

APPENDIX

I hope that you will make the decision to study the Bible on your own. To prepare you for this I have attempted throughout these 15 lessons to point out various techniques of Bible study. This appendix summarizes what has been said throughout the lessons.

A. Materials

Basic to any study is a good translation of the Bible. You ought to own a modern translation of Scripture as well as one of the paraphrased versions. My favorite is the New American Standard, but choose one that works personally for you.

A notebook will be an immense help. Writing your findings down will help clarify them for you. Furthermore you will want to make charts and lists as you study. I would suggest you purchase A Christian's Guide to Bible Study by A. Morgan Derham (see Lesson 3, Learning to Love God) and study it as you begin on your own.

B. Passage

Where to turn next in the Bible is an individual matter. However, I would suggest that you first try to master one of the Gospels. Mark is the most straightforward. The epistles are always fascinating. James deals with practical Christianity and 1 John with Christian fellowship. These might provide good starting points.

Once you feel reasonably comfortable in the New Testament, try some of the Old Testament books. Start with some historical sections (e.g. Genesis, Exodus, Kings, Samuel).

Try out the Psalms and Proverbs. A good habit is to read one chapter of Proverbs every day to the corresponding day. By that I mean read Chapter one on the 1st day of the month, Chapter 2 on the 2nd day and so on.

You may prefer to study a topic rather than a book. For example, you might want to investigate the subject of the Christian life. Matthew 5 - 7; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 13; Philippians 2:1-16 and Ephesians 6:1-20 all deal with this topic.

A personality subject is often interesting. For example look up all the references to Peter and then try to understand his character and how it changed after he met Christ.

C. Methods of Study

The simplest way to approach a passage is by assessing:

- 1) The Facts
- 2) The Meaning of the Facts
- 3) The Significance of the Facts

One gets at the facts by asking questions containing the six key words: who, what, when, why, where, how?

To help you with this task, I have a couple of tools on my website under the tab of "Study Tools" <http://moffitt.yolasite.com/study-tools.php>. These tools will provide a guideline for intentional Bible Study.

Once the facts are before you, evaluate their meaning. "Why are these facts given?" must be your constant question. Then apply the facts to your life and situation today.

The Bible is not a textbook which we study merely to learn new ideas. Rather the Bible is meant to help us and to change us. When you have discovered what the author is getting at, ask yourself, "Now, in my life, how does this apply?"

Another way to put it is to ask the following:

- 1) What is it saying?
- 2) What does it mean?
- 3) How does it apply to me?

Narrative passages are analyzed most easily with these above techniques. "Idea" passages are often harder to understand. When studying the latter, one must be very aware of structure. Watch especially for the key words in a passage.

Underline or circle these. Note any parallels of thought or phrasing. Watch for contrasts and repetitions. Discovering how an author says something often helps us find out what he means.

Test your comprehension of a passage by doing a paraphrase.

Or retell the story as if you were an eyewitness. Or write out the ideas in a way that a young person would understand.

D. Aids

Find out as much about the background of the passage as you can. The following are good basic resource tools to use in your study of the Bible.

Maps (Atlas)

A book on customs and conventions of the time

Bible Dictionary

Commentaries

Here are a few good on-line resources:

<http://bibleatlas.org/>
<http://www.biblestudytools.com/>
<http://www.biblegateway.com/>
<http://bible.org/>
<http://www.e-sword.net/>

I use this one all the time.