

M E T R O P O L I T A N
New Testament Mission Baptist Church

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M E T R O U

**A Pathway to
Discipleship**

LIVING BY THE BOOK

Spring Semester Syllabus

January 10, 2024 – May 8, 2024

Student Edition

v.1
1/3/2024

Introduction and Schedule

Metro U is an educational opportunity offered by the Metropolitan New Testament Mission Baptist Church, where participants are led through a chronological study of the books of the Bible. Its inaugural launch was in September 2017 and the 2024 Spring semester will mark its 14th semester of study. **January and February 2024 classes will be virtual via ZOOM (Meeting ID: 575-058-4656).** The 2024 Spring Semester presentation outline is as follows:

SESSION	DATE	METHOD
1	January 10, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
2	January 17, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
3	January 24, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
4	January 31, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
5	February 7, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
6	February 14, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
7	February 21, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
8	February 28, 2024	Virtual - Zoom
9	March 6, 2024	In-Person
10	March 13, 2024	In-Person
11	March 20, 2024	In-Person
12	March 27, 2024	In-Person
13	April 3, 2024	In-Person
14	April 10, 2024	In-Person
15	April 17, 2024	In-Person
16	April 24, 2024	In-Person
17	May 1, 2024	In-Person
18	May 8, 2024	In Person

Metro U is open to all. Participants can receive course credit by purchasing a syllabus at \$10.00 each and meeting the attendance requirements of participation in a minimum of **10** out of the **14** instructional sessions, plus participation of at least **three (3)** of the **Four (4)** scheduled small group sessions. Certificates of completion will be provided at the end of each semester, and the culmination of certificates (i.e., matriculation) will qualify the participant for graduation. Additionally, the Metro U 2024 Spring Semester will be accredited by the Sunday School Publishing Board Department of Christian Education Accreditation and Credentials, and therefore, participants meeting the attendance requirements of at least ten (10) participation hours will also receive a Certificate of Progress Program (COPP) course card #1032 Survey of Psalms. This course is an elective course of the national COPP requirements. Registered participants who achieve “perfect attendance” by attending all scheduled teaching and small group sessions will receive a SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD.

REFERENCE BOOKS

Wilkinson, B. (2005). *Talk thru the Bible*. Thomas Nelson.

Warren, R. (2011). *Rick Warren’s Bible Study Methods: Twelve Ways You Can Unlock God’s Word*.

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THE PSALMS**Overview****A GLIMPSE AT THE PSALMS**

- Hymn book of the Hebrews. Reflects every mood of human experience.
- Name: Greek Word, *psalmos* – a poem to be sung to a stringed instrument.

FORMATION

Author	David	Asaph	Sons of Korah	Human	Ethan	Moses	Anonymous
Number of Psalms	73	12	12	1	1	1	50

CENTRAL MESSAGE: PRAISE THROUGH PRAYER**GROUPS OF PSALMS:**

- *Songs of Degrees*
- *Messianic Psalms*
- *Hallelujah Psalms*
- *Complementary Psalms*
- *Imprecatory Psalms*

MAKES UP A POETIC PENTATEUCH

I. First Group	(1-41)	Genesis
II. Second Group	(42-62)	Exodus
III. Third Group	(63-89)	Leviticus
IV. Fourth Group	(90-106)	Numbers
V. Fifth Group	(107-150)	Deuteronomy

The Book of Psalms (from a Greek word meaning “a song sung to the accompaniment of a plucked instrument) was written and compiled over a period of perhaps a thousand years: From the time of

Moses (Psalm 90) to the time of the return from exile (Psalm 126). The book was used as the temple hymn book of the Kingdom Period and stands as the longest, most oft-quoted, most diverse book of the Old Testament.

Book	Book 1 (1-41)	Book 2 (42-62)	Book 3 (63-89)	Book 4 (90-106)	Book 5 (107-150)
Chief Author	David	David/Korah	Asaph	Anonymous	David/Anonymous
Number of Psalms	41	31	17	17	44
Basic Content	Songs of Worship	Hymns of National Interest		Anthems of Praise	
Topical Likeness to Pentateuch	Genesis: Man and Creation	Exodus: Deliverance and Redemption	Leviticus: Worship and Sanctuary	Numbers: Wilderness and Wandering	Deuteronomy: Scripture and Praise
Closing Doxology	41:13	72:18-10	89:52	106:48	150:1-6
Possible Compiler	David	Hezekiah or Josiah		Ezra or Nehemiah	
Possible Dates of Compilation	c. 1020-970 B.C.	c.970-610 B.C.		Until c. 430 B.C.	
Span of Authorship	About 1000 Years (c. 1410-430 B.C.)				

INTRODUCTION AND TITLE

The Book of Psalms is the largest and perhaps most widely used book in the Bible. It explores the full range of human experience in a very personal and practical way. Its 150 “songs” run from the creation through the patriarchal, theocratic, monarchical, exilic, and postexilic periods. The tremendous breadth of subject matter in the Psalms includes diverse topics, such as jubilation, war, peace, worship, judgment, messianic prophecy, praise, and lament. The Psalms were set to the accompaniment of stringed instruments and served as the temple hymnbook and devotional guide for the Jewish people.

The Book of Psalms was gradually collected and originally unnamed, perhaps due to the great variety of material. It came to be known as *Sepher Tehillim* – “Book of Praises” – because almost every psalm contains some note of praise to God. The Septuagint uses the Greek word *Psalmoi* as its title for this book, meaning poems sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments. It also calls it the *Psalterium* (a collection of songs), and this word is the basis for the term “Psalter.” The Latin title is *Liber Psalmorum*, “Book of Psalms.”

AUTHOR

Although critics have challenged the historical accuracy of the superscriptions regarding authorship, the evidence is strongly in their favor. Almost half (seventy-three) of the psalms are designated as Davidic: 3-9, 11-32, 34-41, 51-65, 68-70; 86; 101; 103; 109-110; 122; 124; 131; 133; and 138-45. David’s wide experience as a shepherd, musician, warrior, and king (1011-971 B.C.) is reflected in these psalms. The New Testament reveals that the anonymous psalms 2 and 95 were also written by this king whose name means “Beloved of Yahweh” (see Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7.) In addition to the seventy-five by David,

twelve were by Asaph, "Collector," a priest who headed the service of music (see 50; 73-83; Ezra 2:41); ten were by the sons of Korah "Bak," a guild of singers and composers (see 42; 44-49; 84-85; 87; Numbers 26:9-11); two were by Solomon, "Peaceful," Israel's Most powerful king (72; 127); one was by Moses, "Son of the Water," a prince, herdsman, and deliverer (90); one was by Herman, "Faithful," a wise man (see 88; 1 Kings 4:31; 1 Chronicles 15:19); and one was by Ethan, "Enduring," a wise man (see 89; 1 Kings 4:31, 1 Chronicles 15:19.) The remaining fifty psalms are anonymous; 1;2; 33; 43; 66-67; 71; 91-100; 102; 104-107; 111-121; 123; 125-126; 128-130; 132; 134-137; 146-150. Some of the anonymous psalms are traditionally attributed to Ezra.

DATE AND SETTING

The Book of Psalms covers a wide time span from Moses (c. 1410 B.C.0 to the postellic community under Ezra and Nehemiah (c. 430 B.C.) Because of their broad chronological and thematic range, the Psalms were written to different audiences under many conditions. Therefore, they reflect many moods and are relevant to every reader.

KEYS TO PSALMS

Key Word: Worship

Key Verses: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer" (19:14): "My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever" (145:21.)

