

Principles of  
**Effective  
Bible Study**

## Why Study the Bible?

### Introduction:

It is not God's intention to trip us up or confuse us. Actually, His Word is meant to clarify. "Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light to my path." (**Psalm 119.105**). The more one learns to depend on the Bible alone for guidance and avoid the doctrines and wisdom of other people, the surer we are of where our souls are headed. (**Psalm 119.165-167**). Even if one is not an educated person, the Word of God continually keeps us going in the right direction. (**Psalm 119.130**).

### The First Step:

1. Recognize the need for Bible study
  - a. Many just wander through life ignoring the deeper truths at our finger tips.
  - b. Perhaps it's Satan's tactic to deceive us
  - c. How many hours per week do we spend on Bible study vs. other activities?
  - d. Jesus: "anyone who loves family or friends more than me...not worthy of me."
    - i. (**Matthew 10.37-38**).
  
2. Importance of Bible Study:
  - a. Linked to discipleship (**Matthew 28.18-20**).
  - b. Affects salvation (**Romans 1.16**).
  - c. Shows whether one is approved by God (**2 Timothy 2.15**).
  - d. Prescription for spiritual troubles (**1 Timothy 4.11**).
  - e. It equips us (**2 Timothy 3.17**).
  - f. It gives us a connection to the past (**Luke 4.17-21**).
  - g. Builds up our faith (**Romans 10.17**).
  - h. Arms us for spiritual combat (**Titus 1.9-11; 1 Peter 3.15**).
  - i. Opens our eyes to the mystery of salvation (**Ephesians 3.3-6**).

3. Eternity is on the Line:

- a. Do we view it as laborious, unrewarding, even dull?
- b. We will be judged by its words (**John 12.48**).
- c. Any departure from the Bible's teachings will result in being lost. (**2 John 9-10**).
- d. True Bible study does not aim for superficial understanding of the scriptures, but dives deeper to find more meaningful applications.

4. What is the Bible not designed for?

- a. Prove what you already believe
- b. Come up with new truths or invent your own theology.
- c. Look for loopholes so you do not have to obey.
- d. Discover truth based on your "feelings".

5. The Bible is Reliable:

- a. The Bible is the best attested and verified book of the ancient world.
  - i. The New Testament was completed less than seventy years after Jesus ascended back to heaven and less than five years after the last apostle (John) died.
  - ii. Important because it means there were plenty of people still alive when the New Testament books were penned.
  - iii. There are no documents contemporary to the N.T. that contest its authenticity.
  - iv. There are 5,600 surviving copies.
  - v. Example: the earliest copies of Aristotle are from 1100 A.D., about 1,440 years after he lived!
  - vi. If critics of the Bible dismiss the N.T. as reliable information, then they must dismiss the reliability of the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Caesar, Homer, etc.
  - vii. The earliest copy from Homer's Illiad, was written 500 years after he wrote it.
  - viii. The Christian has substantially greater evidence for affirming the N.T. than he does for any other ancient writing!

6. In Spite of Early Persecution Problems:

- a. The Romans for several hundred years destroyed the scriptures but could not.
- b. As a result, the idea was too create numerous cheap perishable copies of the scriptures rather than a few expensive material copies.
- c. History records that the Romans failed to eliminate Christianity's sacred writing, in fact, during Roman times, the New Testament was translated into more and more languages.

7. Do we think the Bible is too complicated to understand?

- a. **Ephesians 5.17:** "Do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is."
- b. Which is more complicated, turning to the Bible as our only source of authority or turning to supplemental creed books, confessionals, manuals, disciplines?
- c. The Lord's church is accused of being complicated and simple at the same time.
  - i. We do not have the programs/activities that other "churches" offer yet deride that we have over complicated and over-thought the Bible.
  - ii. We are considered literalists for teaching baptism for the remission of sins from the plain and simple teaching of the N.T. while at the same time they conclude that passages like **Acts 2.38, Romans 16.16, Galatians 3.27, 1 Peter 3.21**, and a host of others, really "can't" mean what they clearly say!

## The Bible---Truly Unique

- The numbers of Bibles sold are into the billions
- No other book has seen such circulation
- Translated into more than 2,200 languages
  
- Compared to ancient writings, the Bible has more manuscript evidence to support it than all ten pieces of classical literature combined.
  - New Testament documents are better preserved and more numerous than any other ancient writings. Because they are so numerous, they can be cross checked for accuracy...and they are very consistent.
  - There are currently (as of 2008) 2,686 Greek manuscripts in existence today for the New Testament. When compared to other ancient writings, we find that the N.T. manuscripts far outweigh the others in quantity.
  - Examples: **Homer's Iliad's** copies were written 500 years after the original and is deemed to be 95% accurate to the original. There are known to be 643 copies.
  
  - **The New Testament**: Copies were written less than 100 years after the last apostle died. There are 5600 copies that are deemed to be 99.5% textually pure.
  - There are over 19,000 copies in Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages.
  - The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 24,000.
  - Almost all biblical scholars agree that the N.T. documents were all written before the close of the first century.
    - Therefore, if Jesus died in A.D. 30, then that means the entire New Testament was completed within 70 years.
    - This is important because it means there were still plenty of people around when the N.T. documents were originally penned. People who could have contested the writings.
    - There is a papyri that dates back to around 29 years from the original writing. (John Rylands Papyri A.D. 125).

- Persecutions, burnings, outlawing, banning, discrediting attempts, etc. yet the Bible has survived. Acts 5.34-39.
  
- Archaeology always corroborates the Biblical record.
  - Ancient cities, artifacts, ancient records
  
- Before 1910, no recorded evidence of Hittites (Dt. 20.16-18).
  - 1906 Hittite capital of Boghazkay excavated.
  - 10,000 Hittite/Akkadian texts found
  - Can now earn a degree in Hittite Civilization.
  
- In Acts, Luke mentions:
  - 32 countries
  - 54 cities
  - 9 Mediterranean islands
  - 95 people (62 of which are not named elsewhere in the N.T.)
  - Truly remarkable---How? ---Inspiration!
  - [RiceroadchurchofChrist.com/classes/Christianevidences.htm](http://RiceroadchurchofChrist.com/classes/Christianevidences.htm)

- The Bible was written over 1600 years by 40 different men
  - Law of Moses 1450-1400 B.C.
  - Book of Revelation written around 96 A.D.
  - The Bible was written in the Sinai wilderness, Jerusalem, Rome, Ephesus, Isle of Patmos, etc.
  
