

STUDYING THE BIBLE

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A landscape photograph showing a vast field of green crops in the foreground, transitioning to golden-brown fields in the distance. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. A white rectangular frame is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text "THE FOUNDATIONS OF BIBLE STUDY" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF BIBLE STUDY



THE QUALITIES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

- Inspired: The Bible is breathed out by God.
- Inerrant: The Bible is free from error in all it affirms.
- Infallible: The Bible is unfailing in its purpose.
- Sufficient: The Bible contains all needed information for Christian living.
- Authoritative: The Bible carries the right to prescribe beliefs and actions.
- Perspicuous: The Bible is clear - its meaning is understandable to all believers.

WHY SHOULD YOU TAKE TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE?

TO KNOW YOUR GOD

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

TO KNOW YOURSELF

Heb 4:12-13 12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are uncovered and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we have an account to give.

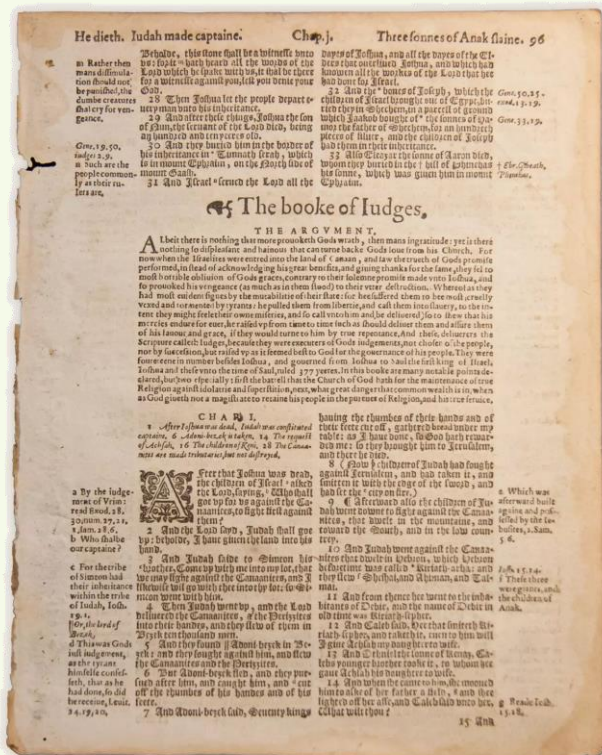
TO KNOW YOUR SAVIOR

John 20:30-31

Therefore many other signs Jesus also did in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

2Tim. 3:14 -15

But you, continue in the things you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.



WHY SHOULD YOU TAKE TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE?

TO KNOW HOW TO LIVE

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 19:8

The precepts of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalm 119:130

The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

2 Peter 1:19

And we have as more sure the prophetic word, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

TO GROW SPIRITUALLY

John 17:17

Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.

1 Peter 2:2

like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

TO BE OBEDIENT TO JESUS

Matt 28:20

teaching them to keep all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matt. 7:24

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.



