every problem a person has is related to his or her concept of God
 3. Attitude is as important as action in obeying God's commands

4. Surrender is the cornerstone of all application. Refusal to surrender blurs our ability to discover and do God's will
 5. Application is a process, not a single event
- B. Principles of Personal Responsibility
1. In those areas of life not addressed by the Scriptures, we must develop personal convictions to govern our behavior
 2. When applying the Scriptures, we must make a distinction between the positive and negative commandments
 3. Each person is individually responsible for applying the Scriptures to his or her own life
 4. In all things, we must be teachable. We must be willing to admit that we are wrong, change direction, and appear inconsistent
 5. The acknowledgement of wrong must be followed by restitution when it is within our power
- C. Principles of Our Perception of God's Word
1. We must consider God's command rather than His chastisement as the motive for application
 2. Knowledge carries with it both privilege and responsibility
 3. There is no such thing as a nonessential command
 4. We must not insist that we will obey only after a seeming contradiction in commandments is resolved
- D. Principles on the Product of Disobedience
1. Although there is no distinction between sins, there is a difference in consequences
 2. Disobedience adds to confusion when adverse circumstances come
 3. God's permissive will is entered only through a failure to apply the Scriptures
 4. We must refuse to yield to what we know is wrong. Satisfying the drive will only momentarily alleviate the hunger and will stimulate a desire for more
 5. Culture cannot serve as an excuse for not obeying God's commands
 6. The differences between a trial and a temptation lies in the response
- E. Principles on the Life of Application
1. Circumstances do not indicate God's approval or disapproval
 2. The validity of personal application is not dependent on another's acceptance or approval
 3. We must resist the temptation to judge others as less spiritual when they do what the Lord has forbidden us to do
 4. The path to intellectual excellence is curiosity, investigation, and experimentation; but the path to moral excellence is obedience
 5. Our conduct, good or bad, will affect the generations to follow
- F. Principles on People in the Process of Application
1. We must maintain an accountability relationship with a group of people who will exhort us to faith and good works
 2. Godly counsel is helpful in the quest of obedience, but it should never be used to avoid personal responsibility

Principles of Application adapted from
Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible
 by Walter Hendrichsen and Gayle Jackson

BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

Bible Study Methods

Arthur, Kay. How to Study Your Bible
 Boice, James Montgomery, Standing on the Rock

Hendricks, Howard and William. Living By the Book
Hendrichsen, Walter and Gayle Jackson. Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible
Julian, Ron and J. A. Crabtree and David Crabtree. The Language of God

Bible Study Tools

The Contemporary Parallel New Testament
The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
Elwell, Walter. Topical Analysis of the Bible
Vine, W.E. Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words
Wilkinson, Bruce and Kenneth Boa. Talk Thru the Bible

Leadership

Blackaby, Henry and Tom Blackaby. The Man God Uses
Clinton, J. Robert. Having a Ministry That Lasts by Becoming a Bible Centered Leader
Malphurs, Aubrey. Being Leaders
Sanders, J. Oswald. Spiritual Leadership
Stanley, Andy. Like a Rock

SELF-STUDY BIBLE/THEOLOGY CURRICULUM

Biblical Authority

Boice, James Montgomery. Standing on the Rock, 1994, Baker

Bible Study

Arthur, Kay. How to Study Your Bible, 1994, Harvest House
Henrichsen, Walter and Gayle Jackson. Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible, 1990,
Zondervan

Bible Overview

Stedman, Ray. Adventuring Through the Bible, 1997, Discovery House
Wilkinson, Bruce. Talk Thru the Bible, 1983, Nelson

Old Testament

Bright, John. A History of Israel, 1975, Westminster
Geisler, Norman. A Popular Survey of the Old Testament, 2003, Prince Press
Wood, Leon. The Prophets of Israel, 1979, Baker

New Testament

Bright, John. The Kingdom of God, 1953, Abingdon
Gundry, Robert. A Survey of the New Testament, 1981, Zondervan
Ladd, George Eldon. A Theology of the New Testament, 1975, Eerdmans
Stott, John. The Cross of Christ, 1986, InterVarsity

Theology

Duffield, Guy. Foundations of Pentecostal Theology, 1987, LIFE

Grudem, Wayne. Bible Doctrine, 1999, Zondervan

Packer, James. Knowing God, 1973, InterVarsity

Apologetics

Corduan, Winfried. Reasonable Faith, 1993, Broadman & Holman Publishers

Geisler, Norman. Christian Apologetics, 2002, Prince

Church History

Cairns, Earle. Christianity Through the Centuries, 1982, Zondervan

An Endless Line of Splendor, 1986, Tyndale House

Latourette, Kenneth Scott. A History of Christianity, Vol. I & II, 2005, Prince Press

Shelley, Bruce. Church History in Plain Language, 1995, Thomas Nelson Publishers