KEY CHAPTER (100)

So many of the favorite chapters of the Bible are contained in the book of Psalms that it is difficult to select the key chapter among such psalms as Psalms 1, 22, 23, 24, 37, 72, 100; 101, 119, 121; and 150. The two central themes of worship and praise are beautifully wed in Psalm 100.

CHRIST IN PSALMS

Many of the Psalms specifically anticipated the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the One who came centuries later as Israel's promised Messiah ("anointed one.") The Psalms, like the four Gospels, give several perspectives on the person and work of Christ:

- **Jesus Christ, the King (portrayed in Matthew)**
 - 2: Christ rejected as King by the nations
 - 24: Christ is King of Glory
 - 18: Christ is Protector and Deliverer
 - 47: Christ rules in His kingdom
 - 20: Christ provides salvation
 - 110: Christ is King-Priest
 - 21: Christ is given glory by God
 - 132: Christ is enthroned
- **Jesus Christ, the Servant (portrayed in Mark)**
 - 17: Christ is intercessor
 - 41: Christ is betrayed by a close friend
 - 22: Christ is the dying Savior
 - 69: Christ is hated without a cause
 - 23: Christ is Shepherd

109: Christ loves those who reject Him

40: Christ is obedient unto death

▪ **Jesus Christ, the Son of God (portrayed in Luke)**

8: Christ is made a little lower than angels

40: Christ's resurrection is realized

16: Christ's resurrection is promised

▪ **Jesus Christ, the Son of God (portrayed in John)**

19: Christ is Creator

118: Christ is the Chief Cornerstone

102: Christ is eternal

THERE ARE FIVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MESSIANIC PSALMS

- 1) **Typical messianic**- The subject of the psalm is in some feature a type of Christ (34:20; 69:4, 9.)
- 2) **Typical prophetic** - The psalmist uses language to describe his present experience, which points beyond his own life and becomes historically true only in Christ (22.)
- 3) **Indirectly messianic** - At the time of composition the psalm referred to a king or the house of David in general, but awaits final fulfillment in Christ (2, 45, 72.)
- 4) **Purely prophetic** - Refers solely to Christ without reference to any other son of David (110.)
- 5) **Enthronement** - Anticipates the coming of Yahweh and the consummation of his kingdom – will be fulfilled in the person of Christ (96-99.)

FURTHER STUDY

Every month, read five Psalms per day. For instance, in each given month, read the book of Psalms using the following sample schedule:

Day 1 1-5	Day 2 6-10	Day 3 11-15	Day 4 16-20	Day 5 21-25	Day 6 26-30	Day 7 31-35
Day 8 36-40	Day 9 41-45	Day 10 46-50	Day 11 51-55	Day 12 56-60	Day 13 61-65	Day 14 66-70
Day 14 71-75	Day 16 76-80	Day 17 81-85	Day 18 121-125	Day 19 91-95	Day 20 96-100	Day 21 101-105
Day 22 106-110	Day 23 111-115	Day 24 116-120	Day 25 121-125	Day 26 126-130	Day 27 131-135	Day 28 136-140
Day 29 141-145	Day 30 146-150					

PRAYING WHEN THE HEAT IS ON

(Psalm 119:73-80)

OUTLINE

Eight parts to this prayer:

1. A Prayer for _____ v. 73
2. A Prayer for _____ v. 74
3. A Prayer for _____ v. 75
4. A Prayer for _____ v. 76
5. A Prayer for _____ v. 77
6. A Prayer for _____ v. 78
7. A Prayer for _____ v. 79
8. A Prayer for _____ v. 80

STRUGGLING BUT NOT LOSING

(Psalm 119:81-88)

OUTLINE

- I. The Despair He Felt vs. 81-83
- II. The Devotion He Forgot vs. 84-85
- III. The Danger He Faced vs. 85-87
- IV. IV. The Dependence He Formed vs. 88

WHAT GOD'S WORD CAN DO FOR YOU

(Psalm 119:97-104)

OUTLINE

- I. The Passion for the Word v. 97
 - A. Emotional
 - B. Intellectual

- II. The Proclamation About the Word vs. 98-104
 - A. The Reason
 - B. Discernment
 - C. Directives
 - D. Delight
 - E. Development

TAKING GOD'S WORD SERIOUSLY

(Psalm 119:116-120)

OUTLINE

The psalmist is observed talking to himself (v. 113), to God (v. 114), to his enemies (v. 115), and to God again (v. 116.)

- | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| I. | He Has a _____ Toward God's Word | vs. 113-114 |
| II. | He Has a _____ of God's Enemies | v. 115 |
| III. | He Has a _____ on God's Grace | vs. 116-117 |
| IV. | He _____ in God's Judgment | vs. 118-119 |
| V. | He _____ God's Law | v. 120 |

HANDLING UNFAIR TREATMENT

(Psalm 119:121-128)

OUTLINE

(Bible Phobia)

- | | | |
|------|----------------------------|--------------|
| I. | Prayer for Deliverance | vs. 121-122 |
| II. | Patience in Waiting | vs. 123 |
| III. | Petition for Enlightenment | vs. 124-125t |
| IV. | Passion for God | vs. 126-128 |

EMBRACING THE WONDERFUL WORD OF GOD

(Psalm 119:129-137)

OUTLINE

- I. The Word of God Can Renew Your Mind (Romans 12:1) vs. 129-131
 - A. Attitude of Reverence (Psalm 119:18)
 - 1. Source (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - 2. Content (Psalm 11:105)
 - 3. Focus (Isaiah 6:9, James 1:22-23)
 - B. Attitude of _____ (John 3:19, 2 Corinthians 4:4) v. 130
 - C. Attitude of _____ (1 Peter 2:2, Psalm 81:10) v. 131

- II. God's Word Can Change Our Lives vs. 132-135
 - A. Gracious intervention (John 21:15-17, 1 Peter 1:8-9) vs. 132
 - B. Sanctifying power vs. 133
 - C. Mighty Deliverance v. 134
 - D. Divine Favor (Numbers 6:24-26) v. 135

- III. God's Word Will Break Your Heart v. 136
 - A. Lamentation
 - (Psalm 119:113, Proverbs 14:12, Romans 10:1, Matthew 33:37)
 - 1. Tell God About the Lost (John 3:8)
 - 2. Tell the Lost About God

THE BIBLE IS RIGHT

(Psalm 119:137-144)

OUTLINE

- I. The Righteousness of God's Word: His Declaration v. 137

- II. The Righteousness of God's Word: His Description v. 138
 - A. It's Exceedingly _____ v. 138b
 - B. It's Deeply _____ v. 139
 - C. It's Absolutely _____ v. 140
 - D. It's Personally _____ (James 1:22-24) v. 141
 - E. It's Eternally _____ v. 142
 - F. It's Inwardly _____ v. 143

- III. The Righteousness of God's Word: His Dependence v. 144

PRAYING WITH ASSURANCE

(Psalm 119:145-152)

OUTLINE

- I. Pray With All Your Heart. (Proverbs 3:5, Psalm 66:18) vs. 145-146
- II. Pray All the Time vs. 147-148
- III. Pray As If It All Depends on God. (1 John 1:9) vs. 149
- IV. Pray To the God Who Is Already There vs. 150-151

WHEN AFFLICTION COMES

(Psalm 119:153-156)

OUTLINE

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| I. | The Psalmist's Assessment | vs. 153-156 |
| | His Situation: | v. 155 |
| | It made Him: | |
| | More _____ in Prayer | vs. 153-154 |
| | He Opens his Life to: | |
| | A. God's Inspection | v. 153 |
| | B. God's Intervention | v. 154 |
| | 2. More _____ in Prayer | v. 155 |
| | His Savior | v. 156 |
| II. | The Psalmist's Assailants | vs 157-158 |
| | He was: | |
| | 1. Troubled by Their Attacks | v. 157 |
| | 2. Troubled by Their Attitude | v. 158 |
| III. | The Psalmist's Assurance | vs. 159-160 |
| | 1. His Devotion to God's Word | v. 159 |
| | 2. Discernment of God's Word | v. 160 |