- The men who wrote the Bible were Shepherds, Military leaders, Kings, Herdsmen, Statesman, Priest, Cupbearer, Scribe, Physician, Tax collector, fishermen, Lawyer.
  
- The languages were Hebrew, Aramaic, Koine Greek,
  
- Types of writing are Law, Poetry, History, Narrative, Biography, Prophecy, and Apocalyptic.
  - What would happen if this # of diverse writers produced this document today?? Chaos!
  - Science books constantly are revised
  - Historians of the same generation disagree.
  
- Organic Unity:
  - All parts are necessary to a complete whole
  - All are necessary to complement each other.
  - Consistent message throughout (Unity).
  - God's fingerprint is found throughout
  - The Scheme of Redemption

- **Inspiration of the Bible:**

- Inspiration: Theopneustos
  - Theos: God
  - Pneo: God---to breathe
  - Scripture: Graphe---The Oracles of God
- 1 Cor.15.14-19
- 2 Tim.3.16-17
- 1 Tim.5.18: ..." For the scripture says,"
- Dt. 25.4; Luke 10.5-7
- Paul recognized the Gospel of Acts as "Scripture"
- 2 Peter 1.20-21: "Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
  - Moved: Phero—" -bear, bring forth, carry, lead."
- 3800 times in the old testament the claim is made that they are the scriptures
- Matt. 5.18: "One jot or tittle will by no means pass away until..."
  - Jot: the smallest letter in Hebrew
  - Tittle: the projection of a letter
- Jesus even argued a tense of the verb (Matt.22.31-32.
  - I am the God of the living.
- Jesus viewed these accounts as factual:
  - Matt.12.39-40
  - Matt. 19.4
  - Luke 4.27
  - John 3.14-15
- Verbal inspiration is the work of God through the Holy Spirit so directing men in their choice of words. That their writings contain written accurately, exactly what God desired, and all that He desired, them to contain. It is the doctrine of superintendence or guidance; that is, God so directed the writing of the books of the Bible that the words are His words in the style of the writers. Verbal inspiration is the opposite of inspired concepts. (H.S. Miller).



## The Reliability of the Bible

1. **Septuagint:** Completed in 250 B.C. for Greek speaking Jews who had been scattered.
  - a. Greek was the universal language at that time.
  
2. **The Dead Sea Scrolls:** were discovered in the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century in the caves of Qumran.
  - a. Some were from the last 300 years B.C.
  - b. Some from the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.
  - c. Pages from every old testament book were found except from the book of Esther.
  - d. Prior to the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest known manuscript was the Masoretic text from the Jewish tribes from around 980 A.D. 1700 years after the book of Isaiah was written!
  - e. 98% of the Masoretic text and the Dead Sea Scrolls match perfectly.
  - f. The other 2 % were generally spelling errors.
  - g. How is this possible??
  
3. **There were safeguards set up:**
  - a. They destroyed any damaged and worn copies of the scriptures.
  - b. The copyists counted the number of times that each letter of the Hebrew alphabet was used.
  - c. The scribes were checked by other scribes to check for errors.
  - d. If there were errors/flaws, the copies were destroyed and they started over.
  - e. The scribes would always wipe the ink from their pen tip before writing the name of God out of reverence and respect for Him.

#### **4. Early New Testament:**

- a. The earliest complete copies of the Greek New Testament date to the 4<sup>th</sup> century.
- b. Some incomplete copies date to the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.
- c. The original letters and stories written by N.T. authors passed from existence very early on because of the type of paper that it was written on.
- d. Papyrus: Inner bark from reeds (2 John 12).
- e. Other authors wrote on parchment or vellum (skins of young calves and antelopes).
  - i. 2 Timothy 4.13 (Parchments).
- f. Even vellum perished with the using from handing down to others.
- g. Older copies were eventually discarded for newer copies.

#### **5. Other Factors: Persecution**

- a. Old Testament literature destroyed for several hundred years by the Romans.
- b. The idea was to create numerous cheap perishable copies of the scriptures rather than a few expensive material copies.
- c. History records that the Romans failed to eliminate Christianity's sacred writings, in fact, during the Roman times, the New Testament was translated into more and more languages.
- d. Providence: in 1947/1948 provided for the Dead Sea Scrolls.

#### **6. The Bible is the best attested and verified book of the ancient world.**

- a. Less than 50 years after completion of the New Testament, there are 5,600 copies surviving.
- b. Example: the earliest copies of Aristotle are from 1100 A.D. 1,440 years after he lived!

## 7. Facts About Translations:

- a. Codex Sinaiticus: (Library of London) Discovered in 1859 A.D. in a convent at the foot of Mt. Sinai.
  - b. 790 pages written in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century.
  - c. Contains every New Testament book and much of the Old Testament.
  - d. Along with the Codex Alexandrinus, it is the most modern N.T.
  - e. There are also some Syriac and Latin reliable versions written prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.
    - i. The most famous is the Latin Vulgate whose translator was Jerome done from 382-385 A.D.
8. Most Notable translations (New American Standard Bible, New International Version, Revised Standard Version, and the English Standard Version), are based on the oldest manuscripts/codices such as the Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus which were all written not later than the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- a. In addition, small bits of scripture written from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century.
  - b. Plus, records of early church writers' quotes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.
9. **Variations in some manuscripts:** Generally inconsequential---
- a. Misspelled words
  - b. Run on sentences
  - c. The use of one synonym for another
  - d. Transposition of words
  - e. Clerical errors
  - f. Changes in pronunciation over time
  - g. When there is a variant reading, it causes scholars and translators to look more closely at the Bible verse to insure consistency and accuracy.
  - h. Example: there are 5 Greek words for Love...only one in English.

## 10. Prophecies written hundreds of years before Christ:

- a. Predicted the Messiah's birthplace, circumstances of His birth, personality traits, circumstances surrounding His betrayal and death, and ultimately the New Covenant.
- b. **Daniel 9.25** (written 530 B.C.)
- c. **Isaiah 7.14**: (written in 700 B.C.), Born of a virgin
- d. **Micah 5.2**: (written 735 B.C.) Born in Bethlehem.
- e. **Isaiah 9.1-7** (written 750 B.C.) Lineage of David; His 1<sup>st</sup> work in Galilee.
- f. **Isaiah 35.5-6**: He will give sight to the blind; (See **Matthew 11.2-6**).
- g. **Isaiah 42.1-9**: Humble demeanor, tender, thoughtful, (**Matthew 12.18-21**).
- h. **Isaiah 28.16**: Great stone of Zion (**1 Peter 2.6**).
- i. **Isaiah 53**: Rejected, Man of sorrows, buried in a rich man's tomb).
- j. **Psalms 22**: Hands pierced, thirsty, poured out like water; (**John 19.31-33, 46**); (**John 19.23-24**).

