



REASONING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Private Times With God

How To Study God's Word More Effectively

Sometime ago someone asked me , but how do you study the Bible; and after careful consideration I decided to put in on paper (so to speak) and the outcome was what you are reading now. This method of bible study has been tried, weighed and proven as a most effective yet practical method for studying God's Word. This is a form that I have been using since as far back as I can remember. If you truly want to get a fuller understanding of the scriptures this is for you, the time it has taken me to put it together was not in vain. It has been a blessing for me and I am sure if you follow this proven system it will be to you as well.

Prayer: First things first

One would start off with Prayer; this prayer is preparing the soil of the heart to receive the word, as one would prepare the grounds (turning over the soil) before planting seeds for a garden. The prayer should be something along the lines of King Solomon's when he assumed the position of King, the Lord told him that he could request anything of Him, and his response was *'Lord God, give me Wisdom and Knowledge that I might be able to lead your people'*. As a child this scripture stood out so much to me that prior to studying God's Word, from as far back as I can remember studying - my prayer was and is *"Lord give me a clear understanding of your Word, that I may be able to share it in a way that if need be a small child can understand it"* And as the Lord has blessed King Solomon with Wisdom and Understanding, He has not failed me either.

The Holy Spirit: The Master Teacher

Part of that Wisdom from God revealed to me that the ultimate teacher of the Word is the Holy Spirit, and from a child I can truly say that the Holy Spirit was and is my best friend. It is the Holy Spirit that will teach us and lead us into all understanding of the truth. But that will not happen in ones life if the heart is not prepared, and

submissive. One may say, how is it that the Holy Spirit teaches us – First remember this, the Holy Spirit will not go against Himself, hence He is in complete agreement with the written Word of God. Many times the teaching of the Holy Spirit comes in the form of scriptural illuminations, as you study the scriptures you will get lessons from the Spirit of God by seeing or rather understanding the principle behind the Words you are reading. They are no longer just words on a page, but the Spirit of God has used some recent or past event in your life and pinpoints that, and He would say something like– “You see! That is what I'm saying to you, this is what that means.” As you continue on this path of submission; the illuminations become more and more evident. Then you will truly know what Jesus meant when He said "I will not leave you comfortless, but I will send the Comforter and he will Teach..."

Keep the Text within the Context: A Must Do

A very important part of this systematic studying of God's Word is to always keep the "text" within the "Context". You see you can take a verse of scripture and run with it, but is the underlining principle still there - "Keep the Text within its Context and you won't make it a Pretext" This is one way to not be ashamed for "Wrongly" dividing the Word of Truth!

Strongs or Englishmen Concordance

As I continue in my studies and listening to the Spirit of God and receiving that Wisdom, I realized that to get a clearer understanding of what the writers of the scriptures were conveying was to have some knowledge of the original language. After all our English Bibles are a translation of another language, so now I needed a few study tools - A "Concordance" this book will take every word in the scriptures and give a definition of that word from its original language, the Old Testament was written in Hebrew & Chaldee, the New Testament was written in Kione Greek. So I would take a verse of scripture and conduct a "Word Study", each word in that verse is written in the Concordance (A Strongs or Englishmen). This would be the first step in "In-depth Study".

Vines Expository Dictionary

There is another Study tool that is complimentary to the word study it is called a "Vines Expository Dictionary" this volume will give you a more in-depth definition of the word usage that you have just read about in the Concordance, I have learned that many of our English words as far as the scriptures are concerned are used in places where the true meaning is not understood. As an example, the Apostle Paul made a statement to the Church in Galatia that he was surprised at how they had succumbed to **another** Gospel, which he then said is not **another**... Now, if one was to read this and accept it without further study it sounds sort of contradictory, but by use of the study tools mentioned - "Concordance & Vines Expository Dictionary" you will see that there are two distinct Greek words used and each word has a different meaning, however our English translations use the one word **another**. The original language has two words, *heteros* (het'-er-os); which means other; and *allos* (al'-los); different (in many applications):

allos NT:243 and *heteros* NT:2087 have a difference in meaning, which despite a tendency to be lost, is to be observed in numerous passages. *Allos* expresses a numerical difference and denotes "another of the same sort"; *hetero* expresses a qualitative difference and denotes "another of a different sort".