PEACE IN SPITE OF PERSECUTION

(PSALM 119:11-168)

OUTLINE

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------|-------------|
| I. | The Persecuted Man | v. 161 |
| II. | The Praising Man | vs. 162-164 |
| | A. What He Discovered | v. 162 |
| | B. What He Detested | v. 163 |
| | C. What He Did | v. 164 |
| III. | The _____ Man | v. 165 |
| IV. | The _____ Man | v. 166 |
| V. | The _____ Man | v. 168 |

A FINAL PLEA

(PSALM 169-176)

OUTLINE

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-------------|
| I. | Lord, Hear Me | vs. 169-172 |
| | A. The Prayer | vs. 169-170 |
| | 1. For Enlightenment | v. 169 |
| | 2. For Enablement | v. 170 |
| | B. The Promises | vs. 171-172 |
| | 1. He Would Praise the Lord | v. 171 |
| | 2. He Would Proclaim the Word | v. 172 |
| II. | Lord, Help Me | vs. 173-176 |
| | A. Lord, Save Me | vs. 173 |
| | 1. The Ground of the Appeal | |
| | 2. The Greatness of the Appeal | |
| | B. Lord, Satisfy Me | v. 174 |
| | C. Lord Strengthen Me | v. 119:175 |
| | He wanted something: | |
| | 1. Wrought in Him | |
| | 2. Bought from Him | |
| | 3. Taught to Him | |
| | D. Lord, Seek Me | v. 119:176 |
| | We see him: | |
| | 1. Straying | |
| | 2. Praying | |

APPENDIX

I. PRINCIPLES OF DYNAMIC BIBLE STUDY

Dynamic Bible study does not require anything magical. Once you understand the basic principles, it is simple to do. Here are five general principles you will need to remember, regardless of the method of study you use.

1. *The secret of dynamic Bible study is knowing how to ask the right kinds of questions.* As you grow in proficiency in Bible study, you will develop the art of asking questions. The more questions you ask about the text under study, the more you will get out of it. You will realize that you can bombard the text with a limitless number of questions. One benefit of studying the Bible is that you will begin developing a more inquisitive mind. You will discover exciting insights you've overlooked in the past. It will seem as if you have been given a new pair of eyes! Suddenly, every time you pick up the Bible to study, new truths will leap out of the text.
2. *Dynamic Bible study involves writing down what you have observed and discovered.* You haven't really thought through a biblical text until you have put the thoughts gained from it into writing. You cannot *study* the Bible without writing something down. One of the most profitable things you can do in your spiritual life is to start some kind of spiritual notebook in which you write down thoughts and insights God has given you. Nowhere is note-taking more important than in your personal Bible study. If you really value the nuggets of truth that you discover, you will take notes on everything you dig out of the Scriptures. Even if you don't see anything in a particular verse, write *that* down.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BIBLE STUDY AND BIBLE READING

Bible Reading involves reading through a portion of scripture

Bible Study involves taking extensive notes

"The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives"
– Dwight L. Moody.

3. *The ultimate goal of Bible Study is application, not just interpretation.* We do not want to settle for understanding alone; we want to apply the biblical principles to our daily living. The Bible was given to change our character and bring it more into conformity with Jesus Christ. All of our efforts in Bible study are valueless if in the final analysis we do not change and become more like Jesus. We must "not merely listen to the word," but we are to "do what it says" (James 1:22.)

Some of the questions you ought to be asking yourself in your Bible study are:

- What attitude do I need to change as a result of this study?
- What do I need to start doing or stop doing?
- What things do I need to believe or stop believing?
- What relationships do I need to work on?
- What ministry should I be having with others?

When the Word of God changes our lives and makes us more like Jesus, that's when we realize what the real purpose of life is, what true joy is, and what it means for God to change the world through us. The Great Commission is fulfilled, and souls are won when we become Christlike and do his will. When you study the Word of God, don't go to it with the attitude of finding some truth that no one else has ever seen. Don't study it to find something with which to impress others. Just go to the Word to find out what it has to say to *you*. The real problem for most of us is not with interpreting difficult passages but with obeying the passages we do understand.

4. *Dynamic Bible Study means that God's Word must be studied Systematically.* A haphazard study of the Word of God is an insult to the sanctity of Scripture. It is a slap at the holiness of God, who gave us that Word. The "cafeteria style," the "dip-or-skip" method or the "what are we going to find today" approach will not produce the results God wants in our lives. What we need is a systematic regular plan of study, whether we go through a book study, study a word, analyze a person's character, study a chapter, or choose some other method.

We should not overlook any passage or section in the Bible. The Old Testament is just as much God's Word as is the New. Many people today do not know too much about the Old Testament. We need to study all of it systematically.

Studying the Bible is like being a good detective. A good Bible student basically follows the same procedure as a good sleuth. The first thing a detective does is to go out and look for clues. He doesn't say anything, interpret anything, or draw any conclusions, but he does look at all the details. He observes things that other people might normally overlook because he is trained in observation. Second, he begins asking questions on the basis of what he has observed. Third, after intense observation and questioning, he starts putting the evidence together and interpreting what he has. Fourth, he compares and correlates, piecing together all the evidence he has collected to see how each fact relates to the others. Finally, he draws a conclusion and makes a decision on the basis of what he believes actually occurred and who was involved.

1. **Observe:** See the basic facts contained in the text under study.
2. **Ask Questions:** Discover additional facts by more intense observation.
3. **Interpret:** Analyze what the text means.
4. **Correlate:** Connect what you have discovered with other biblical truths you know (cross-referencing verses and comparing Scripture with Scripture.)
5. **Draw a conclusion:** Apply.

5. *In dynamic Bible Study you will never exhaust the riches in any one passage of Scripture.* The psalmist declared, “To all perfection I see a limit; but your commands are boundless” (Ps. 119:96.) You can dig and dig in Scripture, but you will never tough bottom. Solomon said, “If you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:4-5). But God’s silver lode is inexhaustible and the treasure is boundless. For this reason you can study the same passage over and over again, dig into it, leave it for three or four months – and when you come back to it, there is much more to find. The key is this: *Stick with it!* Remember, there is no limit to the number of questions you can ask, the number of observations you can make, and the number of applications you can make. So don’t give up. The best attitude to have in Bible study is the one Jacob had when he wrestled with the angel and said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me” (Gen. 32:26.).

Bible study has no shortcuts. It is hard work, but if you are diligent and patient, you will reap results in due time. Once you have felt the joy and satisfaction that comes from finding a fantastic spiritual truth on your own and applying it to your life, you will realize that it was well worth the effort. So, stick with it!

II. PREPARATION FOR DYNAMIC BIBLE STUDY

You do not just rush into Bible study. Good Bible study demands some preparation. Here are four things that are important to do if you are to receive the most benefit from your study:

1. **Schedule your Bible study time.** Set aside a specific amount of time to do Bible study each week. Decide how much time you want to spend on Bible study. Don't overdo it, but don't shortchange yourself, either. If you don't put study into your weekly schedule, you will never make time for it, or it will be sporadic and shallow. *You must make time for Bible study.* How often should you study the Bible? The answer will vary from person to person, but an important factor to keep in mind is the distinction between your quiet time and your Bible study time.