## **Dangers of Paraphrases and Doctrinal Bias in Translations**

### **Introduction:**

Extremes in rewording the text must be avoided. A translator who liberally paraphrases the Bible according to how he interprets the overall idea could distort the meaning of the text. How?

The translator may erroneously insert his opinion of what the original text means or may omit important details contained in the original text. So, while paraphrases of the Bible may be easy to read, their “freeness” at times may prevent the reader from getting the true message of the text.

A Bible translator must also consider that the Bible was written using the common, everyday language of average people, such as farmers, fishermen and shepherds. (See Nehemiah 8.8, 12; Acts 4.13).

Therefore, a good translation of the Bible makes the message it contains understandable to sincere people, regardless of background. Clear, common, readily understood expressions are preferred over terms that are rarely used by the average person.

## Introduction: Bible Translation

There was no need for any part of the Bible to be translated until a community of Jews, in the Diaspora (dispersion), forgot their Hebrew. For example, the Jews dispersed to Alexandria in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, Greek is the first language. They undertake the translation of the Old Testament now known as the Septuagint.

Five centuries later the early Christians, who use Greek for their own New Testament, need to read both the Old and New testaments. Many saw themselves as the inheritors of the Old Testament tradition. They needed an accurate understanding of the original Hebrew as they debated with Jewish rabbis. This need prompts the great work of Biblical scholarship undertaken by *Origin* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

## Principles of Bible Translation

The Bible was originally written in ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Today it is available in whole or in part in about 2,600 languages. The vast majority of people who read the Bible do not understand the original languages and therefore must rely on a translation. Therefore, principles should guide how the Bible is translated.

No two languages are exactly alike in grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Different languages require different thought patterns. No modern language exactly mirrors the vocabulary and grammar of Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

The meaning of a word or an expression may vary depending on the context in which it is used. A translator, may be able to mirror the literal rendering of the original language in some passages, but this must be done very carefully.

### Examples of how word-for-word translation can be misunderstood:

- The scriptures use the expressions “sleep” and “fall asleep” to refer both to physical sleep and to the sleep of death. (**Matthew 28.13; Acts 7.60**). When these expressions are used in contexts that refer to death, modern translators can use such wording as “fall asleep in death,” which helps modern reader confusion. (**1 Cor.7.39; 1 Thess.4.13; 2 Peter 3.4**).
- The apostle Paul used an expression found in **Ephesians 4.14** that can be literally translated “in playing of dice of men.” In most languages, a literal rendering of this allusion makes little sense. Translating this expression as “the trickery of men” is a clearer way to convey the meaning.
- At **Romans 12.11**, a Greek expression is used that literally means “to the spirit boiling.” This wording does not convey the intended meaning in English, so it is rendered “aglow with the spirit” in this translation.

- **Matthew 5.3:** Jesus, Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” In many languages, a literal rendering of this expression is obscure. It could mean that the “poor in spirit” are mentally unbalanced or lacking in vitality and determination. However, Jesus was here teaching people that their happiness depended, not on satisfying their physical needs, but on recognizing their need for God’s guidance.

In view of these (and others), Bible translation involves more than simply rendering an original language word with the same term each time it occurs. A translator must use good judgment in order to select words in the target language that best represents the ideas of the original language text.

In addition, there is a need to structure the sentences in a way that conforms to the rules of grammar of the target language, making the text easy to read. At the same time, extremes in rewording the text must be avoided. A translator who liberally paraphrases the Bible according to how he interprets the overall idea could distort the meaning of the text. He may erroneously insert his opinion of what the original text meant. Doctrinal bias can easily color a translator’s work.

A Bible translator must also consider that the Bible was written using the common, everyday language of average people, such as farmers, shepherds, and fishermen. (**Nehemiah 8.8; Acts 4.13**).

Therefore, a good translation of the Bible makes the message it contains understandable to sincere people, regardless of their background. Clear, common, readily understood expressions are preferred over terms that are rarely used by the average person. Many versions will explicitly state that “we offer no paraphrase of the Scriptures. Our endeavor has been to give as literal translation as possible. “As a result, the Bible can be read with ease and the reader can have full confidence that its inspired message has been translated faithfully. (**1 Thessalonians 2.13**).

### **A reliable translation must:**

- Sanctify God’s name by restoring it to its rightful place in the scriptures. (**Matthew 6.9**).
- Accurately convey the original message that was inspired by God. (**2 Timothy 3.16**).
- Translate expressions literally when the wording and structure of the target text allow for such renderings of the original language text.
- Communicate the correct sense of a word or a phrase when a literal rendering would distort or obscure the meaning.
- Use natural, easy-to-understand language that encourages reading. (**Nehemiah 8.8, 12**).

## History of Bible Translation:

The history of Bible translation began with a necessity: people should be able to read the Bible in their own languages as the gospel went into new lands. As familiarity with Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek declined, biblical translation into new languages occurred.

### Early Translations:

It was not until the fourteenth century that the Bible was translated into English. Latin was dominant in the western “church.” The principal Bible used in the church was Jerome’s Vulgate completed in 405 AD.

In the Middle English Period (ca.1100-1550), John Wycliffe, John Purvey, and Nicolas of Hereford collaborated to produce the first complete Bible in English. There were two editions of the Wycliffe Bible. They were both translations of the Latin text. The first edition was a literal translation from Latin to English. There was a second edition completed in 1396. It is circulated more widely. The focus was on the meaning of sentences, not mere words.

As a result of this work, Wycliffe and his followers “the Lollards” suffered persecution as heretics. The edict in 1408 from the Constitutions of Oxford included a prohibition against Bible translation without approval from “church” authorities.

### Events That Profoundly Affect Bible Translation:

1. The invention of the printing press around 1450 was a profound influence on Bible translation.
  - a. By 1488 there were printed editions of the Hebrew Bible.
2. The break with Rome during the Tudor dynasty influenced the course of the English Bible.
3. William Tyndale a Greek scholar desired to provide a readable Bible to the average person. He printed it in Europe in 1526 and revised it in 1534.
4. Myles Coverdale produced the first complete English Bible in 1535.
5. The King James in 1611, gave his blessing to a new translation, the King James Version.
6. There were later discoveries of the Codex Sinaiticus, in a monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai, which contained early Greek papyri of New Testament documents.
7. The Dead Sea scrolls discovered in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century aided in new translations we use today (New English Bible, New International Version, and the Jerusalem Bible).
8. Note: The Bible is reported to be the bestseller of all time, and its history is fascinating to study. As God’s Spirit breathed on the authors of the Bible, they recorded the messages with whatever resources were available at the time. The Bible itself illustrates some of the materials used: engravings on clay, inscriptions on tablets of stone, ink and papyrus, vellum, parchment, leather, and metals.



