

## LEARNING TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

Dr. Rich Denning

### I. Why Study the Bible?

- A. It is a **Letter** from God to you, although given through men (the writers were simply God's "messenger boys") (II Timothy 3:16).
- B. It helps **Sustain** spiritual life (John 6:63).
- C. It helps us determine the **Will** of God for our lives (Psalms 119:105).

[Parenthetical: In determining God's will regarding a particular situation, we have three sources that should be used together much as a sea captain might align three markers to guide him into an inlet. These three markers are:

1. The **Bible** -- does God say "yes," "no," or is He silent on the issue?
2. The **Spirit** -- the Holy Spirit guides us by giving us peace when on the right path and disturbing our peace when on the wrong one.
3. Our **Circumstances** -- if we pray, the Lord will open a door or close one, whichever is right for us (Revelation 3:8).

It is important to use these three together, not separately. Example: The circumstances, #3, may appear favorable for committing adultery, but we know from God's Word, #1, that it is forbidden under any circumstances and such an act would disturb our peace, #2.

II. How Do I Study the BIBLE?

- A. As a new Christian, it is wise to begin with the New Testament, inasmuch as it gives the basics for your growth. Later in your Christian walk, the Old Testament should be added because it will promote further understanding of the New Testament. An excellent approach is to read the Bible in Chronological order.
- B. Always interpret Scripture in the light of other Scripture. The Bible is its own best commentary.
- C. Always interpret Scripture in its Context -- that is, study the setting or circumstances under which it was given. It is helpful to determine who is speaking, to whom he is speaking, and if it has present-day application. Also, knowing the background of a book can assist understanding (especially reading prophecy).

III. Supplemental Helps

- A. Modern English Translations -- inasmuch as the King James Version was written in the language of that day (1600's), it is often helpful to use translations in contemporary language for better understanding. Examples are the New International Version, New King James Version, and the Amplified Bible.
- B. Many good Commentaries are available in one-volume editions, such as Matthew Henry or Clark's.
- C. Bible Dictionaries --- will enhance your study. Zondervan and Smith's are good examples.
- D. Bible Handbooks, such as Halley's, will help with determining the context of your study.
- E. Concordances, such as the one found in most Bibles, and exhaustive editions such as Strong's or Young's.

- F. Hebrew dictionaries (for the Old Testament) such as Wilson’s Word Studies. Greek dictionaries (for the New Testament such as Vine’s).
  - G. A Study Bible with good notes and a chain reference such as, The Full Life Study Bible, The Life Application Study Bible or Thompson Chain Reference Bible.
- IV. Some Helpful Information About the Bible
- A. The Bible contains 66 books.
  - B. The Bible has 2 major divisions. The Old Testament was written before the birth of Jesus and the New Testament records the life of Jesus and the beginning of the church. The word, “Testament” means covenant. So there is the Old Covenant (the Law given to Moses and the Prophets) and the New Covenant (Grace, through faith in the blood of Jesus).
    - 1. There are 39 books in the Old Testament.
    - 2. There are 27 books in the New Testament.
  - C. The first four books of the New Testament is referred to as the Gospels. Which means Good News!
  - D. The Last book of the Bible is Revelation. The original Greek word which is translated “Revelation” is *APOCALIPSO* which means an uncovering of that which was formerly not seen. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He has given to us the Revelation of Himself.
- V. A Suggested Devotional for New Christians
- A. It is important to begin the habit of listening and talking to God each day. Bible reading helps us know who God is and how we might grow in our relationship with Him.

1. To Have a Productive Bible Study:
  - a. PRAY TO UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURE: As you open your Bible, ask God to prepare your heart and mind to receive from His Word.
  - b. READ TO RECEIVE TRUTH: Allow your mind to be open to what God is really trying to say to you.
  - c. PERSONALIZE TO DAILY LIVING: Discover how the Scripture impacts our everyday life.
  - d. APPLY TO EXPERIENCE GROWTH: Realize that no growth occurs until application is made. Prepare for change.
  - e. MEMORIZE TO RETAIN KNOWLEDGE: True growth is maintained by the memorization of Scripture.
  
2. While Reading Try the Following:
  - a. Look for a verse that stands out to you personally.
  - b. Mark that verse with “FV” which stands for “Favorite Verse.”
  - c. Meditate on how and why this verse is your favorite.
  - e. Apply that verse to your daily life in your prayer time. From your first Scripture reading in Mark 1:1-12, verse 5, you might pray something like this:

(for yourself) “Thank You for Your faithfulness, God, to forgive my sin. Is there anything I need to confess?” (Pause. If there is, God will bring it

to mind.) I confess my sin of (name the sin).  
“Thank You for forgiving me.”

(for others) “I pray for (name the person) that  
they might begin to understand Your loving  
forgiveness as I am beginning to learn.”

READ	FAVORITE VERSE
Day 1 – Mark 1:1-12	_____
Day 2 – Mark 1:14-27	_____
Day 3 – Mark 1:29-43	_____
Day 4 – Mark 2:1-12	_____
Day 5 – Mark 2:13-27	_____
Day 6 – Continue your daily reading through the book of Mark in little devotional portions. After Mark, read the book of John. After John, read Philippians. After Philippians, read Acts. After Acts, read Romans.	