



How to Study the Bible

The Study of a Book

- I. APPLY THE EARLIER PRINCIPLES
- II. BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE BOOK
 - A. Read Through the Book
 - 1. This is done without the purpose of study, but rather for familiarity.
 - 2. Do this without looking at commentaries or any other resources.
 - B. Read Through the Book
 - 1. Continuously: this means that you sit down and read the book all the way from start to finish in a single sitting. This may seem difficult, but the book of Psalms can be read in approximately four hours.
 - 2. Repeatedly: this means that you go through the continuous reading several times. If possible, reading through the book at least three times.
- III. BREAKDOWN THE BASICS OF THE BOOK
 - A. Read Through the Book (4th time); this reading is going to incorporate questions and answers.
 - B. Basic Questions to Answer
 - 1. How many chapters are in the book? Is this significant?
 - 2. How many verses are in the book? Is this significant?
 - 3. What is the average number of verses per chapter? Is this significant?
 - 4. How many words are in the book? Is this significant?
- IV. FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE BOOK
 - A. Read Through the Book (5th time); this reading is going to incorporate some more questions and answers.
 - B. Background Questions to Answer
 - 1. Who is the author?
 - a. Is there any external proof?
 - b. Is there any internal proof?
 - 2. To whom was the book written?
 - 3. About what was the book written?
 - 4. What places are mentioned?



- a. What are the first and last places mentioned?
 - b. Does this tell you where the book starts and ends?
 - c. Does the book give away the location of the authorship?
 - d. Do some of these places have other names in scripture?
5. What dates are mentioned?
- a. What are the first and last dates given?
 - b. Does this tell you how much time the book covers?
 - c. How do the dates in this book relate it to other books of the Bible?
 - d. Does this indicate that you ought to also study a portion of another book to fully understand the time about which you are studying?
6. What people are mentioned?
- a. Who are the major characters of the book?
 - b. Who is mentioned as a matter of history and who is mentioned as being alive at the time of the book?
 - c. What does the mention of a living person tell you about the time of the authorship and events recorded in the book you are studying?
7. What events are mentioned?
- a. Does this tell you how much time the book covers?
 - b. Does this indicate that you ought to also study a portion of another book to fully understand the time about which you are studying?
8. What is the order of the book?
- a. Is this book written in chronological order?
 - b. Is this book written to emphasize events without concern for order?
9. What doctrines are dealt with in this book?
- a. Does this indicate some problems that the author was addressing?
 - b. Does this give any indicator as to the time of the authorship?

C. Give Each Chapter a Title

V. KEYS TO INTERPRETATION CONCERNING THE BOOK

- A. Read Through the Book (6th time); this reading is going to incorporate the provision of keys to properly interpret this book.
- B. Key Questions to Answer
1. What are the major topics of this book?
 2. Is there a statement of purpose?
 - a. Some books have a direct statement telling the purpose of the book and some do not.
 - b. John has one of the clearest statements of purpose in the Bible in John 20:30-31.
 3. What are the key words or phrases?
 - a. What words or phrases occur most often in the book?
 - b. Are there words or phrases that occur often in one part of the book, but less often in another part of the book?
 4. What is the key verse or passage of the book?



5. Are there any key shifts in the text?
 - a. Key shifts can refer to many things; things like a shift in the person of the pronoun, a shift in audience, location, key person, etc.
 - b. Several books have some important key shifts that will help you understand the breakdown of the book.
 - c. Several such shifts occur in John.
 - (1) The coming of His hour
 - a) Not yet come (John 2:4; John 7:30; John 8:20)
 - b) Now come (John 12:23, 27; John 13:1; John 16:32; John 17:1)
 - (2) The identity of “his own” (see John 1:11 and John 13:1)
 - (3) Growing rejection of Jesus and His message
 - a) First unorganized attempt to kill Him (John 5:16-18)
 - b) First major departure of His disciples (John 6:66)
 - c) First organized attempt to seize Him (John 7:30-32)
 - d) First organized attempt to kill Him (John 11:47-51, 57)
 - e) Final rejection of His miracles (John 12:37)
6. Are there any natural divisions in the book?
 - a. Most books of the Bible have some natural divisions of thought, though some are better defined than others.
 - b. These natural divisions can also be shown by events, time, or places.
7. What is the general feel of the book?
 - a. Does the author seem pleased or troubled with the conditions surrounding the times in which he was writing?
 - b. Is it a book of praise or is it a book penned to deal with troubles?
 - c. Consider the book of Galatians for an example.
 - (1) The multitude of conflicts mentioned in the book
 - a) Paul’s gospel vs. another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9)
 - b) Pleasing men vs. serving Christ (Galatians 1:10)
 - c) Liberty vs. bondage (Galatians 2:4)
 - d) Gospel of the circumcision vs. gospel of the uncircumcision (Galatians 2:7)
 - e) Paul vs. Peter (Galatians 2:8, 11)
 - f) Works of the law vs. faith of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16)
 - g) Works of the law vs. hearing of faith (Galatians 3:2)
 - h) Law vs. faith (Galatians 3:11-12)
 - i) Seed vs. seeds (Galatians 3:16)
 - j) Law vs. promise (Galatians 3:17-18)
 - k) Servant vs. child (Galatians 4:7)
 - l) Bondwoman vs. freewoman (Galatians 4:22-23)
 - m) Ishmael vs. Isaac (Galatians 4:28-29)
 - n) Liberty vs. an occasion to the flesh (Galatians 5:13)
 - o) Flesh vs. Spirit (Galatians 5:17)
 - p) Led of the Spirit vs. under the law (Galatians 5:18)
 - q) Works of the flesh vs. fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19, 22)
 - r) Sowing to the flesh vs. sowing to the Spirit (Galatians 6:8)
 - s) Corruption vs. life everlasting (Galatians 6:8)
 - t) World vs. Paul (Galatians 6:14)