## Interesting Facts about/in the Bible

**Proverbs 27:17** *Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.*

**We all can help each other in learning more about the Bible.**

**The Class Title for today and next Sunday morning class is:**

**"Interesting Facts about the Bible"** - Obviously "interesting facts" to one person may not be interesting to someone else. So bear with me as we go through this.

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### **A. Who authored and wrote the Bible?**

That which makes this wonderful Book so special is its own claim, while men were used to write it, that the Almighty God of heaven and earth was its ultimate author.

This claim was not made by Christianity, but is the claim the Bible makes for itself.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAS).

The Apostle Peter explains how God made His will known to the prophets, "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21 NAS).

Inspiration was the method by which revelation was delivered, and the Holy Spirit did it through men in the words chosen by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6-13).

In the Old Testament alone there are over 2,000 times when you will find expressions like "And God spoke to Moses," "The word of the Lord came unto Jonah," and "God said."

The Bible is the record of the words and deeds of God as He dealt with mankind for the purpose of providing salvation.

The mere fact that the Bible claims to be the Word of God does not prove that it really is from the Living God, for there are other books that make similar claims.

The difference between the Bible and other books claiming to be from God is the fact that the Bible contains indisputable evidence that it is the Word of God.

About forty men engaged in writing the Bible beginning with Moses, about 1,500 years before Jesus, and closing with the Apostle John writing the book of Revelation toward the close of the first century (covering about 1,600 years).

These forty men came from different walks in life including shepherds, kings, and fishermen.

These men wrote in different places, such as the wilderness, prison and exile. Although there are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament the Bible is one book.

From beginning to end, there is one unfolding story of God’s plan of salvation for mankind.

Salvation was conceived before creation, revealed gradually through the Old Testament and culminated in the coming of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. Jesus said, (John 5:39 NAS). “You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me;”

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**B. Is the Bible like a Handbook?**

**How many here currently have, or have had a handbook in the past for their employment or maybe your School?**

**What are they for?**

It's for Doing things (or following the rules) according to those that have authorized the book and wrote the book.

Usually they contain a vision statement, then they go into a list of rules about behavior that are expected to be followed as a condition of your employment or your school enrollment. Sometimes they are put there for safety reasons, sometimes for the good of the company, for the protection of the company. Whatever the reason, you are expected to follow them always.

**Is there discipline in your handbooks?** Yes, If you break the rules, there is usually a discipline that follows to encourage you to think or do it right in the future.

**Who's established this principle a long time ago?** God's started this method of providing the rules and consequences with the Bible.

The Bible is God's Book, it's our book for living righteously according to His Word, far greater than any other book written, as it pertains to everlasting life and is not temporary as our handbooks for school and work.

-----**Here are my thoughts about the Bible**-----

**To me**, it is my lifeline to salvation, because it's my handbook, the rule book, It's the personal message that God has provided me with what I need to be saved.

The Bible gives me and you our pathway that we need to follow to be right with Him.

**It really gives me peace of mind** to see how patient our God has been over the years with many sinners. He has done so much for us. Even to the point of having his son die for us on the cross for our salvation.

It's not because we deserve it, but it is because of his love for us, he has given us his grace.

He has given us many examples in the Bible, of those doing right and those doing wrong throughout the ages. It's because of learning his nature, that know that I have a chance of being saved.

**It also reminds me how God, "is a Just God"**, when it comes to disciplining his people when they are not doing things right. This causes me concern, It makes me be very cautious in things that I do.

### **The writer of Psalms says in Chapter 50:16-23**

<sup>16</sup> But to the wicked God says,  
"What right have you to tell of My statutes  
And to take My covenant in your mouth?  
<sup>17</sup> "For you hate discipline,  
And you cast My words behind you.  
<sup>18</sup> "When you see a thief, you are pleased with him,  
And you associate with adulterers.  
<sup>19</sup> "You let your mouth loose in evil  
And your tongue frames deceit.  
<sup>20</sup> "You sit and speak against your brother;  
You slander your own mother's son.  
<sup>21</sup> "These things you have done and I kept silence;  
You thought that I was just like you;  
I will reprove you and state *the case* in order before your eyes.  
<sup>22</sup> "Now consider this, you who forget God,  
Or I will tear *you* in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.  
<sup>23</sup> "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me;  
And to him who orders *his way aright*  
I shall show the salvation of God."

Whoa, If we want the "salvation of God", We need to have our path going correctly according to his word, not acting as evil, accepting them or associating with evil ones.

We are **not** judged by what others do, we are judged on what we do. **Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:17** that we are all judged as individuals according to our deeds here on earth.

### **Near the very end of the last chapter of the Bible, we read Revelation 22:14**

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

So, my eternal life is at stake..... unless I follow his word, the Bible

### **What do you some of you think of the Bible?**

**Does anyone want to share their thoughts about what the Bible is to them?**

**I. THE BIBLE BY THE NUMBERS**

- Number of books: 66 (39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New)
- Number of different writers: 40
- Number of chapters: 1,189 (929 in the Old Testament, 260 in the New)
- Number of verses: 31,101
- Number of words: 783,137 to 788,280
- Number of letters: approximately 3,566,480
- Longest book in the Old Testament: Psalms (42,684 words)
- Longest book in the New Testament: Luke (25,939 words)
- Shortest book in the Old Testament: Obadiah (669 words)
- Shortest book in the New Testament: 3 John (294 words)
- Shortest chapter in the Bible: Psalm 117 (2 verses, 33 words)
- Longest chapter in the Bible: Psalm 119 (176 verses)
- Promises: approximately 1,260
- Commands: approximately 6,468
- Predictions/prophecies: more than 8,000
- Fulfilled prophecies: approximately 3,268 verses
- Unfulfilled prophecies: approximately 3,140
- Number of questions: 3,294
- Different Hebrew words in the original manuscripts: 8,674
- Different Greek words in the original manuscripts: 5,624
- Different English words in the King James Version: 12,143
- Number of languages Bible has been translated into: more than 1,200
- Number of Bibles sold, given away, or distributed in the United States: 168,000 daily (as of few years ago).