You should have a quiet time every day. It is usually a short devotional period (10-30 minutes) in which you *read* the Bible, meditate for a few minutes on what you have read, and have a time of prayer. The purpose of your quiet time is to have fellowship with Jesus Christ.

You should not try to do in-depth Bible study during your quiet time. In fact, nothing will kill your quiet time faster than engaging in serious Bible study during that devotional period. Just enjoy the presence of God and fellowship with him. While it is better to have a 20-minute quiet time every day than just one-hour period once a week, the exact opposite is true in Bible study. You cannot study the Bible effectively in a piecemeal fashion. It is better to block out larger periods of time (two to four hours) than to try to study a little bit every day. Then, as you grow in your Bible study skills, you can spend additional time with it.

You should study your Bible when you are at your best physically, emotionally, and intellectually, and when you can be undistracted and unhurried. Since you are either a "day person" or a "night person," you should pick the time when you are most alert. You should never try to study when you are tired or right after a large meal. Try to study when you are rested and wide-awake.

2. **Keep a notebook.** As already stated, you cannot study the Bible without writing down things that you have observed. Each Bible study method described in this course has a study form designed to go with it.
3. **Get the right tools.** You should consider making an investment in reference tools and setting up a little personal reference library. It will be an investment you will use the rest of your life.
4. **Spend a short time in prayer before each study.** First, ask the Lord to cleanse your life from all known sin and to fill you with the Holy Spirit so you will be in fellowship with him during the study. This is the advantage of studying the Bible as compared with studying a textbook: you have direct communication with the author himself. You have the privilege of studying not only the revelation but also the Revealer. So, make sure you are in fellowship with Christ before you study his Word. The apostle Paul said if you are in the flesh, or carnal, you cannot understand spiritual truths (1 Cor. 2:10-3:4). You have to be in fellowship with the Lord in order to understand and apply his Word. As someone said, "We need to search our hearts before we search the Scriptures." We need to make sure our lives are right with God before we try to dig into his Word. Second, pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you in your study. The best way to understand the Bible is to talk with its Author. Memorize Psalm 119:18 and use it before each study: *"Open my eyes that*

I may see wonderful things in your law.” Ask God to open your eyes to his Word. In the final analysis, unless God the Holy Spirit opens your eyes to see the truths in the Bible, all of your studying will be a wasted effort.

III. SELECTING THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR GOOD BIBLE STUDY

Probably one of the best-kept secrets in Christendom is the availability of practical Bible study helps. Many Christians are not aware of the many excellent reference tools currently available to make personal Bible study possible and exciting. This is comparable to a carpenter who sets out to build a house without knowing that a hammer and saw are available to him.

Pastors should acquaint their people with these books, for the devil delights in keeping them out of circulation. As long as Satan can keep Christians from studying their Bibles on their own, his work will be that much easier. A Christian who does not spend regular time each week in personal Bible study will be weak in resisting the devil's temptations. A practical way that pastors can "prepare God's people for works of service" (Eph. 4:12) is to familiarize their people with these study tools.

Christians living in the Western world have an abundance of helpful books that are designed to aid us in our personal Bible study, making use of the latest archeological finds, word studies, and research of great Bible scholars. Bible study tools, however, are not meant to replace the Bible; rather, they help us in studying the Bible itself. Bible study is a skill we need to develop. Most skills require the use of some kinds of tools. Carpenters need their hammers and saws; artists need their brushes and paints; plumbers need their wrenches. Likewise, serious Bible students will want to take advantage of the available reference tools to help them search the Scriptures effectively. People who try to study the Bible systematically without using good tools will find their job tedious and difficult. Some Christians hesitate to use references out of fear that they will become too dependent on them. Some say piously, "All I need is the Bible." True, but the tools suggested in this section are designed to help you get into the Bible. You should not be afraid of using reference tools, for most of these books represent the lifelong studies of dedicated men of God. The insights they received from the Lord can enrich your Bible study immensely and provide information about people, places, and events you would not find in the Bible alone.

Eight types of reference tools:

1. *The Study Bible.* It should have print large enough for you to read for long periods of time without getting a headache from eyestrain. It should also have paper thick enough for you to make notes without the ink running through the paper to the next page. Wide margins are helpful because they allow room for making personal notations. It should have a good system of cross-references. The New International Version (NIV) is recommended because exhaustive concordances and various study Bibles are available in this version. The study Bibles include a general edition as well as versions designed for particular categories of people such as men, women, teenagers, and people still in their spiritual search for God. Study Bibles are also available in the King James Version (KJV); however, that version's archaic language can be a handicap unless you keep a more recent translation, such as the NIV at your side during your Bible Study.
2. *Several recent translations.* In the past 50 years we have seen the production of many new translations of the Bible that use contemporary English. Though weaknesses exist in every translation, each one makes a unique contribution to a better understanding of the Bible. Many people who were previously not interested in the King James Version have begun to read and

study the Bible in the more recent translations. The greatest benefit you can receive from these versions is comparing them with one another in your study. The many possible means and usages of a word can be found by reading a verse in the various versions and noting the differences.

Also available today are some “parallel” Bibles, which include several translations side by side in a single volume. This allows you to compare translations quickly without having to lay out 10 Bibles across your desk. Besides these recent translations, a few well-known paraphrases have been produced. A translation is more of a word-for-word translation from the original language; a paraphrase is what one person believes the original says, which calls for inclusion of their own interpretation in some places. Many translations have been prepared by a group of scholars, while a paraphrase is the work of one person. Paraphrases are fine for occasional light devotional reading but should not be used for serious Bible study. Use an accurate and respected translation for that.

The Difference Between a Translation and a Paraphrase	
Translation	Paraphrase
A translation is more of a word-for-word translation from the original language.	A paraphrase is what one person believes the original says, which calls for the inclusion of their own interpretation in some places.
Most translations have been prepared by a group of scholars.	A paraphrase is the work of one person.

Some useful and reliable translations available today besides the NIV are:

The New American Standard Bible (NASB) is recognized as one of the most accurate translations that is faithful to the original languages.

The Amplified Bible includes different possible means of many words used in the text. It seeks to show the many renderings a Greek or Hebrew word can have so you can understand the full implications of its usage. It is helpful in doing word studies but is not recommended as a regular reading Bible.

The New Living Translation (NLT) has a dynamic approach to language similar to that of the NIV. It is a little freer in its language than the NIV but is not a paraphrase like its predecessor, **The Living Bible**.

Today's New International Version (TNIV) is one of the newest versions available. It is similar to the NIV (only 7 percent is different) but takes a more gender-accurate approach.

An exhaustive concordance by the most important tool you will need in Bible study next to your study Bible is a concordance geared to your primary Bible version. This tool is a Bible index of the words contained in that version. A number of Bibles have limited concordances at the back, which list only a few of the major words and names. An “exhaustive” concordance lists every usage of every word in the Bible and gives all the references where that word may be found. Exhaustive concordances are available today for various versions of the Bible. They are descendants, adapted to more recent translations of the original *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* that was compiled for the King James Version. Two

examples are *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Zondervan) and *The Strongest NASB Exhaustive Concordance* (Zondervan).

In addition, there is Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible, which, like Strong's originated in the 19th century and is based on the King James Version. All exhaustive concordances are large, bulky volumes that are fairly expensive, but they are worth every penny you invest in them.

A Bible dictionary and/or Bible encyclopedia – A Bible dictionary explains many of the words, topics, customs, and traditions in the Bible as well as giving historical, geographical, cultural, and archeological information. Background material is also given for each book of the Bible, and short biographies are presented for the major people of both testaments. A Bible encyclopedia is an expanded Bible dictionary, with longer articles that deal in greater detail with more subjects.

