

## Rules For Bible Study

There are several rules, or methods, of Bible study that will be of help to you as you study your Bible. It is possible to have knowledge of the Bible and still not be a fruitful Christian; however, it is impossible to be a mature Christian without having a knowledge of the Bible. The Bible says, in I Peter, chapter 2:

**“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” (I Peter 2:2)**

As a Christian your spiritual food is the Bible. Then too, diligent Bible study is a sure prevention to keep you from back-sliding.

**“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.” (II Peter 1:10)**

The benefits of Bible study are many, yet we find it difficult for earnest Bible study. This is true in every area of the Christian life. You will find opposition to carrying out every command given the Christian; starting with salvation, until we receive our glorified bodies—and Bible study is no exception. We are given a command to:

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (II Timothy 2:15)**

I am often asked what method I use in Bible study. Over the years I have followed certain rules for Bible study. These rules have been gathered from many different sources. I claim no originality for these rules. I only pass them on, hoping they will make your Bible study more profitable, and your Christian life more fruitful. Rule number (1) Ye must be born again; (2) the infallibility of the Bible; (3) literal interpretation; (4) the rule of first mention; (5) the rule of triple approach; (6) studying the Bible in it's context; (7) rightly dividing the word of truth; and (8) using Bible study helps.

The first rule of Bible study is YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN. Unless you have been born again you cannot understand the Word of God.

**“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Corinthians 2:14)**

Jesus told Nicodemus: “Except a man be born again he cannot see...” Before you can understand the Bible, you must know its Author.

The second rule is “the authority of the Bible.” You must accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, absolutely infallible, and perfect in every detail on every subject on which it speaks.

**“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.  
That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (II Timothy 3:16,17)**

With all the different Bible translations, I am often asked what Bible I would recommend. The Bible we use in this class, and the only Bible we recommend is the King James version of the Bible.

Yes, the Bible is either what it claims to be, the Word of God, or it would have to be a myth. We either believe all of the Bible, or none at all. If the Bible is made up of only part truth, as some claim, it would be the most dangerous book in the world, for we would not know what part to believe and what part not to believe.

If a person’s excuse for not studying the Bible is that they are not sure of its accuracy, then how can they know that they are saved? Think for a moment. Who says the Bible cannot be trusted? Certainly one did not come to this conclusion from a diligent study of the Bible; so it must have come from some other source. This doubt started with the Devil, in the Garden of Eden. When he said, “yea, hath God said.” He questioned the Word of God.

There is no reason that one cannot believe every word of the Bible. If we can believe the opening statement in the Bible, then we will have no difficulty in believing the rest of the Bible. **“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...” (Genesis 1:1)**

This is God’s statement, and we can either take it or leave it. You either believe the first verse in the Bible, or you do not. If you believe the opening statement of the Bible, then you will have no difficulty in believing the rest of the Bible, including every miracle the Bible records. If you believe the first statement in the Bible you will have no trouble with the record of the parting of the Red Sea, casting out of demons, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, and the raising of the dead, and most of all, the saving of a lost sinner from hell.

The story is told about a group of scientists taking one of the most sophisticated computers they could find, and feeding into this computer the information concerning the origin of the world and the universe. After feeding the computer all the data they possessed, the computers answer was “see Genesis 1:1.” This is just a story, but how applicable it is for today. You can trust and believe all of the Bible!

The third rule that I follow in Bible study is that of “literal interpretation.” The Bible is not the deep and mysterious book that it is made out to be. James chapter 1, verse 5, tells us:

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”**

Every child of God possesses the Holy Spirit, and it is the Holy Spirit that teaches us from His Word. It is true that some of God’s children know more about the Bible than others, and these are the ones who are to teach us. There are God-called teachers,

for which we are certainly grateful. This does not mean that you do not have access to the Word of God to study it for yourself. You should read and study your Bible.

Believe what God says. He says what He means, and means what He says. When God talks about Israel, He means Israel. When God talks about the Church, He means the Church. When the Bible uses a figure, or a symbol, it is clearly stated that it is a figure or symbol. Take the Bible literally unless the context, or the structure of the verse, clearly indicates that it is a symbol, or figure, and is not to be taken literally.