**II. 10 BIBLICAL NAMES/TITLES FOR THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD**

1. Word of God (Luke 11:28)
2. Word of Life (Philippians 2:16)
3. Word of Christ (Colossians 3:16)
4. The Book (Psalm 40:7)
5. Book of the Law (Deuteronomy 31:26)
6. Holy Scriptures (Romans 1:2)
7. Lively Oracles (Acts 7:38)

8. Scriptures (John 5:39)
9. Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17)
10. Good Word of God (Hebrews 6:5)

**A writer(Jay Wilson) says the following of the Bible -----**

1. The Bible is accurate in dealing with external matters.

It is accurate in its record of archeology and natural science.

In order to be the word of God, the Bible must be accurate in its portrayal of observable facts.

The Bible meets this requirement of accuracy in external matters, and therefore can be the written revelation from God.

2. The proof that the Bible is the word of God comes from its internal contents. The Bible contains the following categories of internal evidence which prove it to be the word of God:
  - a. Fulfilled historical prophecies.
  - b. Fulfilled predictions of the Messiah.
  - c. A Plan revealed, then carefully carried out - proof of the existence of the Planner, and a bridge binding the Old and New Testaments together as one complete unit.

**The Bible could be described maybe best as a book about God.**

**One could probably say that the main Theme of the bible is "Redemption" through Him.**

**Then there are some sub-themes that lead to Redemption:**

1. The nature of God.
2. The curse for sin and disobedience.
3. The blessing for faith and obedience.
4. The Lord, our Savior, and the sacrifice for sin.
5. The coming kingdom and glory.

### **III. Eighteen Names of Jesus**

What's in a name? Names in the Bible were most important, because they were given to express the character of the person.

We are so used to thinking about our Lord being called Jesus Christ that we may forget what his name meant or that he had many other names.

- \* **Jesus:** The name Jesus comes from the Greek for Joshua, Joshua means "God is salvation". The name Jesus is very well explained by Matthew 1:21, Mary will give birth to a son, and; you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.
- \* **Immanuel** (God with us): Isaiah says the virgin will be with a child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel. Matthew quotes this verse in Mt. 1:23.
- \* **Prince of Peace:** Jesus brought God's peace to this world. Isaiah 9:6
- \* **Anointed One:** Psalm 2:2
- \* **Son of God:** This shows Jesus' special and unique relationship to God. Mark 1:1
- \* **Son of Man:** Matthew 8:20
- \* **Word:** John 1:1
- \* **Lamb of God:** This title was used of Jesus only by John the Baptist, who proclaimed that Jesus was the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. John 1:29
- \* **Christ:** Matthew 16:16
- \* **Rabbi:** John 1:38
- \* **Author of Life:** Acts 3:15
- \* **Alpha and Omega:** are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, indicate that Jesus is the first and the last. Revelation 1:8
- \* **Lion of Judah:** Revelation 5:5
- \* **Lamb:** Revelation 5:6-13
- \* **Word of God:** Revelation 19:13
- \* **King of Kings:** Revelation 19:16
- \* **Lord of Lords:** Revelation 19:16
- \* **Bright Morning Star:** Revelation 22:16

#### IV. Miracles of Christ

- \* Water changed into wine, John 2: 1-11
- \* Nobleman's son healed, John 4: 46-54
- \* Sick man healed, John 5: 1-9
- \* Man born blind given sight, John 9: 1-41
- \* Lazarus raised from the dead, John 11:1-44
- \* Fishermen's net was filled with 153 fish, John 21: 1-11
- \* Jesus walking on water, John 6: 19-21
- \* 5,000 people fed, John 6: 5-13
- \* Demon-possessed man, Luke 4: 33-35
- \* Simon Peter's mother-in-law healed, Luke 4: 38-39
- \* Large catch of fish, Luke 5: 1-11

- \* Leper healed, Luke 5:12-13
- \* Paralyzed man healed, Luke 5:18-25
- \* Shriveled hand healed, Luke 6: 6-10
- \* Centurion's servant healed, Luke 7:1-10
- \* Widow's son raised from the dead, Luke 7:11-15
- \* The storm calmed, Luke 8:22-25
- \* Evil spirits removed, Luke 8:27-35
- \* Jairus' daughter raised from the dead, Luke 8:41-56
- \* Woman subject to bleeding healed, Luke 8:43-48
- \* Demon-possessed boy healed, Luke 9:38-43
- \* Crippled woman healed, Luke 13: 11-13
- \* Ten lepers healed, Luke 17: 11-19
- \* Blind man given sight, Luke 18: 25-43
- \* The servant of a high priest had his right ear cut off by a sword, it was healed, Luke 22: 50-51
- \* Two blind men given sight, Matthew 9:27-31
- \* Demon-possessed mute, Matthew 9: 32-33
- \* Coin in fish's mouth, Matthew 17:24-27
- \* Unclean spirits removed from Woman's daughter , Matthew 15: 21-28
- \* 4,000 people fed with seven cakes and some small fish, Matthew 15: 32-28
- \* Fig Tree became barren and died immediately, Matthew 21: 18 -22
- \* Deaf and mute man abilities restored, Mark 7: 31-37
- \* Blind man's sight restored, Mark 8: 22-26
- \* Man with disease healed, Luke 14: 1-4

## **V. Ten people raised from the dead**

### **A. Old Testament**

1. A widow's son, 1 Kings 17: 17-24
2. A Shunammite woman's son, 2 Kings 4: 32-37
3. The man who touched Elisha's bones, 2 Kings 13: 20-21

### **B. New Testament**

1. The son of a widow, Luke 7: 11-15
2. Jairus' daughter, Luke 8: 41-42, 49-55
3. Lazarus, John 11: 1-44
4. Holy people who had died, after Jesus died, Matthew 27: 52-53
5. Jesus, Matthew 28:1-8