Some of the best are:

- *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2 vols. (Baker)
- *The Complete Book of When and Where in the Bible* (Tyndale)
- *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed. (Broadman & Holman)
- *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 3 vols. (Tyndale)
- *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nelson)
- *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (InterVarsity Press)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Tyndale)
- *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5 vols. (Zondervan)

A topical Bible – This tool is similar to a concordance except that it categorizes the verses of the Bible by topics instead of by words. This helps the Bible student because a verse often deals with a topic without ever using a specific word. If you had to rely on your concordance alone, you might miss those verses when studying a particular subject. For example, if you were to look up the subject "Trinity" in the Nave's Topical Bible, you would find 83 references listed, even though the actual word does not appear in the Bible.

A Bible Handbook – This tool is a combination of an encyclopedia and a commentary in a concise form. It is used for quick reference while reading through a particular book of the Bible. Instead of being arranged by topics alphabetically, handbooks are designed to follow the order of the books of the Bible. They give background notes and a brief running commentary and include maps, charts, archeological notes and many other helpful facts.

The best ones are:

- *Halley's Bible Handbook with the New International Version* (Zondervan).
- *Holman Bible Handbook* (Broadman & Holman).
- *The New Unger's Bible Handbook* (Moody Press)..
- *Zondervan Handbook to the Bible*, rev. ed. (Zondervan)

A set of word studies – A good set of word studies will give you the following information:

- The original root meaning of the Greek or Hebrew word (its etymology)
- The various uses of the word throughout the Bible and in similar nonbiblical literature of that historical period
- The frequency with which the word occurs in the Bible.

These reference tools range from inexpensive one-volume expositor dictionaries to very expensive 12-volume sets.

These four are recommended:

- *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study: New Testament*, 3 vols. (Victor).
- *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study: Old Testament*, 4 vols. (Victor).
- *Expositor Dictionary of Bible Words* (Hendrickson).
- *Kregel Dictionary of the Bible and Theology* (Kregel).

Commentaries – A commentary is a scholarly collection of explanatory notes and interpretations on the text of a particular Bible book or section. Its purpose is to explain and interpret the meaning of the biblical message by analyzing the words used, background, introduction, grammar and syntax, and relation of that particular book to the rest of the Bible.

- Used properly, commentaries can greatly increase your understanding of the Bible.
- Generally, you should not refer to a commentary until **after** you have done your own study.
- Never let reading a commentary take the place of your personal Bible study.
- Because commentaries are written by people, they are fallible.
- The best way to use a commentary is to check your own findings with those of the authors/commentators and discover whether they are solid and evangelical in their commitment to Scripture.
- Beware of buying and using commentaries written by people who do not regard the Bible as the Word of God.

Commentaries come in all sizes, ranging from one volume covering the whole Bible to multivolume sets. Here are some good one-or-two-volume commentaries:

- *Baker Commentary on the Bible* (Baker)
- *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2 vols. (Victor)
- *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Abridged Edition*, 2 vols. (Zondervan)
- *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nelson).
- *New Bible Commentary: Twenty-First Century Edition* (InterVarsity Press)

Commentary series with more volumes include the following. Some series are incomplete with some volumes still to be published.

- *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 4 vols (Victor)
- *Cornerstone Bible Commentary*, 18 vols. (Tyndale)
- *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 13 vols. (Zondervan)
- *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Broadman & Holman)
- *Holman Old Testament Commentary* (Broadman & Holman)
- *New American Commentary*, 44 vols. (Broadman & Holman)
- *The NIV Application Commentary* – 23 vols. Old Testament; 20 vols. New Testament. (Zondervan)

Examples of a basic library:

1. A study Bible
2. Two recent Bible versions
3. An exhaustive concordance
4. A Bible dictionary
5. A topical Bible
6. A Bible handbook
7. A one-or-two-volume commentary

IV. THE DEVOTIONAL METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY

The Devotional Method of Bible Study involves taking a passage of the Bible, large or small, and prayerfully meditating on it until the Holy Spirit shows you a way to apply its truth to your own life in a way that is personal, practical, possible, and provable. The goal is for you to take seriously the Word of God and “do what it says” (James 1:22.)

Why Application is Important

The Bible was given to us to show us how we can have a relationship with Almighty God and how we are to live our lives his way in this world. It was given to change our lives to become more like that of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul declared that it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training the believer in righteous living (2 Tim. 3:16.)

The Bible is a practical book, for it is concerned with practical godly living. Bible study without personal application can be just an academic exercise with no spiritual value. The Bible was written to be applied to our lives.

Application Is Necessary for Our Lives

The study of the Word of God should lead to its application in our lives, with the result that the scriptures change us too. conform more with the will of God.

STEP ONE Pray for insight on how to apply the passage.	STEP TWO Meditate on the verse(s) you have chosen to study	STEP THREE Write out an application	STEP FOUR Memorize a key verse from your study
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1. You can't really know the word of god unless you apply it to your life. You can be a walking Bible encyclopedia, with your head crammed full of biblical knowledge, but it won't do you any good if you don't apply it practically in daily living. If you study the Word of God without applying it to your life, you are no better off than the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' day. You really don't know the Scriptures until you put them into practice.
2. Studying the word of god can be dangerous if you merely study it without applying it. Bible study without application can be dangerous because knowledge puffs up. The apostle Paul stated, “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor. 8:1.) The Greek word translated as “puffs up” contains the idea of being inflated with pride that, in turn, leads to arrogance. The Bible tells us that the devil knows the Word intellectually (see his temptation of Jesus – Matt. 4:1-11), and we also know that he is puffed up with pride and is arrogant. When you correctly apply the Word of God to your life, you eliminate the danger of being puffed up with pride. Bible study without application can be dangerous because knowledge requires action. What a man knows should find expression in

what he does. James declared, “Do not merely listen to the word, and deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22.) God’s commands are not optional. He doesn’t say, “Please won’t you consider doing this?” He commands, “Do it!” And he expects us to obey. King David was known as a man after God’s own heart because he applied the Word to his life and practiced what he knew. The psalmist wrote, I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes. I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands” (Ps. 119:69-60.)

3. Bible study without application can be dangerous because knowledge increases responsibility. If you get serious about studying the Bible, you will be held more accountable than the average person, because with added knowledge comes added responsibility. James wrote, “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins” (James 4:17.) With a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures comes a stronger judgment if you fail to apply them. When you start studying the Bible, God begins showing you areas of your life that need changing and calls you to greater responsibility. If you are not planning on applying the lessons you receive from your Bible study, it would be better for you not to study the Bible at all. You will just be heaping more judgment on yourself. John Milton, a great Christian poet, is reported to have said, “The end of all learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love and imitate Him.” That sums up what we are talking about in applying our study of Scripture: we are to know God, love him, and then be like him.

Application Is Hard Work

It would seem that applying the Bible would be fairly simple, but actually, it is the hardest part of Bible study. Why is that? Application doesn’t happen by accident. We have to plan for it, or it will never come about. Three things that make applying Scripture to our lives so difficult are that it requires thinking, the devil fights viciously, and we naturally resist change.

