

PRINCIPLES OF FRUITFUL BIBLE STUDY

Recap

2 Tim 2:15

- Now if we take time to read through 2 Timothy, we will discover that when Paul was handing over the baton of the ministry to Timothy,
 - he was primarily concerned with the Word of God.

He said elsewhere **2 Tim 1:13**

ESV

Follow the pattern of the sound^[a] words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

AMP

Keep and follow the pattern of sound teaching (doctrine)

KJV

Hold fast the form of sound words, which though hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

'Timothy, retain the standard of sound words that you have heard from me'

Continues to say to Tim

2 Tim 2:2

'These entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also'

To perpetuate/propagate sound doctrine

- Tells him not to stumble over words and wind up on a doctrinally wrong tangent
- He in effect warns in verses 16 and 18 of the same chapter, 'Don't deviate doctrinally and upset the faith of some.'

2 Timothy 3:15 Paul says to him that the Word of God is the source of the knowledge of our salvation.

and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

And in verses 16 and 17, Paul explains how that leads to growing in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ and being perfected by God's Word.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God^{a]} may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Then in **2 Tim 4:2** comes that great exhortation 'Preach the word.'

preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

- All of these appeals are built upon the foundation of one particular verse

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to show yourself approved unto God (not to men), a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth

- There Paul is specifically telling Timothy/us that in order to minister effectively,
 - One must correctly interpret the Word of God.
 - In order to understand what God means by what He says, you must divide the Word of God correctly.

The Principles of bible study

In order to correctly divide the word of truth (study) – Word of God, we need to follow some principles:

- Whoever you are – whether you are a pastor with numerous theological degrees or a new believer in Christ,
- a series of simple steps for fruitful Bible study can successfully lead you into the Word of God.

- You'll come away with the deep satisfaction of knowing that God has spoken to you through His Word and that you understand the message.

1. Affirmation

Sir Walter Scott was a great and versatile Scottish novelist, poet, playwright and historian. While on his deathbed, asked a friend to read to him. This friend was of course puzzled, as he scanned the shelf of books that Scott had written – wondering which one he wanted him to read from. So, he asked Sir Scott, 'What book shall I read?'

To which Sir Walter replied, 'Why do you ask that question?'

There is **but one book; bring the Bible.**'

You too as you sit down to read and study the Bible – you need to have that mindset

STEP ONE INVOLVES AFFIRMING THAT:

'all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work' (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

- It is God's holy Scripture (Rom. 1:2).
- The Bible does not compete with other books for the spot-on truth.
- It is the truth (John 17:17)

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

- No other book comes near as its equal.

David speaks of this book thus Ps. 119:98–100

- It has the ability to make one wiser than his enemies,
- it delivers more insight than all teachers,
- and gives more understanding than the aged.

- That is why – the disciples of Jesus – **the WORD in flesh** – when seen by people
- They were shocked by how bold and knowledgeable, they were – yet they had not been to a theological school.

Acts 4

- Peter and John – healed the crippled beggar (crippled from his mother's womb) that sat at the gate of the temple;
- They continued to teach and preach to the people.
- As they were speaking the priests and the captain of the Sadducees came upon them – greatly annoyed because - teaching people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead
- They had them arrested
- Next day – paraded in Jerusalem before the rulers and elders and the scribes – Sadducees
- They are joined by Annas the high priest and Caiaphas.
- Asking them – by what power or by what name they preach and teach – and heal – the crippled man at the beautiful gate had been healed

Peter filled with the Holy Spirit – preached to them and made it clear to them that

- they spoke and acted by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth who they had crucified
- but was now risen from the dead and has now become the cornerstone
- is the one who had healed the man
- the only one through whom salvation can come to man

Vs 13

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Therefore, every time you open the Bible to study:

- Approach it with the fresh affirmation that it is 'God's Word.'
- accept it as inerrant (truthful) and infallible (trustworthy).
- That is when it will become your teacher and
- also, your supreme authority for both your belief and behavior.

Approach it with the reverence it deserves – know that you are not just reading mere words – but the WORD of God Almighty.

2. Preparation

George Mueller was a great Christian evangelist – and was once asked how one would study the Bible in the most beneficial/ rewarding way.

