

# How to Study Your Bible

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## Worksheet:

- I. Introduction
  - a. Close your eyes and pay attention to the imagery of Billy Sunday's description of his personal Bible Study experience. (read)
  - b. Though the Bible is awe-inspiring we don't just want to be admirers of it as we would in an art gallery looking at awesome works of art. What four things must we be diligent to do, as we seek God's will, according to John MacArthur?
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
    - iv. \_\_\_\_\_
- II. Reading the Bible

- a. How would you characterize yourself as it relates to personal Bible study? Are you a “nibbler” or “eater” of God word?
- b. What are some examples of “spiritual snack food”?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What is an example of a “well-balanced spiritual meal” and where does it come from?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Our personal doctors tell us that we should have at least “three square meals” per day with “healthy snacks” in between. This amounts to about five times per day that we should be eating something for our physical bodies. What can be said of “spiritual snacks” when compared to well-balanced “spiritual meals”? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_

III. The Old Testament

- a. According to John MacArthur, the 39 books of the Old Testament can be read through in a year. How does he say this can be done?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_ per day
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_ per week
- b. Is this practical? Is it doable? Is it excessive? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What language was the Old Testament written in? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. According to John MacArthur, what are some of the characteristics of this language? How is it different from the Greek, the primary language of the New Testament?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. \_\_\_\_\_
  - v. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Name some of the genres that can be found in the historical narrative of the Old Testament?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. As you read through the Old Testament, John MacArthur suggests that you make a notation “with a pencil” next to passages that are difficult for you to

understand. What is the purpose of using a pencil as apposed to a pen or marker? \_\_\_\_\_

g. As you read through the Old Testament over and over what can you expect will happen to your understanding of these difficult passages marked “with a pencil”? \_\_\_\_\_

h. If you read through the Old Testament over and over and still can’t understand a passage, what are some other options that you have at your disposal to help your understanding? \_\_\_\_\_

i. One of the potential causes for confusion in reading the Old Testament, according to John MacArthur, is that the Old Testament is not always written in \_\_\_\_\_ order.

j. “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

(Romans 15:4 NASB)

#### IV. The New Testament

a. As the church, Christians should focus more of their attention on reading the New Testament, according to John MacArthur. Why is this? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_

i. “Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,...” (Colossians 1:25-26 NASB)

ii. “that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,...” (Ephesians 3:3-6 NASB)

b. How was the Old Testament used in relationship to studying and understanding the New Testament and how did Paul use it in his letters (epistles) to the church?

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

c. The New Testament was written in Greek and Aramaic. Greek was the primary language used and being a more complex language than Hebrew, which is more

concrete, it emphasizes abstract concepts and subtle shades of meaning. Thus, studying the New Testament requires more \_\_\_\_\_.

- d. John MacArthur recommends starting your Bible study of the New Testament by reading a \_\_\_\_\_ book and then proceeding with a \_\_\_\_\_ book afterwards, alternating as you go through all 27 of the New Testament books.
- e. How does this help your study habits and keep your attention? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- f. By using this method of studying the New Testament, it will take you about \_\_\_\_\_ years to finish reading it in its entirety.
- g. Name at least two benefits you will experience as a result of studying the New Testament using this method.
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_

- h. What is the benefit of using the same version and the same Bible for your study? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- i. Is there any reason(s) why we should read more than one version of the Bible as we study? What benefit can we derive from this practice? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- j. Why does reading the Bible “repetitiously” help our understanding and comprehension of the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

- k. God is The Great Communicator and He wants us to understand His word in its entirety. In order to understand books like The Revelation, which many may shy away from, we must have a working knowledge of the Old Testament books of Daniel, Isaiah and Ezekiel. What can be said about those who say that the Bible is to hard to understand? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