1. *Application is hard work because it requires serious thinking.* Sometimes it takes a long period of meditation (concentrated, prayerful thinking) before we can see a way to apply a truth of Scripture we have studied. Sometimes it may mean looking beneath a temporary rule to see a timeless principle in the text. Sometimes, it means looking beyond a local custom to see a universal insight. All this takes time and concentration that we may be hesitant and reluctant to give.
2. *Application is hard work because Satan fights it viciously.* The devil’s strongest attacks often come in your quiet time when you are trying to apply what you have studied. Satan knows that as long as you are content with merely having head knowledge of the Word, you are not much of a threat to his plans. But as soon as you get serious about making some changes in your life, he will fight you tooth and nail. He hates doers of the Word. He will let you study the Bible all you desire as long as you don’t ask yourself, “Now what am I going to do with all that I’ve learned?”
3. *Application is hard work because we naturally resist change.* Often, we don’t “feel” like changing, which is what a true application requires. We live by our emotions rather than by our wills, for we are content to stay the way we are. We hear Christians saying they don’t feel like studying the Bible, or they don’t feel like praying, or they don’t feel like witnessing. Feeling has nothing to do with living the Christian life, for feelings, come and go. The key to spiritual maturity is to live for Jesus Christ not because we feel good but because we know it is the right thing to do. You apply the Word of God to your life not because you may feel like it that day or week, but because you know

God expects it of you. Applied Bible study as an act of the will leads to maturity and is a basis for stability in your Christian life.

Four Steps To Practical Application

When you do a devotional bible study, follow four simple steps. these steps can be summarized in the words, *pray, meditate, apply, and memorize.*

STEP ONE Pray for Insight on How to Apply the Passage

Ask God to help you apply the Scripture you are studying and show you specifically what he wants you to do. You already know that God wants you to do two things: Obey his Word and share it with others. In your prayer tell God that you are ready to obey what he will show you and that you are willing to share that application with others.

STEP TWO Meditate on the Verse(s) You have Chosen to

Meditation is the key to discovering how to apply Scripture to your life. Meditation is essentially thought digestion. You take a thought God gives you, put it in your mind, and think on it over and over again. Meditation may be compared to rumination; that's what a cow does when it chews its cud. It eats some grass and sends it to its first stomach, then it lies down, brings the grass up, chews on it, and swallows it again. This process of digestion is repeated three times. Scriptural meditation is reading a passage in the Bible, then concentrating on it in different ways. Here are several practical ways you can meditate on a passage of scripture:

Visualize the scene of the narrative in your mind. Put yourself into the biblical situation and try to picture yourself as an active participant. Whether you are reading the historical books of the Old Testament, the Gospels, or the Book of Acts, imagine yourself in that historical context. As yourself how you would feel if you were involved in that situation. What would you say? What would you do?

Another example of visualization in meditation is to imagine yourself as the apostle Paul in prison writing the letter we know as 2 Timothy. Picture yourself in that Roman jail, condemned to death and awaiting execution, and alone except for Luke. Feel the loneliness Paul must have felt, but also feel the triumph he must have felt as he wrote, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7.) When you start visualizing a scene, Scripture comes tremendously alive to you.

Emphasize words in the passage under study. Read through a verse aloud several times, each time emphasizing a different word, and watch new meanings develop. For instance, if you are meditating on Philippians 4:13, you would emphasize the words as follows:

I can do everything through him who gives me strength."
I **CAN** do everything through him who gives me strength."
I can **DO** everything through him who gives me strength."
I can do **EVERYTHING** through him who gives me strength."
I can do everything **THROUGH** him who gives me strength."
I can do everything through **HIM** who gives me strength."
I can do everything through him **WHO** gives me strength."
I can do everything through him who **GIVES** me strength."
I can do everything through him who gives **ME** strength."
I can do everything through him who gives me **STRENGTH**."

You will get 10 different meanings from this verse as you go through and emphasize a different word each time.

Paraphrase the passage under study. Take the verse or passage you are studying and rephrase it in your own words. As you think on it, use contemporary words and phrases to express timeless biblical truths. The Living Bible and Eugene Peterson's *The Message* are two examples of paraphrases of Scripture.

Personalize the passage you are studying. This can be done by putting your name in place of the pronouns or nouns used in Scripture. For example, "John 3:16 would read, "For God so loved *Rick Warren* that he gave his one and only Son that if *Rick* believes in him he shall not perish but have eternal life."

Use the **S-P-A-C-E P-E-T-S** acrostic. This acrostic is a useful aid to meditation. Each letter represents a question that can help you apply the passage to your life. If you memorize the nine questions that this acrostic represents, you have them available every time you want to meditate on a passage.

This acrostic asks: Is there any...

Sin to confess? Do I need to make any restitution?

Promise to claim? Is it a universal promise? Have I met the condition(s)?

Attitude to change? Am I willing to work on a negative attitude and begin building toward a positive one?

Command to obey? Am, I willing to do it no matter how I feel?

Example to follow? Is it a positive example for me to copy, or a negative one to avoid?

Pray to pray? Is there anything I need to pray back to God?

Error to avoid? Is there any problem that I should be alert to or beware of?

Truth to believe? What new things can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or other biblical teachings?

Something to praise God for? Is there something here I can be thankful for?

Pray the verse or passage back to God. Put the passage under study into the first person singular, turn it into a prayer, and pray it back to God. The book of Psalms is a good example of this method of meditation. An example of this method of meditation may be seen in the use of the first three verses of Psalm 23:

- Thank you, Lord, for being my Shepherd, and I lack nothing.
- Thank you for making me lie down in green pastures, for leading me beside the quiet waters, for restoring my soul.
- Thank you for guiding me in the paths of righteousness for your name's sake.

Which one of these methods should you use in your meditation? The one that best fits what you are studying or a combination of them. If you are studying the book of Proverbs, for example, it might be difficult to visualize a scene in your mind, but you can emphasize the words and pray some of the teachings back to God.

STEP THREE Write Out an Application

Write an application of the insights you have discovered through your meditation. Writing your application out on paper helps you be specific. If you don't write something down, you will soon forget it. This is particularly necessary when you are dealing with a spiritual truth. If you can't put it down on paper, you haven't really thought it through. It's been proven that if you write something down, you will remember it longer and be able to express to others what you have learned.

You need to remember four factors in writing out a good application:

1. Your application should be personal – you should write it in the first-person singular. Use the personal pronouns I, me, my and mine throughout.

2. Your application should be practical – it ought to be something you can do. Plan a definite course of action that you intend to take. Design a personal project that will encourage you to be a “doer of the Word.” Make your applications as specific as possible. Generalities can make you feel helpless and produce little action.
3. Your application should be possible – it should be something you know you can accomplish. Otherwise, you will get discouraged.
4. Your application should be provable – you must set up some sort of follow-up to check up on your success in doing it. It has to be measurable so you will know that you have done it. This means you will have to set some kind of time limit on your application.

The following example of these four factors is taken from Ecclesiastes 6:7. The passage reads, “All man’s efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied.” The four factors in the written application would look as follows:

1. Personal: “I need to...”
2. Practical: “I need to lose some weight.”
3. Possible: “I need to lose 10 pounds.”
4. Provable: “I need to lose 10 pounds before the end of the month.”

To help you carry out this kind of application, tell a friend or someone in the family about it who will occasionally check up on your progress in an encouraging way. Record applications for future use as well as present needs. What if you find an application that does not apply to you at that particular time? You are studying a passage that has to do with death and how you can overcome grief and sorrow, but this is not your problem now. What do you do with these verses? Write them down anyway, for two reasons. First, the application might be needed in the future when another situation comes into your life. Second, it might help you to minister to someone else who is in that situation. As yourself, “How can I use this verse to help someone else?”