- (2) The way the epistle is addressed
- a) Rome
 - i) Beloved of God (Romans 1:7)
 - ii) Called to be saints (Romans 1:7)
 - iii) Thank my God for you all (Romans 1:8)
 - iv) Faith spoken of through the world (Romans 1:8)
 - b) Corinth
 - i) Sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:2)
 - ii) Called to be saints (1 Corinthians 1:2)
 - iii) Thank my God always on your behalf (1 Corinthians 1:4)
 - c) Ephesus
 - i) Saints which are at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1)
 - ii) I heard of your faith (Ephesians 1:15)
 - iii) I cease not to give thanks for you (Ephesians 1:16)
 - d) Philippi
 - i) Saints in Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:1)
 - ii) Thank my God upon every remembrance of you (Philippians 1:3)
 - e) Colosse
 - i) To the saints and faithful brethren (Colossians 1:1)
 - ii) We give thanks to God (Colossians 1:3)
 - iii) We heard of your faith (Colossians 1:4)
 - iv) The love which ye have to all the saints (Colossians 1:4)
 - f) Thessalonica
 - i) The church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:1)
 - ii) We give thanks to God always for you all (1 Thessalonians 1:2).
 - iii) Remembering without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 1:3)
 - (a) Your work of faith
 - (b) Labour of love
 - (c) Patience of hope
 - g) Galatia
 - i) I marvel that you are so soon removed (Galatians 1:6).
 - ii) O foolish Galatians (Galatians 3:1)
 - iii) Who hath bewitched you (Galatians 3:1)?
 - iv) Are ye so foolish (Galatians 3:3)?
 - v) I am afraid of you (Galatians 4:11).
 - vi) Am I become your enemy (Galatians 4:16)?
 - vii) They zealously effect you, but not well (Galatians 4:17).
 - viii) I stand in doubt of you (Galatians 4:20).
 - ix) Who did hinder you (Galatians 5:7)?

8. What is the theme of this book?



VI. APPLICATION OF THE STUDY OF THE BOOK

- A. Read Through the Book (7th time); This reading is going to be used to provide outlines and practical applications of the book.

- B. Outline the Book
 - 1. Start with a basic outline of the book.
 - a. First step using Galatians
 - (1) Personal Section: The Apostleship of Paul (Chapters 1-2)
 - (2) Doctrinal Section: Justification by Faith (Chapters 3-4)
 - (3) Practical Section: Life in the Spirit (Chapters 5-6)
 - b. Second step using Galatians
 - (1) Personal Section: The Apostleship of Paul (Chapters 1-2)
 - a) Paul's Divine Call (Chapter 1)
 - b) Paul's Divine Message (Chapter 2)
 - (2) Doctrinal Section: Justification by Faith (Chapters 3-4)
 - a) According to Promise (Chapter 3)
 - b) According to Sonship (Chapter 4)
 - (3) Practical Section: Life in the Spirit (Chapters 5-6)
 - a) The Life of Liberty (Chapter 5)
 - b) The Life of Sacrifice (Chapter 6)
 - 2. Continue outlining the book until you have outlined the entire passage in great detail.

- C. Practical Lessons of the Book
 - 1. The entire Bible is not written **to** you, but it is written **for** you.
 - 2. What is the foremost practical application of this book of the Bible?
 - a. Moral purity?
 - b. Christian service?
 - c. Hope or faith?
 - 3. What can this book teach you about:
 - a. Serving God
 - b. Righteousness
 - c. Faithfulness
 - d. Sin
 - e. Faith
 - f. Etc.
 - 4. What lessons out of this book would be useful for:
 - a. Preaching or teaching
 - b. Families
 - c. Men
 - d. Ladies
 - e. Children