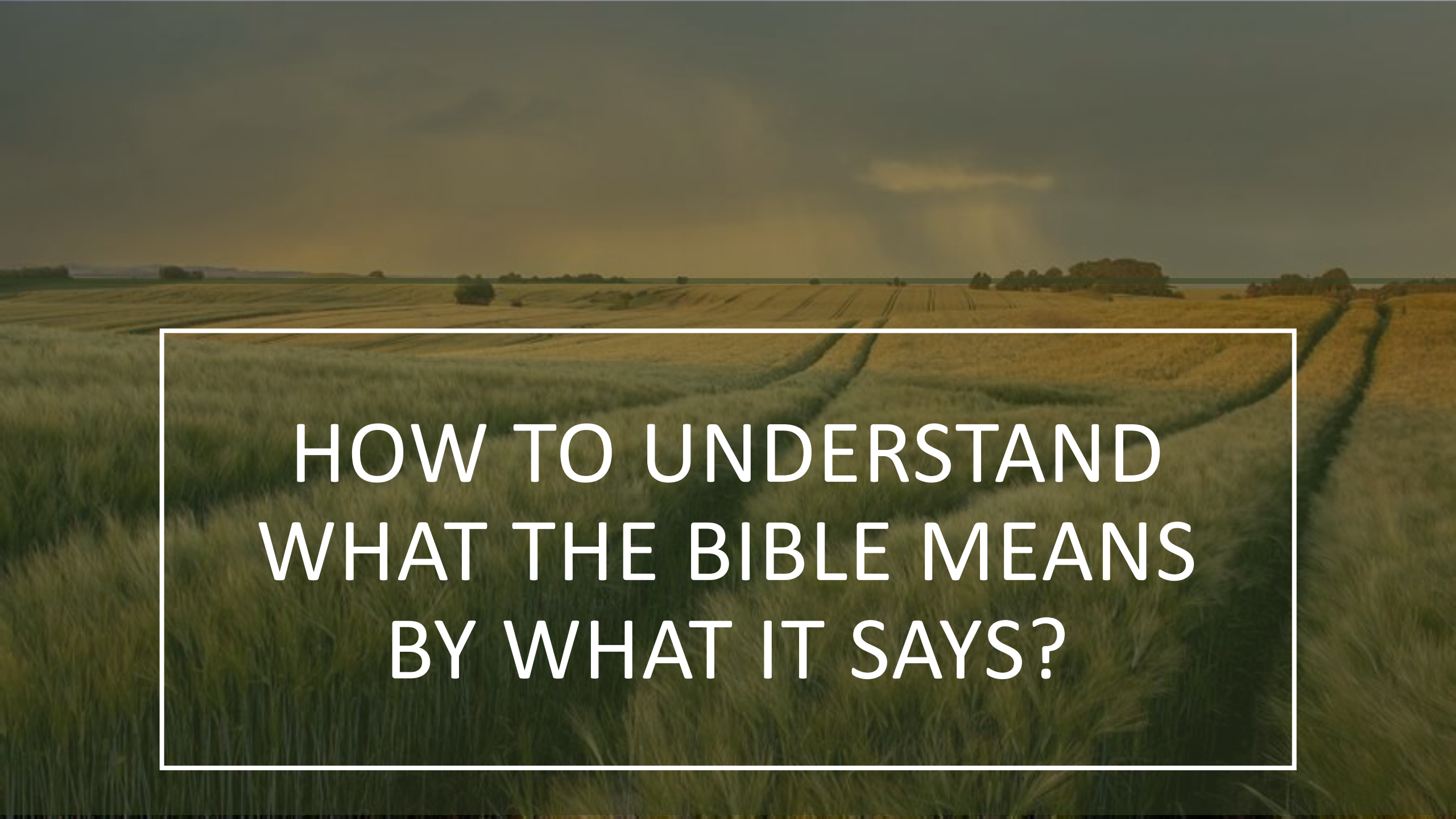
WHAT SHOULD YOU AIM FOR WHEN YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

1. Seek to worship God.
2. Seek to understand what the Bible means by what it says.
3. Seek to apply and put into practice what you learn about what Scripture means.
4. Seek to pass along to others what you are learning.



“THE MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURE IS THE
SCRIPTURE”

~John MacArthur~

A landscape photograph of a golden field with a winding path, overlaid with a white border containing text. The field is a mix of green and gold, suggesting a transition between seasons. The path winds through the field towards the horizon. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. The text is centered within the white border.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT THE BIBLE MEANS
BY WHAT IT SAYS?



BIBLE STUDY – AN OVERVIEW

1) PRAY

Ask God to help you properly understand the text.

2) READ THE TEXT

Read and reread the text in trustworthy translations.

3) MAKE BIG PICTURE OBSERVATIONS

Ask questions about everything.

Look for the theme or central idea.

Trace the author's argument, narrative, poetry, etc.

4) DIAGRAM THE PASSAGE

Use a block, sentence, or logical-flow diagram to capture the author's flow.

5) IDENTIFY GRAMMAR & SYNTAX

Note the verb tenses. Note relationships between phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Note word order

6) IDENTIFY FORM & WORDS

What literary form is used? What idioms or metaphors are used? Do a word study for each keyword.

7) EXAMINE CONTEXT

Look at the immediate and wider context. Examine cultural, historical, geographical, political, economic settings.

8) INTERPRET & SOLVE PROBLEMS

Look at the immediate and wider context. Examine cultural, historical, geographical, political, economic settings.

9) CHECK COMMENTARIES

Check to see if you missed anything.

10) APPLY

Seek to apply what you learned.

11) RELAY

Seek to pass along what you've learned.



HERMENEUTICS

“...is the study of the general principles of biblical interpretation.” (Britannica)

“...is the study of the principles and methods of interpreting the text of the Bible.” (Got Questions)

“...is the art and science of interpreting the Scripture.” (James Rosscup)

PRINCIPLES OF HERMENEUTICS

The Principle of Context (Near and Wide)

- Context of the Whole Bible (also called the analogy of the faith principle)
- Context of the Old or New Testament
- Context of the Book of Scripture (What is the theme, emphasis, or use of a word in the book under study?)
- Context Immediately Before or After

The Principle of Word Study

- Studying the roots of words (studied etymologically)
- Studying words comparatively (one word may have different usages - look up contexts to see which meaning is best; sometimes, one English word may translate into several different Greek or Hebrew words; compare words or phrases for some concept)
- Studying words culturally (inquire as to how a word or concept was understood at the time and in the culture of its biblical setting)

The Principle of Grammar

- Understand the verbs (voice, tense, person, etc.)
- Understand the relationships between words, phrases, and paragraphs.