6. Tabitha, Acts 9: 36-43

7. Eutychus, Acts 20: 9-10

## VI. Prophecies about Jesus

### A. In Psalms

<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Fulfillment</b>
2:7	God will declare the Messiah to be his Son	Matthew 3:17
8:6	All things will be put under the Messiah's feet	Hebrews 2:8
16:10	He will be raised from the dead	Mark 16:6-7
22:1	God will forsake him in his hour of need	Matthew 27:46
22:7-8	He will be mocked and insulted	Luke 23:35
22:16	His hands and feet will be pierced	John 20:25, 27
22:18	They will gamble for his clothing	Matthew 27:35-26
34:20	Not one of his bones will be broken	John 19:32-33, 36
35:11	He will be accused by ruthless witnesses	Mark 14:57
35:19	He will be hated without any reason	John 15:25
40:7-8	He will come to do god's will	Hebrews 10:7
41:9	He will be betrayed by a friend	Luke 22:47
45:6	His throne will be for ever	Hebrews 1:8
68:18	He will ascend to God's right hand	Mark 16:19
69:9	Zeal for god's house will consume him.	John 2:17
69:21	He will be given gall and vinegar to drink	Matthew 27:34
109:4	He will pray for his enemies	Luke 23:34
109:8	His betrayer's office will be replaced by another	Acts 1:20
110:1	His enemies will be put under his feet	Matthew 22:44
110:4	He will be a priest like Melchizedek	Hebrews 5:6
118:22	He will be the capstone	Matthew 21:42
118:26	He will come in the name of the Lord	Matthew 21:9

### B. Prophecies in Matthew

<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Old Testament reference</b>
1:23	His virgin birth	Isaiah 7:14



2:6	His place of birth	Micah 5:2
2:15	Return from Egypt	Hosea 11:1
8:17	Healings	Isaiah 53:4
12:18-21	Servanthood	Isaiah 42:1-4
13:34	Use of parables	Psalms 78:2
21:5	Entering Jerusalem	Zechariah 9:9
21:42	Jesus rejected	Psalms 118:22
22:44	Jesus is God	Psalms 110:1
26:31	Jesus is deserted	Zechariah 9:9
26:64	Jesus will return	Daniel 7:13
27:34, 48	Jesus and the cross	Psalms 69:21
27:35	Jesus and the cross	Psalms 22:18
27:39-40	Jesus and the cross	Psalms 22:7
27:43	Jesus and the cross	Psalms 22:8
27:46	Jesus and the cross	Psalms 22:1
27:57-60	Jesus and his burial	Isaiah 53:9

## VII. Highlights of Seven Prophets

- A. Nathan,** Nathan rebuked King David for committing adultery with Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 12
- B. Elijah,** Elijah confronted and defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. 1 Kings 18
- C. Elisha,** Elisha brought back to life the son of a wealthy Shunammite woman. 2 Kings 4
- D. Isaiah,** Against all the odds, Isaiah predicted the retreat of the Assyrian troops. 2 Kings 19
- E. Jeremiah,** Jeremiah was imprisoned for predicting the fall of Jerusalem. Jeremiah 37-38
- F. Daniel,** Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. Daniel 2, 4
- G. Amos,** Amos condemned people for exploiting the poor. Amos 8

## VIII. Twenty Five (25) "I am's" of Jesus

- I am The Messiah (John 4:26).
- I am the bread of life (John 6:35).
- I am the living bread (John 6:51).
- I am from [God] (John 7:29).
- I am the light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5).
- I am one that bear witness of myself (John 8:18).
- I am from above (John 8:23).

- I am not of this world.(John 8:23).
- Before Abraham was, I am (John 8:58).
- I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7).
- I am the good shepherd (John 10:11, 14).
- I am the Son of God (John 10:36).
- I am the resurrection, and the life (John 11:25).
- I am come a light into the world (John 12:46).
- I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).
- I am in the Father, and the Father in me (John 14:10, 11).
- I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you (John 14:20).
- I am the true vine (John 15:1).
- I am the vine, ye are the branches (John 15:5).
- I am not of the world (John 17:14).
- I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending (Revelation 1:8).
- I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (Revelation 1:11).
- I am he that liveth, and was dead (Revelation 1:18).
- I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts (Revelation 2:23).
- I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star (Revelation 22:16).

#### **IX. Witnesses that saw Jesus alive after the Crucifixion**

From the day before the resurrection of Jesus people refused to believe in his resurrection. It is sad, but the top religious leaders of the day led the way to this.

The chief priests and Pharisees hatched this plot. They went to Pilate and told him to bribe the soldiers to say, "his disciples stole the body."

**"Secure the tomb" Matthew 27: 62-66** Now on the day after the getting ready of the Passover, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, Saying, Sir, we have in mind how that false man said, while he was still living, After three days I will come again from the dead. Give orders, then, that the place where his body is may be made safe till the third day, for fear that his disciples come and take him away secretly and say to the people, He has come back from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said to them, You have watchmen; go and make it as safe as you are able. So they went, and made safe the place where his body was, putting a stamp on the stone, and the watchmen were with them.

**The great cover up.... Matthew 28:11-15** Now, while they were going, some of the watchmen came into the town and gave news to the chief priests of all the things which had taken place. And when they had come together with those in authority, and had made their decision, they gave much money to the watchmen, saying, Say, His disciples came by night and took him away secretly while we were sleeping. And if this comes to the ruler's ears, we will see that he does not make you responsible. So they took the money, and did as they had been ordered: and this account has

been current among the Jews till the present time. But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had given them orders to go. And when they saw him they gave him worship: but some were in doubt.

**At Least 517 Witnesses to Jesus' resurrection**

Mary Magdalene in John 20:10-18 ----- James and Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:7 & 8.

Two disciples walking to Emmaus in Luke 24: 13-31 ----- Stephen in Acts 7:55

The eleven disciples, without and then with Thomas in John 20:19-24; 25-29

At least five hundred people in Galilee in 1 Corinthians 15: 6

**X. New Testament Parables**

Instruction by parables has been in use from the earliest times. A large portion of our Lord's public teaching consisted of parables. Jesus explains his reasons for this in his answer to the inquiry of the disciples, "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" Matthew 13:13-15,

**Definition from Nelson's Bible Dictionary:** Parable —a short, simple story designed to communicate a spiritual truth, religious principle, or moral lesson; a figure of speech in which truth is illustrated by a comparison or example drawn from everyday experiences.

A parable is often no more than an extended metaphor or simile, using figurative language in the form of a story to illustrate a particular truth.