V. Interpreting the Bible

- a. How many of you have talked to people who have said, “Oh, yeah, I’ve read the Bible from cover to cover, I know what it says and what’s in it, but it’s just not for me”. What do you say to that when contrasting the ideas of **reading** the Bible and **understanding** it’s meaning? Are they the same? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. *Proper interpretation* of a biblical passage leads to *proper application* to your life, which in turn leads to *proper glorification* of God. What does this mean?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- c. Read Nehemiah 8 passage...
- d. Read 1 Timothy 4 passage...
- e. Read 2 Timothy 2 passage...
- f. Read 1 Timothy 2:15 “Notwithstanding she shall be **saved** in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. (1 Timothy 2:15 KJV)

VI. Things to Avoid

- a. Don't make a point at the cost of proper interpretation
  - i. What is it called when someone says “God said something that He didn't say” or that “God did something that He didn't do”? *[discussion]*  


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  - ii. A message should flow from the word as it was written and intended by God the author, but if a message authored by man forces the word of God to comply, then “the word spoken by man” ceases to be “the Word spoken by God”.
  - iii. For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.  
 2 Corinthians 2:17 NASB
- b. Avoid superficial Bible study
  - i. Is using the phrases, “I guess this verse means...” or “what does this verse mean to you” ever appropriate for a group Bible study? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_  


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  - ii. Does God want us to “guess” at the meaning or have “a private interpretation” of His word? \_\_\_\_\_  


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    1. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:20-21 NASB)
    2. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV)
    3. As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the

Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. (1 Timothy 1:3-7 NASB)

- c. Don't spiritualize the text
  - i. It is tempting to "spiritualize" a spiritual text and miss the practical application in the physical world that it makes reference to.
  - ii. This is particularly tempting for some when reading, interpreting and teaching from the Old Testament that is literal and concrete (Hebrew language) in most instances.

VII. Gaps to Bridge

a. Language

- i. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic.
- ii. **Aramaic:** a Semitic language, a Syrian dialect of which was used as a lingua franca in the Near East from the 6th century BC. It gradually replaced Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people in those areas and was itself supplanted by Arabic in the 7th century AD.
- iii. How can original word studies enhance our personal and corporate Bible study?

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b. Culture

- i. Times change, customs change, people change, culture changes. Sometimes over long periods of time, in other cases in a relatively short period of time. We know this because things have changed considerably over the last eight months across the globe.
- ii. Read John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1 NASB)
- iii. Why didn't John just say, "In the beginning was Jesus"? *[discussion]*

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c. Geography

- i. How does a knowledge of the geographical locales in the Bible help our understanding of the Bible and the events described in it? *[discussion]*
- ii. Using other resources such as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ can help better understand the geography of a biblical locale during Bible study.

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d. History

- i. How does a working knowledge of the historical events and people of the world during the time of the Bible help our study of the Bible? *[discussion]*

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- ii. Using other resources such as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ can help better understand the historical context of biblical events and people during Bible study.

VIII. Steps to Follow

- a. Know the context
- b. Analyze the sentence structure
- c. Compare your interpretation with the totality of Scripture
- d. Look for principles to apply

IX. Meditating on the Bible

- a. Is this level of deep thinking, reflective, meditation excessive?

\_\_\_\_\_

- b. What does this mean that we should do practically speaking?

\_\_\_\_\_

- c. How can this be accomplished?

\_\_\_\_\_

- d. What is meditation from a biblical perspective?

\_\_\_\_\_

- e. How is Eastern meditation different from that of biblical meditation?

\_\_\_\_\_

X. Teaching the Bible

- a. "The best way to retain the word is to give it away!"
- b. Teaching the word of God drives you into education (study).
- c. Do you have to be a learned biblical scholar in order to teach someone else?

[discussion] \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- d. If you don't know a lot about the Bible, and want to teach, what can you do?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

XI. Conclusion

- a. Reading, interpreting, meditating on, and teaching the Bible is a \_\_\_\_\_ habit.

- b. What attitude and thinking should we have about ourselves as we learn more and become more knowledgeable about the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- i. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29 NASB)

- ii. "...we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him." (1 Corinthians 8:1-3 NASB)