PRINCIPLES OF HERMENEUTICS

The Principle of Background

- What were the circumstances at that time for the reader and/or writer?
- Geography
- History
- Customs & Manners

The Principle of Historical Appropriateness

- What would the readers have understood?
- Keep in mind progressive revelation, i.e., historical propriety of the passage.

The Principle of Scripture Interprets Scripture (Cross-reference, clear interprets unclear)

- Verbal Cross-reference of a word or phrase
- Conceptual Cross-reference
- Parallel Cross-reference (i.e., conversion of Saul)

The Principle of the Analogy of the Faith

- There is one unified, consistent, harmonious system of faith in the Bible.
- No portion of Scripture, when correctly understood, will contradict another portion of Scripture.

PRINCIPLES OF HERMENEUTICS

The Principle of Checking

- Checking with competent, scholarly sources.
- Use common sense and good scholarly sources.
- This is not a one-step principle but should be used in conjunction with the other principles.

The Principle of Oneness

- A biblical text has one basic proper meaning or interpretation, not two or three.
- This does not rule out the possibility of various applications.
- This does not rule out a NT author adding meaning to an OT passage (but the new information will never contradict what the OT author intended).

The Principle of Clarity

- Clearest, most logical conclusion

The Principle of Literary Mold

- Determining from the context what type of language is employed.
- Necessity of literal Interpretation where the context allows (but not “Letterism” or “wooden literalism”)
- Non-literal interpretations: parable, allegory, simile, metaphor, etc.
- Symbolism
- Typology
- Prophecy
- Poetry

HERMENEUTICAL ERRORS TO AVOID*

Studying a text while ignoring the context

- Prooftexting: Stringing together an inappropriate or inadequate series of Bible verses to prove our theology or preconceived idea.
- Isolationism: Failing to interpret a single Scripture text in light of its context

Adding to Scripture

- Spiritualizing: Reading a spiritual or historical truth into a text rather than extracting truth from it. This is also called eisegesis.
- Nationalizing: Seeing one's own country as the recipient of the national promises made by God in the Bible to Israel.

Editing God's mind

- Embellishing: reading current thinking into the Bible.
- Methodologizing: Interpreting the Scripture by means of an unproved theory about the Bible's literary origin.

Modernizing the Bible

- Accommodation: Viewing Scripture through the lens of human reason.
- Culturalizing:
 - Limiting a text to a specific time in history or culture, when in reality the text demands a wider application in time
 - Extending a past practice or culture into our time which in fact should have been limited historically.

*These errors to avoid originate from "How to Study the Bible" by Dr. Richard Mayhue.

HERMENEUTICAL ERRORS TO AVOID

Twisting Scripture

- Redefining: Giving historically accepted Biblical words new definitions to support our theology or preconceived ideas.
- Anglicizing: Reaching inaccurate conclusions by drawing theology from the English text alone.
- Mysticizing: Finding hidden meanings in Scripture that can be understood only by the one who knows the “secret code”.

Over Literalizing

- Letterism: Ignoring figures of speech and drawing wooden literal conclusions.
- Legalizing: Overemphasizing the letter of God’s Word at the expense of its spirit.

Reverse Interpretation

- Generalizing: Assuming that any specific historical experience reported in Scripture is a valid, general experience for today.
- Experientializing: Reasoning that if any experience has occurred in Scripture, and I have the same experience, then it must be from God, i.e. using experience to validate Scripture instead of vice versa.

Over Systematizing

- Dogmatizing: Starting with a conclusion, which is then used to interpret the evidence, thereby assuring that the desired conclusion will be affirmed, i.e. circular reasoning.
- Dispensationalizing: Overemphasizing the variations in God’s stewardship of redemption throughout history while minimizing God’s never-changing dealings with mankind according to His never-changing character.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



1. *How to Study the Bible*, Richard Mayhue, paperback and Kindle formats
2. “How to Study the Bible,” in *The MacArthur Study Bible*
3. Expository Studying, Joel James, PDF available at

<https://gracefellowship.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Expository-Studying-PDF-2009.pdf>

**BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT
YOURSELF APPROVED TO
GOD AS A WORKMAN WHO
DOES NOT NEED TO BE
ASHAMED, ACCURATELY
HANDLING THE WORD OF
TRUTH.**

~ 2 TIMOTHY 2:15~

