

How to Study the Bible

Pray

Ask God to search your heart. Confess any known sins to him. Ask him to make you ready and eager to learn. Ask him to teach you and show you what he wants you to see.

Ask Questions

What do these verses say? What questions do you have of them? Be alert by looking for key words, ideas, thoughts and/or phrases. Look for things which are repeated. Read at least two good translations (ESV, NASB, NIV). Write down everything you see.

Determine Meaning

Don't ask, "What do these verses mean to me?" Ask, "What would the original hearers have understood them to mean?" Remember: God determines the meaning and our task is to discover it. Other things to keep in mind: Ask what kind of literature this is. Look at the larger context of the passage. Look for where related material might be found in Scripture. Consider the culture of the recipients and what was going on. Consult a good Study Bible (ESV Study Bible, NIV Study Bible) if needed to see what others have said.

Arrive at Principles

Prayerfully come up with principles from the verses you are choosing. A principle is a timeless truth that works in any culture at all times. If you come up with a principle that only applies to Americans, you haven't quite arrived at the destination. Keep praying and working at it.

Develop an Application

A good application takes the timeless principle(s) you arrived at above and develops a game plan for how they will impact your life. A good application is an "I will..." statement that flows from the study you have done. A good application is both personal and practical. It can be measured and you will know when you've done it.

How to Read the Bible

A fundamental component for growing as a disciple is the Bible. It's in the pages of Scripture that we come to meet Jesus, know Jesus and find life and growth and maturity and joy. How, then, can we read the Bible in a way that helps us become maturing followers of Christ? Here is a simple strategy that can help. It's called the R.E.S.T. plan.

Read

The most important thing about reading is, well, reading. And do so consistently. Therefore, the first step is to choose a plan to follow. There are many on the internet. Simply type "Bible Reading Plans" into your search engine and go from there.

Engage the Scriptures

Once you start, it's important to think about what you're reading. You may want to do some extra studying (a Study Bible can be helpful, as can our church library). The important thing is to allow what you've read to sink into your mind and heart. This happens as you think deeply about it.

Sit With Jesus

After reading and engaging, spend some time in prayer and ask Jesus what he wants you to hear? It might be that he highlights a word, or a phrase. Trust that he has something for you as you seek him through his Word.

Trust & Obey

What if you assumed there was a step of obedience He was calling you to everyday? Would that change the way you read? After sensing what step of obedience he's calling you to take, make it your intention to follow his lead by the power of Spirit.

Read. Engage. Sit. Trust. Try reading the Bible using this methodology and see how it helps you become a disciple of Jesus.