

Using Your Owner's Manual

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Week 1
Bible Study Methods
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Welcome

- Who I am.
- Am I qualified for this?
 - o No.
 - o Struggle with the same things you do
 - o Have not been a serious student for years

Purpose

- Why did you choose this class?
- What do you hope to learn?
- With what do you expect to walk away?
- Provide the tools to assist in systematic, purposeful study of the Bible
- Syllabus – Explore 11 methods
- Homework – to give you practice.

Introduction

- Since you chose this class, you probably understand it is important to study the Bible.
- We are just going to go over today
 - o 4 reasons that Bible Study is Important
 - o 5 benefits of studying the Bible
- Have you ever tried to use a kitchen knife as a screw driver? It doesn't work well.
 - o If you have a surgeon working on you, you don't want him using a chain saw.
 - o And, you don't want your dentist using a jackhammer!
 - o You want the right tools & equipment for the situation.
 - o You want to know the right way to use that tool.
- This morning we're going to take a look at the Bible—the owner's manual that God has given us. 2 Tim 3:17 makes that very clear: "The Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God & fit him fully for all branches of his work." Let's talk about how to use your equipment—asking first: WHY DO I NEED THE BIBLE?

Why do I need the Bible?

- **Answer 1:** I Need The Bible To Help Me Know God.

There are a lot of things we can know about God in nature: He's powerful & creative & organized. But most of what we know about God is only known because He chose to reveal Himself through a book, the Bible.

- **Answer 2:** I Need The Bible To Teach Me The Truth.

In this age of truth decay who are you going to trust? According to recent polls people trust politicians, advertisers & the media less & less. Jesus says "Know the truth; the truth shall set you free." He even goes so far as to say "I am the Truth." When God speaks it, He's not putting you on, He's not blowing smoke—it is eternal truth you can count on.

- **Answer 3:** I Need The Bible To Show Me How To Live.

A few years ago there was a popular a book: Life's Little Instruction Book. The Bible is God's big instruction book. The difference is: Life's Little Instruction Book is man's opinion—the Bible is what God says works.

- **Answer 4:** I Need The Bible To Give Me Spiritual Strength.

Whatever God asks us to do—He always gives us the power to do & we find power in the spiritual truth of His word.

Benefits of Bible Study

1. I get Knowledge.

When I'm talking about Bible knowledge, I'm talking about knowing what God has done in the past. At this level you simply learn the stories of the Bible, the people of the Bible, the truths, the facts & events. You learn the content & what the Bible is all about. This is the shallowest level but it's the basic level that you have to get down. Without a solid foundation of Bible Knowledge, you can't build a sturdy life.

- o But here is the odd thing about this Bible. While there are more Bibles today than ever before—they are everywhere: market places, bookstores, motels, hotels & hospitals, we are a Biblically illiterate generation. People just don't know what's in it.
- o George Barna recently did a survey & discovered 62% of Americans thought the phrase "God helps those who help themselves" was in the Bible. The fact is God teaches the exact opposite. God helps those who trust in Him.
- o If I were to say, "How many of you believe or accept or try to follow the 10 Commandments?" you'd probably all raise your hands. But what if I asked: "Could you name all 10?"
- o If I said, "How many believe that Jesus gave the way to happiness in the 8 beatitudes?" you'd probably agree, but "How many of you could name the 8 beatitudes?"
- o Is it no wonder that God said in Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge." They don't know the content of the Word of God. Jesus said in Mark 12:2, "Your trouble is that you don't know the Scriptures."
- o So, how do you learn the Word of God? The easy answer is this—by reading it. If I were to say, "How many of you believe the Bible from cover to cover?"—again—most of you would probably raise your hands. But what if I said, "How many of you have read it from cover to cover?" That's a different story.
- o You need God's word in your life. You get the first level by reading it. But—Bible knowledge is not enough; you've got to go to the deeper levels.

2. I Gain Perspective.

Perspective is seeing life from God's point of view. In knowledge you know **what** God did in the Bible. In perspective you know **why** He did it.

- o Would you agree that God has a bigger perspective on your life than you do? The good news is He wants to share that with you.
- o Let's say a helicopter flies by & radios down, "I can see 2 miles ahead. It's OK for you to pass." That is perspective. God has a bigger perspective on your life & He wants to share it with you.
- o Have you ever tried to do something you thought would work out & it didn't? The problem was probably a lack of perspective.
- o Erin and I like to watch "Flip that House." It always amazes me that we see these first-time flippers make the same mistakes over and over again. It all has to do with the fact that they have no perspective.
- o Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man but it ends in death." The goal of knowledge is that you know the word of God; the goal of perspective is that you understand the mind of God.
- o Ps 103 says: "The people of Israel knew the acts of God, but Moses, God shared His ways with." The people saw the plagues, the Red Sea open, the manna, the miracles of the water; they saw the acts of God. But God made known His ways—His perspective—to Moses.
- o You get knowledge by reading the word—but how do you get perspective? It is by studying the Word.
- o What's the difference between reading the Bible & studying the Bible? Here's the answer: a pen or a pencil. If you haven't written anything down, you haven't studied, you've merely read. The secret of Bible study is asking the right questions & knowing how to write it down.