So, by this we see that the gospel that Paul was talking about was not another (*Allos*) Gospel, but another (*Heteros*). A modern example of this "Other Gospel" (*heteros*) would be that of the "Faith and Prosperity" movement, it is another Gospel but not really another Gospel.

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge

With Prayer, submission to the Spirit of God, His Word, a Concordance an Expository Dictionary one can learn, get wisdom and understanding from God's Word that will truly minister to them and equip them to Minister to others. But it doesn't stop there, another study tool that would be as beneficial at this point is a book called "Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge" this volume is huge, it basically takes the scriptures (all of them) and breaks them up into what is called "Phrase Study" when reading the scriptures you are bound to encounter the same phrase in many verses whether Old or New, and so this part of the study tools will allow the Bible to explain itself.

Study Bible (Thompson Chain Reference Bible)

Now at this point one might want to invest in a good study bible, I would say to start out with or rather a good first study bible is the most excellent "Thompson Chain Reference Bible" I point this one out first and at this point, because with this "Study Bible" you will continue with the systematic study habits you have already begun. This Study Bible uses the idea of a "linked Chain" usually every chain is built upon link by link, all the links are the same, but different in order, all chains has a beginning and an ending but yet when connected they continue on, each link is in harmony with the other whether in front or behind, thereby providing a smooth even flow.

That would be the premise of the "Thompson Chain Reference Bible", i.e. "In the beginning..." lets say that you are reading John 1:1 and you look in the middle margin of this text and you will see an (s) the (s) would be the start of the chain, and a scripture next to it, no doubt Genesis 1:1, followed by a list of other verses and each verse you go to will have another chain of linked verses to expound further, there you have at your finger tips in one volume a chain of verses that you can go through and get a fuller understanding, by allowing the Bible to cross reference itself.

Additional Useful Study Tools

At this point of Studying God's Word, you will now began the use of reference tools that will take you outside of your personal and intimate studies you have become accustomed to, because now you will began to read what others are saying about certain Customs, and Traditions, of Biblical Times. Thus far our study of God's Word relied heavily on the personal Teaching and Wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

But now, we want to know about the Customs of the times of the Hebrews, the history of the Church at the time of the writing of the books. What was going on then in other parts of the World, what was going on just outside of the immediate groups mentioned? Who are the Pharisees, the Essences, the Zealots, the Magi, how did the pious people of that day react to a person with a disease of leprosy, an issue of Blood, what exactly is the Holy of Hollies, what is the vicarious atonement?

To get answers to these one must seek out those that specialize in that area, I'm assuming that we've all been to school, we learned history from someone that studied that particular field and received some type of degree of accomplishment in that area. So, some of the study tools we must look to are "International Biblical Encyclopedias, Bible Handbooks, Bible Dictionaries, and Commentaries."

International Biblical Encyclopedia

Now, the systematic study does not stop here, I've placed them in that specific order for this reason, the "International Biblical Encyclopedias" are not geared to any one specific denomination, it will be more objective in that it will present the facts based on a simple but thoroughly study of all customs, history and languages of the period reporting on.

The Bible Handbook

The "Bible Handbook" is another basically universal reference tool. Here you can find customs, outlines of each book of the Bible and more.

Bible Dictionary

"Bible Dictionaries" I have noticed will present the facts, but they will almost always be tainted with the personal belief of the Author. I say this because there are certain issues within Christendom which appear to be controversial when in fact it is not the scriptures that are controversial, but the misinterpretation of that scripture by some well known and respected Biblical Scholar that interpreted a portion of scripture based on their personal belief, and not from the teaching of the Spirit of God.

Commentaries

And lastly, commentaries are a great source of information when studying the Word. There are many most excellent commentaries out there, and then there are those that we can all do without. Does that mean that we should ban or be against commentaries in general? No, we should always welcome the Word of God, be eager to hear/read/study the Word. But should we accept everything that is written in Commentaries – No; it is a commentary of the Word – Not the Word. But still they have their place.

Commentaries are last on this list for this fact, it is better to feed yourself then have someone spoon feed you.

When you learn something new, when God gives you personal illuminations of His Word, they're yours; they stick with you longer; it becomes a part of your very soul, which others will see as your character.

Thy Word oh God have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee...

Be Blessed and Enjoy your Studies!