

THE CHRISTIAN AND BIBLE STUDY

An Introduction to Bible Study.

A) METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY

1. **Topical** - taking a topic, e.g. "Faith" through the whole of Scripture. Looking at each reference to it.
2. **Typical** - e.g. the correspondence between the Old Testament animal sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ; see Hebrews.
3. **Word Study** - Studying a single word in its use throughout Scripture.
4. **Bird's-eye View** - Reading a whole book at one sitting. Many of them were intended to be so read. e.g. Epistles.
5. **Comparing Scripture with Scripture** - One passage throws light on another. e.g. in the Gospels.

You may well, of course, need to use a Commentary and a Bible Dictionary or Concordance.

B) PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

1. **Recognise it is a Spiritual/Supernatural Book.**
Heb. 4:12 - *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."*
2. **Stick to the Basic Grammatical Sense.**
i.e. take every word in its normal sense and in harmony with its context, (surrounding passage).
3. **Recognise there are different types of Literature;**
Law, History, Poetry, e.g. Psalm 62:1-2. God is not literally a "rock" or a "fortress", but He is "strong" and "secure". Matt.5:29 means we are to be drastically opposed to sin, not that we should mutilate ourselves.
4. **Note the Historical background.**
e.g. the modern meaning of "hope" and "belief" are very weak. Hope in the Bible means something certain to happen in the future.

C) GETTING DOWN TO BIBLE STUDY

Bearing in mind these principles -

1. Have a spiritual attitude. Be reverent and prayerful.
2. Come to read it with a Conscious Need and Expectancy.
i.e. spiritual hunger, but beware "reading into" it your own ideas.
3. Believe it will lead to first-hand Knowledge.
N.B. Scripture Union, 130, City Road, London EC1V 2NJ.
"Every Day With Jesus" Crusade for World Revival Box 11, Walton-on-Thames,
Surrey, produce very helpful notes, but seek to have your own thoughts on the Bible
as well.
4. Proceed something like this:
 - a) Pray for help and read.
 - b) Ask - What is its original meaning?
UNDERSTAND
IMAGINE SCENE
CROSS REFER (TO SIMILAR PASSAGES).
 - c) Ask - What is its Timeless Meaning?
i.e. Eternal Truth behind story for example.
 - d) Ask - What is its present meaning?
i.e. APPLICATION.

N.B. Value of Memorising:

It builds up your faith and helps you to recall relevant passages at anytime.

Other questions you can ask:

What new thing is there here about the Father?
the Son?
the Holy Spirit?

What is relevant to me?

What is relevant to the Church?

Can I turn any verse into praise or prayer?

Is there a command to obey?

Is there a warning against sin?

Is there a promise to claim?

Is there a verse to memorise?

Is there an example to follow or an error to avoid?

What is the main lesson?

- e) Read notes, commentary, etc.
- f) Pray.
- g) ACT.

D) SOME THOUGHTS ON MEDITATION

Importance of meditation.

Joshua 1:8 - *"This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success."*

Also Psalm 119:15, 148. John 6:63.

Definition of meditation -

Jer 15:16 - *"Thy words were found and I ate them, and thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart."* Meditation means to "*chew over*" a particular subject or theme in your mind and heart.

Benefits of meditation - Psalm 119:9-11 To prevent sin, error.

23 Peace when in danger.

99 Understanding more than teachers.

How to meditate -

1. Pray and choose subject of meditation. Make time to be unhurried.
2. Psalm 46:10 - *"Be still and know that I am God."* i.e.
 - a) Clear your mind of irrelevant and unhelpful thoughts.
 - b) Think simply about God.
3. Look at the subject of meditation. N.B. Make it short. It could be a verse of Scripture.
4. The idea is to repeat the verse over and over and to allow its meaning fill our hearts and minds.
5. Don't worry about feelings or lack of them.
6. Don't strain but relax in God.
7. Apply what you learn (See questions above).
8. Share what you learn with someone else, which will help crystallize your thoughts.