The fourth rule I use in my Bible study is “the rule of first mention.” This means that the first time a word or phrase is mentioned in Scripture usually gives the key to its meaning other places in the Bible. In your Bible study, the first time you run across a word, check and see where it is used in the Bible the first time, and what is represented in this instance. This will, many times, give you a clue as to the meaning of certain words. This is especially true in the plan of salvation.

Every element of salvation is recorded in the first sacrifice that was offered. For instance, in Genesis chapter 3, verse 21, we read:

**“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”**

Here is the first mention of a “sacrifice” in the Bible. Adam’s fig leaves were not sufficient to cover his sin, and in this verse we find that the sacrifice was a gift of God. It was God who provided the animal. It was by the shedding of blood. It was by the death of an innocent substitute. This holds true throughout the Bible. The rule of first mention is a valuable rule to follow when studying the Bible.

The fifth rule I use is called “the rule of triple approach.” This rule must always be kept in mind while studying the Bible. By this we mean that that all Scripture has a “primary meaning,” all Scripture has a “practical application,” and many Scriptures have, in addition, a “prophetic revelation.” The primary meaning of the Scripture is found in “to whom it is written,” and “the time it was written.” Then, of course, all Scripture has a practical application. The Bible says, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...” (II Timothy 3:16a).**

The Bible also says, **“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning...” (Romans 15:4a)** The majority of the Bible is taken up with prophetic revelations, either fulfilled, or to be fulfilled. This includes both the Old and New Testaments. As for us today, we should look, for the most part, for the “practical” applications, and then the “prophetic revelation.” Keep this rule in mind, the rule of “triple approach.”

The sixth rule of Bible study is “study the Bible in its context.” Read what goes before and what goes after. Do not use a verse for a pretext, but study the Bible in its full context. This should also be done in the light of the rest of the Bible. Do not try to force a meaning from a verse.

The seventh rule to be followed is “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” The Bible deals with three types of people.

**“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” (I Corinthians 10:32)**

In your Bible study you must keep these three types separate. Do not try to mix Israel and the Church, faith and works, law and grace, or salvation with rewards. Do not try to make the Church the Kingdom, or the Kingdom the Church. Do not try to make the Millennium mean Heaven. All Scripture is for us, but all Scripture was not given to us.

God gave certain commands to certain people, which He has not given to us. For instance: God told Noah to build an Ark, but He never told us to do that. He gave a detailed blueprint to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness, but He did not tell us to build a Tabernacle.

A problem that faces many Bible scholars is they “spiritualize” the Bible. They take the promises that God made to Israel and try to connect them with the Church. This is a deceitful use of the Scriptures. It comes from failure to rightly divide the Word of truth. Therefore, always find out to whom God is speaking, and then take it literally.

We come now to number eight of Bible study rules, “using Bible study helps;” or what books are necessary for help in studying the Word of God.

**“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation,  
to doctrine.” (I Timothy 4:13)**

This scripture literally means, “be careful what you read.” You must choose your reading material with care. Be cautious in your reading material. This is more true today than when it was recorded. In that day, without the benefit of high speed printing presses, and high speed typesetting machines, there was already so many books in existence that Paul warned Timothy to pay close attention to what he read. We read that even in Solomon’s day: “...of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” (Ecclesiastes 12:12b)

A rule of selective reading is very important, because the Bible is our text book, and Bible study means just exactly that---Bible study. One should study the Bible rather than books about the Bible. Here are some recommended helps: (1) The King James version of the Bible (preferably, a Scofield reference Bible); (2) A good concordance (Strong’s or Young’s); and (3) a good Bible dictionary. These are the three “helps” I recommend for Christians who want to know what books to use in connection with their Bible. Also an excellent help is the booklet by C.I. Scofield “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.”

I am sure you have found other rules that are helpful in studying your Bible. We trust that, in this lesson, we have said something that will help you in your Bible study, that you may know your Bible better. The better equipped we are, the better servants we will be.

Remember the FIRST RULE, that of BEING BORN AGAIN. If you are not born again you cannot understand the Bible. To be born again you must receive Christ as your Saviour. If you are not sure that you are a Christian, that you are born again, why not right now, acknowledge to God that you are a sinner, that Christ died for your sins, and then receive Him as your Saviour.

