

How to Study the Bible

1. Establish Your Plan

- Make it personal
- Answer preliminary questions
 - ✓ When will you make time to study God's Word?
 - ✓ Where will you go to meet with God?
 - ✓ What will you do during your time with God?
 - ✓ How will you approach your study?

2. Establish Your Process

- **Systematic: "Seeing the big picture"**
 - ✓ Reading the Bible all the way through
 - ✓ Genesis-Revelation
 - ✓ Chronologically
 - ✓ One Year Bible
 - ✓ OT or NT in a shorter amount of time
- Strengths of systematic study
 - ✓ Overall familiarity with the Bible as a whole
 - ✓ Understanding how things are connected
 - ✓ (Hopefully) remembering where things are!
 - ✓ Constant exposure to all of God's Word
- Weaknesses of systematic study *only*
 - ✓ Doesn't always allow for in-depth study (time)
 - ✓ Easy to gloss over things
 - ✓ Falling behind (if on a schedule) can be discouraging (and can lead to giving up or apathy)

- **In-depth: “Digging down deep”**
 - ✓ Specific book of the Bible, character, or key passage
 - ✓ Pick your spot
 - ✓ Take your time and remember context
 - ✓ Ask questions of the text:
 1. Who? (Characters, who says things, etc.)
 2. What? (What is being said? What’s the topic? etc.)
 3. Where (Setting, history, etc.)
 4. When (Time period, relating to other things, etc.)
 5. Why? (What’s the reason for the passage? Why is something said? etc.)
 6. So what? (Application question)
 - ✓ Record what you learn
 - ✓ Make wise use of resources
- Strengths of in-depth study
 - ✓ Unfolding of verses of Scripture for deeper understanding
 - ✓ Spending focused time looking for understanding and direct application
- Weaknesses of in-depth study *only*
 - ✓ Easy to lose context of Scripture as a whole
 - ✓ Temptation to focus on what I feel is “attainable” and get comfortable
- **Topical: “Searching the Scriptures”**
 - ✓ Different passages that address an idea or topic
 - ✓ Select the topic for your study
 - ✓ Use your resources to locate the passages
 - ✓ Keep context primary
 - ✓ Record what you learn
- Strengths of topical study
 - ✓ Helps you see the full scope of the Bible’s teaching on a subject
 - ✓ Gives a great reference for your Christian walk
 - ✓ Thoroughness

- Weaknesses of topical study *only*
 - ✓ Easy to lose context of passages
 - ✓ Easy to miss topics you should see when studying out an entire book
 - ✓ May lack depth

3. Tools for Study

- The right tool makes all the difference!
- Guided studies
 - ✓ Help teach you the Bible study process
 - ✓ *God and I Time* books from The Wilds Christian Camp
 - ✓ *Journibles*
 - ✓ Warren Wiersbe Bible Study Series
 - ✓ “My God is...” and/or “God is my...” from Psalms
 - ✓ Proverbs: Wise, fool, simple, scorner
- Compare Bible translations
 - ✓ A literal translation is best
 - ✓ “The big 4” of literal translation: KJV, NKJV, ESV, NASB
- Study Bibles
 - ✓ *Life Application Study Bible*
 - ✓ *ESV Study Bible* (standard or student edition)
- Bible Dictionaries
 - ✓ *Unger’s New Bible Dictionary*
 - ✓ *New Bible Dictionary*
- Concordances
 - ✓ *Strong’s*
- Topical Bible
 - ✓ *Nave’s Topical Bible*
- Commentaries
 - ✓ *Bible Knowledge Commentary*
 - ✓ Warren Wiersbe’s *Be* Series

- ✓ *MacArthur NT Commentary*
- ✓ www.bestcommentaries.com
- Supplemental and/or family reading
 - ✓ *Valley of Vision*
 - ✓ *Morning and Evening*
 - ✓ *Long Story Short* (great for younger families)
 - ✓ A good hymnal
- Online resources
 - ✓ www.bible.com
 - ✓ E-sword (computer or app)
 - ✓ www.biblegateway.com
 - ✓ www.biblehub.com
 - ✓ www.blueletterbible.com
 - ✓ www.sermonaudio.com (and Sermon 2.0 app)
- Final reminders
 - ✓ More important than what someone has to say about the Bible is what the Bible actually says
 - ✓ Many resources are free, but don't be afraid to make an investment
 - ✓ If you'd like to see, borrow, or talk about more resources or Bible study methods, all you have to do is ask!