3. I Develop Convictions.

A conviction is something I believe so strongly; it determines the way I act. I'm not talking about opinions. An opinion is something you'll argue about; it's something you'll discuss. A conviction is something you'll die for.

- Today we have what I call Talk Show morality. You get the weirdest people you can find & put them on a stage & let them defend their lifestyle as if it's normal. Anytime you have somebody who says, "I think this or that is OK & I think it's all right to do this or that no matter what anybody else thinks," ask the question, "Who says so?" Who set you up as an authority? Was it public opinion? Is that an authority?
- That's a real issue—who's going to be your authority in life, God or society? Personally—I've chosen God to be my authority in life. We need people of conviction who know right & wrong. But—is it possible to know right & wrong in this day & age? Is it possible to know good from evil? Of course it is. There are some things that are absolutely right—and there are some things that are absolutely wrong. How do you find out? Use this owner's manual.
- Hebrews 5:14 "Solid food is for the mature who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." The point is this: it is possible to discern good from evil. But—you have to train yourself in the constant use of solid food—and this book is solid food.
- They don't teach treasury agents how to recognize counterfeit money by giving them counterfeit bills. They just give them real money to study—and then, when counterfeits come along they recognize them. In the same way—you don't have to know what every cult or new age person thinks like. You just need to know the truth & then when falsehood comes along you can see that it obviously doesn't square up. And—you get the heart of God by developing convictions.
- How do I develop conviction?
You get it from meditating on the word—and meditation simply means thinking about something over & over. If you know how to worry you know how to meditate. When you take a negative thought & think about it over & over, that's worry.
- Take a Bible verse & think about it over & over in your mind, that's called meditating. Notice when you meditate on God's word you get God's heart, you start feeling the same way He does about things. Josh 1:8 "Meditate on God's Word day & night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous & successful." That's quite a promise.
- When you start following the owner's manual—life gets a whole lot easier. You quit making stupid mistakes. You quit having to learn things the hard way. You can learn them directly from the experiences of other people. It's a whole lot wiser. And you develop conviction.

4. I Sharpen My Skills.

Eccl 10:10, "If the ax is dull & its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success."

There are certain things that you have to know how to do in life if you're going to be successful. For instance, if you're going to be successful—you have to know such things as:

- How to get along with other people
 - How to manage your money
 - How to make the best use of your time
 - And how to make wise decisions.
- o Fortunately each of these life skills is in the Bible. It not only tells us what to do—but it tells us how to do it.
- o The goal is that you'll do the will of God. God wants us to be doers of the word. James 1:22 "Be doers of the word & not merely hearers who deceive themselves."
- o After every message you should walk out & say, what am I going to do as a result of what I've just heard? If you don't do that—the Bible says you're deceiving yourself. Just hearing something doesn't mean you've got it.
- o One of our big problems is that we cover something—and know that it is a good thing to do—but before we can do anything about it—we move on to another subject. We've developed this false notion of security that because I have notes in my notebook I've learned it. But friends—you haven't learned it until you've done it.
- o Jesus said: "Everyone who hears these words of mine & puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. But everyone who hears & doesn't put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand."
- o The bottom line: you've got to put it into action. And then—when you do these first 4—know the word, understand the word, believe the word—and do the word—then you come to the Deepest Level Of Maturity:

5. I build Character

Jude 1:20 "Build up your lives ever more strongly upon the foundation of our faith."

D. L. Moody said, "The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge—the Bible was given to change our lives."

- o Col 3:10 puts it this way: "Continually learning more & more of what is right & trying to constantly be more & more like Christ." This is the bottom line—to become like Jesus in my character.
- o If I never get to this level through Bible study & teaching, I've missed the point. Personal application is the deepest form of teaching; it requires life change. We learn the content, then we get perspective, then we start developing convictions, then we go out & do something about it. And when we do something about it, it changes our character.
- o When it comes down to it friends—you've got two choices: you're going to build your life on the world or the word.
- o If, however, you do decide that what God has said is going to be your authority for life, then you have to get serious about the Bible. But consider this: If you are an average American, by the time you're 65, you'll amass 9½ solid years of your life in front of the TV.
- o How many of you believe everything you watch on TV...or read in the newspaper...or hear on the radio? How many of you believe everything that is in God's word, the Bible? If that's true why do we spend more time listening & reading things we don't believe?
- o I rushed out the door last week and I forgot my cell phone at home. As I was preparing for this class, it made me wonder: What would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone? I mean:
 - What if we carried it around in our purse or pocket?
 - What if we turned around to get it if we forgot it?
 - What if we flipped through it several times a day?
 - What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
 - What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
 - What if we gave it to kids as gifts?
 - What if we used it when we traveled?
 - What if we used it in case of emergency?

Let's get practical. If you don't have time for Bible study then you're too busy. If you cut out two 30-minute TV shows a week that's equal to one hour of Bible study. Don't you think that might be a good trade off? If this book really does have the answers to making life easier, don't you think you could commit at least an hour a week to read and study it? I challenge you to do that.