STEP FOUR Memorize a Key Verse from Your Study

So that you can continue to meditate on the passage you are applying, and to help remind you of your project, memorize a verse that is a key to the application you have written. Sometimes, God will work on one area of your life for several weeks or even months. It takes time to change ingrained character traits, habits, and attitudes. New habits and ways of thinking are not set in one day. We must be aware of this and be willing to let God continue to reinforce a new truth in our lives. We should not fool ourselves by thinking that writing out one application will be a magic formula that will produce instant change. Rather, it must be thought of as part of the process of growth. The memorized verse will help in that process because it will ever be with us – “in the heart.” God may teach you to love others by putting you in the midst of unlovely people. You may have to learn patience while experiencing irritations and learn peace in the midst of chaos. You are then discovering how to have joy even in times of sorrow and testing. You must realize that when God wants to build a positive quality in your life, he must allow you to encounter situations where you can choose to do the right thing instead of following your natural inclinations.

Summary

The ultimate test by which we study and apply Scripture is the person of Jesus Christ. We have to ask, “Does this application help me become more like Jesus?” If we do not apply the biblical insights God gives us, we become spiritually hardened and callous. We become dull to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Application of God’s Word is vitally necessary to our spiritual health and our growth in Christian maturity.

HOW TO FILL IN THE DEVOTIONAL STUDY FORM

Fill in the preliminary information:

Date: [Write down the date that you do this study.]

Passage: [Write down the book, chapter, and verse(s) that you are studying.]

Fill in the four parts of the form:

Prayer: Check the box after you have prayed for insight.

Meditation: Write out your thoughts using whichever method you employ.

Application: Write out an application that is personal, practical, possible, and provable.

Memorization: Write out the memory verse you plan to learn, in the version of your choice.

Two examples of completed Devotional Study Forms follow. You may use a blank sheet of paper on which you have marked off the suggested divisions or make copies of the blank form provided.

Assignment: The following passages are suggested as beginning study texts for the Devotional Method:

- Psalm 15
- Psalm 34
- Romans 12
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22
- 1 John 4

For Further Reading:

The following list of books and pamphlets are helpful aids for establishing a regular quiet time. They contain some practical information on developing a daily habit of spending time in a devotional study of God's Word.

- Appointment with God by the Navigators (NavPress)
- "How to Have a Meaningful Quiet Time" by Rick Warren
- Meditation: The Bible Tells You How by Jim Downing (NavPress)
- Primer on Meditation by Robert D. Foster (Challenge Books)
- Seven Minutes with God by Robert D. Foster (Challenge Books)
- Studying, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible by Walter A. Henrichsen and Gayle Jackson, Chap. 13 (Zondervan)

DEVOTIONAL STUDY FORM EXAMPLE 1

DATE:

PASSAGE: Luke 12:22-26

1. **PRAYER** (check when done)

2. **MEDITATION**

I shouldn't worry so much. God will take care of all my needs. Since God gave me my life, surely I can trust him to sustain it. I can learn from the example of birds: they don't worry about the future. God takes care of them on a daily basis. And if God takes care of the birds, of course, he will take care of me! Besides, worrying never does me any good. It never really changes the situation. So, what's the use of worrying? None!

Command to Obey: Don't worry! (v. 22)(

Promise to Claim: God will take care of me! (v. 24)

3. **APPLICATION**

I need to apply this lesson in the area of our family finances.

For this next month (I'll take it one month at a time) every time the devil tempts me to worry about our bills, I'll resist that thought by quoting Luke 12:24 aloud.

4. **MEMORIZATION**

"Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or bar: yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!" (Luke 12:24)

DEVOTIONAL STUDY FORM EXAMPLE 2

DATE:

PASSAGE: Judges 6:1-18

1. **PRAYER** (check when done)

2. **MEDITATION** This passage is on the call of Gideon

Lessons (Truths to Believe)

- When God wants to accomplish something, he looks for people to use
- God often uses the most unexpected people.
- God can show his strength best through our weaknesses.
- God's power in us is the answer to our inadequacies.

Sin to Confess/Attitude to Change

Lord, forgive me for not being willing to be used by you. I've felt that you couldn't use me because of my weaknesses. I've used my inadequacy as an excuse for laziness. Help me remember that trusting in myself will cause failure, but relying on your strength in me will bring victory. Se my weaknesses to bring glory to yourself.

3. **APPLICATION**

I've been afraid to accept my church's invitation to teach a Sunday School class. I've made up excuses for not taking the position because I felt inadequate. But I know God wants me to teach that class, so I'm going to tell my pastor I'll accept the responsibility.

4. **MEMORIZATION**

Remember what God told Gideon: "I will be with you" (v. 16)

DEVOTIONAL STUDY FORM

DATE:

PASSAGE:

1. **PRAYER** (check when done)

2. **MEDITATION**

3. **APPLICATION**

4. **MEMORIZATION**

V. THE CHAPTER SUMMARY METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY

How to Begin Understanding Chapters of a Book of the Bible.

The Bible as it was originally written had no chapter or verse divisions. In fact, it wasn't until A.D. 1228 that Bishop Stephen Langton added the chapter divisions. These were added to make the various sections of the Bible more accessible to the readers. Some of these divisions are arbitrary and interrupt the flow of the writer's message. Usually, however, they provide good braking points that are helpful in Bible study.

According to these divisions, there are 1,189 chapters in the Bible. If you study one chapter each day, you could read through the scriptures in just over three years. If you summarized two chapters a day, you could finish in about 20 months. This pace is certainly not recommended, because you could quickly get bored with the study method. Instead, select random chapters of scripture that you want to study and use the summary method on those passages; or use a different method for variety.

The Chapter Summary Method of Bible study involves gaining a general understanding of the contents of a chapter of the Bible reading it through at least five times, asking a series of content questions and summarizing the central thoughts of the passage.

Why This Method is Important

The Chapter Summary Method is important because it enables you to begin understanding chapters of the books of the Bible. It is a popular method for those beginning Bible study because chapters are usually fairly short and it does not require deep study to do a chapter summary. It is a valuable method because it can be quickly learned by a brand-new Christian or someone else who is interested in doing meaningful Bible study. It is an excellent method with which to begin a lifetime of personal Bible study for four reasons:

1. *This method is easy to learn.* You can begin practicing it as soon as you understand the 10 basic steps that follow in the next section. The study form and example provided should help you.
2. *This method does not take much time.* Depending on the length of the chapter you are studying, you can complete a chapter summary in 20 to 30 minutes. This is especially true if the chapter contains a historical narrative – parts of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the book of Acts, for example. You will have to spend more time, however, in the Psalms, the prophetic books, and the doctrinal letters of the New Testament.
3. *This method does not require any outside helps or reference tools, but it is necessary to memorize the ten steps.* The you can do a chapter summary in any situation at any time, using your Bible and a piece of paper. Whenever you have extra time to spend – as in a doctor's waiting room, a bus depot, or an airport – this is the method to use. Pick a book of the Bible, start with chapter 1, and begin recording your discoveries.

4. *This method is a good type of study to use when you are engaged in a rapid reading survey through the Bible.* You can make initial notes as you read each chapter by using the Chapter Summary Form.

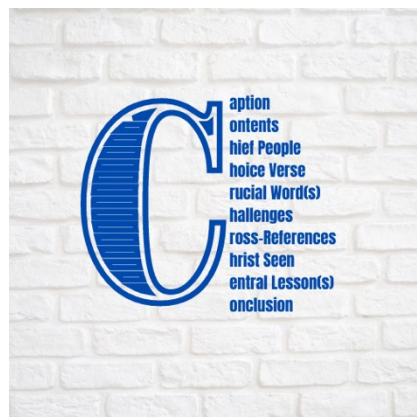
Ten Easy Steps for Doing a Chapter Summary

In preparing to fill in the study form for this method of Bible study, *read through the chapter at least five times.* You will find no better way to get acquainted with a chapter of the Bible than to read it over and over again. The more times you read a passage of Scripture, the more it will come alive to you. Many Christians miss the great insights of Scripture because they fail to read and reread its passage. The great Bible expositor G. Campbell Morgan was famous for his powerful, exciting sermons. When asked for the secret of his ability to communicate God's Word, he replied that he made it a habit to read a chapter or passage 30 or 40 times before he began working on it for a sermon. It is no wonder his sermons were exciting and meaningful.