Good Samaritan	Luke 10:30-37	Lost Sheep	Luke 5:4-6
Lost coin	Luke 15:8-10	Prodigal son	Luke 15:11-32
Dishonest manager	Luke 16:1-8	Rich man and Lazarus	Luke 16:19-31
Servants	Luke 17:7-10	Persistent widow	Luke 18:2-5
Talents	Luke 19:12-27	Wicked tenants	Luke 20:9-16
New cloth	Luke 5:36	New wine	Luke 5:37-38
House on rock	Luke 6:47-49	Two debtors	Luke 7:41-43
The sower	Luke 8:5-8	The lamp	Luke 16:1-12
Watching servants	Luke 16:1-12	Persistent friend	Luke 11:5-8
Rich fool	Luke 12:16-21	Faithful steward	Luke 12:42-48
Fruitless fig tree	Luke 13:6-9	Leafless fig tree	Luke 21:29-31
Mustard seed	Luke 13:18-10	Leaven	Luke 13:20-21
Wedding guests	Luke 14:7-14	Great banquet	Luke 14:16-24
Tower building and war	Luke 14:28-33	Pharisee and tax-collector	Luke 18:10-14
House owner returns	Mark 12:1-9	Growing seed	Mark 4:26-29
Weeds	Matthew 13:24-30	Hidden treasure	Matthew 13:44

Fine pearl	Matthew 13:45-46	Net	Matthew 13:47-48
Unforgiving servant	Matthew 18:23-24	Workers in vineyard	Matthew 20:1-16
Two sons	Matthew 21:28-31	Wedding banquet	Matthew 22:2-14
Ten virgins	Matthew 25:1-3	Sheep and goats	Matthew 25:31-36
<b>---- Two parables from the Old Testament ----</b>			
The lamb	2 Samuel 12:1-4	The vineyard	Isaiah 5:1-7

### XI. Interesting Sayings That Come From The Bible

Some words and phrases many people use today come directly from the Bible.

Everyone knows that someone who does a good deed or action may be called a "good Samaritan", because of the Samaritan's compassion in Jesus' parable.

<b>--- Old Testament phrases ---</b>	
Genesis 45:18	The fat of the land
Job 19:20	By the skin of one's teeth
Proverbs 16:18	Pride goes before a fall
Ecclesiastes 1:9	There is nothing new under the sun
Ecclesiastes 8:15	Eat, drink and be merry
Ecclesiastes 10:1	A fly in the ointment
Ecclesiastes 11:1	Cast you bread on the waters
Isaiah 6:5	Woe is me, for I am undone!
Isaiah 40:15	A drop in the bucket
<b>--- New Testament Phrases ---</b>	
Matthew 5:13	Salt of the earth
Matthew 7:6	Don't cast your pearls before swine
Matthew 7:14	The straight and narrow
Matthew 7:15	A wolf in sheep's clothing
Matthew 15:14	The blind leading the blind
Luke 10:30-37	The Good Samaritan
Romans 13:1	The power that be
1 Corinthians 9:22	All things to all men
2 Corinthians 12:7	A thorn in the flesh

<b>Words and phrases derived from proper names</b>	
<b>Bible name</b>	<b>Meaning today</b>
Jezebel	immoral person

Delilah	wicked person
Jeremiah	pessimist
Judas	traitor

## **Bible Study: Make a Plan**

1. **Spiritual short-comings** can only be helped by honest Bible study.
  - a. Proverbs 16.25, 9.10.
  
2. **True Bible** study does not aim for a superficial meaning of the scriptures but digs deeper for more meaningful applications.
  - a. There are no “cheap” answers.
  
3. **Bible study must become a priority.**
  - a. We spend a lot of time in life on things that we feel are important.
  - b. Are we as serious about our study of God’s word that has eternal implications?
  - c. Romans 1.16: “...the power of God unto salvation.”
  - d. How many hours each week do we spend in Bible Study?
  - e. Compare this to your other “activities.”
    - i. Matthew 10.37-38
  
4. **Bible Study:**
  - a. Linked to discipleship: Matthew 28.18-20.
  - b. Affects salvation: Romans 1.16.
  - c. Shows our approval before God: 1 Timothy 4.11.
  - d. Equips us: 2 Timothy 3.17.
  - e. Gives us a connection to the past: Luke 4.17-21.
  - f. Teaches us both positive and negative lessons: Romans 15.4.
  - g. Builds faith: Romans 10.17.
  - h. Arms for spiritual combat: Titus 1.9-11; 1 Peter 3.15.
  - i. Opens our eyes to the mystery of salvation: Ephesians 3.3-6.
  
5. **The World Will Be Judged by the Bible:**
  - a. John 12.48
  - b. 2 John 9-10
  - c. John 3.36
  
6. **The Bible is Not Used to:**
  - a. Prove what you already believe.
  - b. Come up with new truths or invent your own theology.
  - c. Look for loop holes so you don’t have to change or obey what the Bible says.
  - d. Discover truth based on “how you feel.”

## Practical Tips for Bible Study

### 1. Set up an environment conducive for Bible Study

- a. Go to a private room and close the door.
- b. Study while your spouse is out shopping, etc.
- c. Turn off the TV and radio.
- d. Have adequate light for reading.
- e. Use good pens and highlighters.
- f. Sit in a comfortable chair.
- g. Have your Bible and Concordance, and Bible dictionary nearby.

### 2. Keep a Schedule for Bible Reading/Study

- a. If it's 30 minutes per day, then stick to it.
- b. Make no excuses.
- c. Ask your parents/spouse to remind you until a new habit is formed.

### 3. Avoid Commentaries at First

- a. Read the passage(s) first and think about it.
- b. Discuss it with spouse/friend.
- c. Define words you don't understand with Vine's / Strong's Concordance/Dictionaries.
- d. Then, read a good reliable commentary
- e. Make applications

### 4. Do Not Read a Book Out of Chronological Order until Historical Context Determined.

- a. Example: Nehemiah makes little sense unless you know the context of when/where/why it was written.
- b. Same with the Minor prophets—they have specific messages for different kings, people, and time periods.
- c. Your study will be greatly helped by establishing a historical framework.
- d. ***In the New Testament:***
  - i. Start with Luke and Acts (Same author, same style, linked).
  - ii. The Book of Acts: Our (Church) "Family History."
  - iii. Read the New Testament at face value...use the brain that God gave us.
  - iv. Avoid commentaries for awhile until you get more grounded.

## 5. Attitude Toward Bible Study:

- a. It is not a dusty old textbook.
- b. Opposite: The Book is from God Himself.
- c. It has romance (Isaac and Rebecca, Ruth, Song of Solomon).
- d. It has adventure: (Exploits of Moses, Jonathan, David, Joshua).
- e. It has Drama: (Jesus in the garden with all His emotions).
- f. It has Mystery and Intrigue: (Esther and Nehemiah).
- g. It has help for parents, husband and wives, employees and employers, drug addicts, rich people, poor people.
- h. It has answers for depression, sadness, hopelessness, and despair.
- i. Don't let our world of apathy, mass social media, and indifference numb us to the wonderful rich world of God's treasures in His Word.