He said that he had two rules of thumb.

- First, prayerfully seek God's Spirit as primary teacher.
- Second, let the Holy Spirit teach at the appropriate time.

That is to say, if during bible study the answer does not come straightaway, you have to keep pursuing the Spirit's help.

Psalm 119 is loaded with the writer's love of Scripture.

- And We can learn much from his prayer.
- In our preparation to study the Word of truth – we can pray like this:
 1. 'Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law' (Ps. 119:18)
 - It leads to knowledge.
 2. 'Blessed art thou, O Lord: Teach me Thy statutes' (Ps. 119:12).
 - It leads to understanding.
 3. 'Oh that my ways may be established to keep Thy statutes!' (Ps. 119:5).
 - It leads to obedience.

3. Observation

Steps of observation

- i. Observe *singularly*,
 - that is, at first do not look at any book other than the Bible.
 - Put God's Book in a place all of its own.
 - Try to read through a text a number of times before you move ahead.
 - Try this with Psalm 13.
- ii. Observe *carefully*.

Spurgeon quotes from a writer of his day:

'Most read their Bibles like cows that stand in thick grass, and trample under their feet the finest flowers and herbs.'

- Observe with the idea of discovering the detailed beauty that God has put into His Word.
- Take your time and concentrate.

- iii. Observe *thoroughly*.
 - Start with the knowledge that you will never see it all in just one study;
 - but purpose to see as much as you can.

One writer put it this way:

'It shall greatly help you to understand Scripture, if you mark, not only what is spoken or written,

Ask some questions as you study

But of whom?

And to whom?

With what words?

And what time?

Where?

To what intent?

With what circumstances?

Considering what goes before and after.'

Or in other words, observe both the content and the context.

iv. Observe *systematically*.

- Martin Luther studied the Bible as one who gathered apples.

Remember how we used to gather mangoes:

- 'First, you shake the whole tree, that the ripest may fall.

Martin Luther said:

- He then climbs the tree and shake each limb, and then each branch and then each twig, and then I look under each leaf.'

v. Observe *intimately*.

- Look at it with the realization you are reading a message from the heavenly Father to you His spiritual child.
- It's like a letter from home while you are far away.

You will need a notebook and a pen/ document processor open on your computer/tablet or phone:

Why?

As a detective – you need to write down the clues – what you have observed

- Dynamic bible study requires that you write down what you have observed and discovered
- No detail is small or useless
- You cannot study the bible without writing something down
- You cannot speak to a President of Queen without writing something down – cause what they are saying is important and loaded
- What about God?
- Have a spiritual notebook – where you write down the insights that you receive as you study the word

- If you really value the nuggets of truth that you have uncovered in the word of God – you will take note of them.
- You will need them – because they may not make sense there and then, but they will later when you refer back to them in subsequent study
- They will also inform your further study – investigation as we will see later

3. **Correlation**

Correlating/ associating/comparing/ linking – what you have observed with other scriptures

In reality although the Bible comprises of 66 books – it is actually one Book.

- All 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New are parts of 'The Book' we call God's Word.
- Therefore, when studying a text, it is vitally important that you ask what else God has said about a certain theme or subject.
- Need to ask how else has a certain word been used in Scripture?
- What else has happened in a location in biblical history?
- Is there anything else about the passage I can learn elsewhere in the Bible?

Correlation allows us to see the part (the text we study) in the light of the whole (the entire Bible).

- It allows you to gain a proper biblical perspective—so you can major on majors and minor on minors.
- Once the whole is understood, the part will take on added meaning.

Cross referencing:

- One of the best ways correlate is by using the cross references in your Bible to get a broader understanding.

Example:

Rom 6:12

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts

Cross reference:

Ps.119:133

Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.

13. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness but present yourselves to God.

Cross -reference

Roman 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

- Chain reference Bibles are also helpful.
- The ultimate in tools to do this is *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*.
- Correlation helps flesh out the text.
- It provides depth and is a great source of illustration.
- Also, it prevents us from drawing wrong conclusions from only part of what the Bible says.
- This expanded or theological emphasis constantly allows us to understand the part in light of its whole.