Here are some tips on how to read a chapter of the Bible.

- *Read it in a Bible without notes.* If you try using this method by reading a Bible in which you have made notes, you will have the tendency to concentrate on the same ideas. Let God speak to you in a fresh way and give you new insights.
- *Read it without stopping.* During your first few readings, don't stop in the middle of a chapter, but read it from start to finish. Your goal is to feel the flow of the chapter, so don't be concerned with the details at the outset.
- *Read it in several different contemporary translations.* This will give you additional insights as you see how each translator rendered the original writing. Make notes on the interesting differences you find.
- *Read it aloud and quietly to yourself.* If you have a problem with concentration, this will help tremendously because you will be hearing yourself read. Many people have found that reading aloud helps them better focus their attention on the text.

As you are reading the chapter, begin looking for the following 10 specific things and write your answers on your Chapter Summary Form or on a blank piece of paper. You may fill in the 10 Cs in any order, saving Step Ten for the last step. The 10 parts of your study are:



Step One Caption

Give the chapter a short descriptive title. The shorter the title, the more likely you will remember it. In fact, if you use this method on every chapter in a selected book of the Bible, you can remember the contents of the whole book by memorizing your chapter titles. Use one word if possible (2 Corinthians 23 might be titled "Love") and five words at most (Hebrews 11 could be "Heroes of the Faith".) Try to find the keyword of the chapter and fit it into your title. If your title is catchy or produces a mental picture, you will remember it longer. One creative person gave "Well-Well" as the title for John 4. The two key events of that chapter are the woman at the *well* and the nobleman's son who Jesus made *well*.

Step Two Contents

Describe, summarize, paraphrase, outline, or make a list of the major points in a chapter. The method you choose will depend on the literary style of the chapter and on your own preference. Some people like to summarize; analytical people enjoy outlining. Choose the method with which you feel most comfortable and is easy for you to do. Don't try to interpret the chapter; just make observations on its contents. Record on your form what you feel the writer said.

Step Three Chief People

List the most important people in the chapter. Ask questions such as, who are the main people in this chapter? Why are they included? What is significant about them? If the chapter contains pronouns (he, she, they, etc.) you may have to refer to the previous chapter to identify the people. Write down your reasons for choosing certain people as the chief ones of the chapter. When you come to long genealogies (lists of people), don't try to list each one, but summarize the list.

Step Four Choice Verse

Choose a verse that summarizes the whole chapter or one that speaks to you personally. In some chapters, you may find a key verse that summarizes the writer's argument; in other chapters, there may not be a key verse. On occasion, you may want to pick a verse from which you will be writing your application, a verse that you believe God would have you apply to your life.

Step Five Crucial Word(s)

Write down the keyword or words of the chapter. Many times, the key word will be the one that is used most frequently ("love" in 1 Corinthians 13 and "faith" in Hebrews 11.) Sometimes the crucial word may be the most important word but not the most used one in Roman 6, for example, the word "count" (KJV, "reckon") is the important word even though it is used only once (Rom. 6:11.) Also, a chapter may have more than one crucial word.

Step Six Challenges

List any difficulties you may have with the passage. Are there any statements you do not understand? Is there any problem or question you would like to study further? Often while doing a chapter summary you will get ideas for other types of studies you may want to do in the future. For instance, a certain word and the chapter may catch your attention. Take note of that word; later, you may want to do an in-depth study of it. A question about a doctrinal matter might motivate you to do a topical study on that particular teaching.

using the cross-references in your study Bible, look up other verses that help clarify what the chapter is talking about and list them on your form. Ask the question, what else in the Bible helps me understand

this chapter? Cross-references are important because they are hopeful tools in interpreting the meaning of a chapter; they enable you to see what the bible as a whole has to say on any given teaching. You can look for several types of cross-references. These are described in Chapter 10 of Walter A. Henrichsen and Gail Jackson's book *Studying, Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Zondervan.)

Step Eight Christ Seen

The entire Bible is a revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus used the Old Testament to teach his disciples about himself. On the day of resurrection on the Emmaus Road, Jesus taught two of his disciples: "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27.) As you study each chapter be alert for the statements that tell you something about Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or God the father. Ask yourself, what can I learn about the nature of Jesus from this chapter? What attributes of God in Christ are illustrated here? (Some examples: his love, justice, mercy, holiness, power, and faithfulness.) This step may be the most difficult to complete in some portions of the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament narratives and in passages where symbolism is used.

Step Nine Central Lesson(s)

Write down the major principles, insights, and lessons you learn from this chapter. Ask yourself, why does God want this passage in the Bible? What does he want to teach me from this chapter? What is the central thought the writer is trying to develop? A possible answer might be we should be loving in all interpersonal relationships (1 Cor. 13.)

Step Ten Conclusion

This is the application portion of your study. Develop a project to help you implement in your life a lesson you have learned from the chapter or portion. It will benefit you to conclude your chapter summary by asking yourself two questions: 1). How do these tools apply to me personally? And 2). what specifically am I going to do about them?

CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM EXAMPLE

CHAPTER Luke 15

READ 5 TIMES

(check when done)

1. **CAPTION (TITLE)** “Lost and Found”

2. **CONTENTS** This chapter contains three parables

1. Verses 3-7: The lost sheep
2. Verses 8-10: The lost coin
3. Verses 11-32: The lost son

3. **CHIEF PEOPLE**

1. The shepherd with the lost sheep
2. The woman with the lost coin
3. The father and the lost son

4. **CHOICE VERSE**

Luke 15:7 - “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

5. **CRUCIAL WORD(S)**

- Lost (vv. 4, 5, 9, 24, 32)
- Found (5-6, 9, 24, 32)

6. **CHALLENGES** (Difficulties I need to study)

What does this verse mean - “ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent”?

7. CROSS-REFERENCES Luke 15:4-6

Matthew 18:1`-`4
John 10:10-14
I Peter 2:25
Isaiah 63:6
Psalm 119:176

8. CHRIST SEEN

1st Parable - Jesus the Good Shepherd searching for lost sheep.
2nd Parable - the Holy Spirit our rightful Owner, finding and restoring.
3rd Parable - God the Father waiting to welcome us home.

9. CENTRAL LESSION(S)

Insights

- The son went away saying, “Give me” (v. 12). He returned saying, “Make me” (v. 19)
- God cares for sinners and anxiously waits for them to return home.

Characteristics of the immature brother

- Anger - v. 28
- Childish - v. 28
- Jealousy - vv. 29-30
- Grumbling - vv. 29-30

10. CONCLUSION (Personal Application)

In each of the three parables, a concrete effort was made to recover what was lost. Many of my friends are lost without Christ. I need to develop specific witnessing plans for reaching them with the Good News. I will start by sharing my faith with my friend Jim this weekend.

I need to express more joy when I hear of people who have accepted Christ.

CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

CHAPTER

READ 5 TIMES

(check when done)

1. CAPTION (TITLE)

2. CONTENTS

3. CHIEF PEOPLE

4. CHOICE VERSE

5. CRUCIAL WORD(S)

6. CHALLENGES

7. CROSS-REFERENCES

8. CHRIST SEEN

9. CENTRAL LESSION(S)

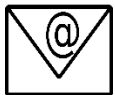
10. CONCLUSION (Personal Application)



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