## 6. Satan Has Tactics:

- a. You are too busy.
- b. You are too tired.
- c. You are too involved with "Life."
- d. The Bible is more complex than it sounds.
- e. Don't be so dogmatic about the Bible.
- f. Look out for # 1.
- g. "God wants you to be happy."
  - i. Don't worry about:
    1. Marriage/Divorce/Remarriage Bible rules
    2. Social drinking
    3. Sex outside of marriage
    4. Financial demands and giving
    5. "Political Correctness"
      - a. Homosexuality
      - b. Sexual identity politics



## Books to Help in Bible Study

1. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
  - a. Where every word is found in the Bible
2. W.E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words
  - a. The meaning of each word in the New Testament
3. Baker's Bible Atlas
  - a. Locations of towns/cities/regions mentioned in the Bible
4. Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts
  - a. Old and New Testaments
5. Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary
  - a. Bible pictures
6. Basic Bible Commentary Set: E.M. Zerr Bible Commentary Set
7. The Four Fold Gospel by McGarvey and Pendleton
  - a. Harmony of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
8. New Commentary on Acts of Apostles by J.W. McGarvey.
9. Reading Romans by Robert F. Turner.
10. A Commentary on the Epistle of James by Guy N. Woods.
11. The Search for the Ancient Order by Earl I. West.
12. A Commentary on the Minor Prophets by Homer Hailey.
13. Ephesians by Colly Caldwell
13. Philippians and Colossians by Walton Weaver.

14. 1,2,3 John by Daniel King.

15. A Commentary on Hebrews by David McClister.

Websites to buy these (and other) books:

- a. CEI Bookstore: [www.ceibooks.com](http://www.ceibooks.com)
- b. Christianbook.com
- c. Amazon.com

## Some Thoughts on Commentaries

1. Commentaries should not be regarded as creed books.
  - a. Remember that human authors are subject to error.
  - b. A lot of material in the religious area has very little to offer one who is seriously seeking help to better understand God's Word.
  - c. However, there are excellent Bible tools written by conservative Bible scholars/students that are very helpful.
2. The following list of books/commentaries have been very helpful to me and generally are written with truth in mind.
  - a. This list is by no means exhaustive but have shown themselves to be generally faithful to the truth.
  - b. They also are great work aids when determining the meaning of Bible words as intended by the original author.
3. Books should be regarded as tools for Bible study as tools are for any endeavor.
  - a. A mechanic, doctor, lawyer, or scientist must have tools.
  - b. A reader must exercise discretion/judgment at all times with books.
    - i. 1 Thessalonians 5.21-22.
4. Reference works (Vines, Strong's, etc.) are to be regarded as tools which are available when needed and not meant to be read from cover to cover.
  - a. Ex. J.H. Thayer (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament) is generally a reliable and scholarly work, yet did not believe in the deity of Christ, the virgin birth of Christ, or that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person within the Godhead.

## Studying the Bible: “5 W’s and an H”

1. **Who:**
  - a. Is speaking?
  - b. Is this about?
  - c. Are the main characters?
  - d. To whom is he speaking?
2. **What:**
  - a. Is the subject or the event covered in the chapter?
  - b. Do you learn about the teaching from the text?
3. **When:**
  - a. Do or will the events occur?
  - b. Did or will something happen to a particular person, people, or nation?
4. **Where:**
  - a. Did or will this happen?
  - b. Was it said?
5. **Why:**
  - a. Is something being said or mentioned?
  - b. Would or will this happen?
  - c. At this time?
  - d. This person?
6. **How:**
  - a. Will it happen?
  - b. Is it to be done?
  - c. Is it illustrated?
  - d. Does it apply to me?

**Note:** Don’t be concerned if you cannot find the answer to each question every time. The questions don’t always apply to every type of literature in the Bible.

- Mark key words and phrases
- Look for lists
- Watch for contrasts and comparisons
- Note expressions of time
- Identify/define words and terms
- Develop chapter themes
- Discover lessons for Life
- Complete the “At a glance chart” Can be recorded in your Bible at the beginning of each Book.
  - Date book was written; Theme of book/chapter; Author;

## General Rules of Bible Interpretation:

1. Remember that Context Rules.
  - a. Consider each verse in light of:
    - i. The surrounding verses
    - ii. The book in which it is found
    - iii. The entire Word of God
  - b. Question: Is my interpretation of a particular section of scripture consistent with the theme, purpose, and structure of the book?
  - c. Am I considering the historic and cultural context of what is being said?
  - d. Never take a Scripture out of it's context to make it say what you want it to say.
  
2. Always seek the full counsel of the Word of God.
  - a. Do not accept a teaching simply because someone has used one or two isolated verses to support it. Those verses may have been lifted out of context.
  
3. Remember that Scripture will never contradict Scripture.
  - a. The best interpretation of Scripture is Scripture!
  - b. It is inspired by God; therefore, it will never contradict itself.
  - c. When two or more truths that are clearly taught in the Word seem to conflict, remember that we are humans with finite minds; but there is an answer even if you can't fully understand or reconcile it at the moment.
  
4. Don't base your convictions on an obscure passage of Scripture.
  - a. Obscure passage: One in which the meaning is not easily understood.
  - b. Some are difficult to understand or reconcile at the time but they should not be used as a basis for establishing doctrine.

5. Interpret Scripture literally.

- a. The Bible is not a book of mysticism.
- b. God spoke so that we can understand His truth.
- c. Take the Word of God at face value.
- d. First, look for the clear teaching of Scripture, not some hidden meaning.
- e. Understand and recognize figures of speech; hyperbole; similes, metaphors, etc.
- f. Consider what is being said in light of its literary style.
  - i. Example: You may find more similes and metaphors in poetical and prophetic literature than in historical books.

6. Literary Styles:

- i. Historical: Acts
- ii. Prophetic: Revelation, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc.
- iii. Biographical: Luke
- iv. Didactic (Teaching): Romans
- v. Poetic: Psalms, Song of Solomon, etc.
- vi. Epistle (Letter): 1 and 2 Timothy, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, etc.
- vii. Proverbial: Proverbs

7. Look for the single meaning of the passage:

- a. Always try to understand what the author had in mind when you interpret a portion of the Bible.
- b. Don't seek to twist verses to support a meaning that is not clearly taught.
- c. Let the passage speak for itself unless the author of the book indicates that there is another meaning to what he says.