

## Introduction

The lack of Bible knowledge among those who profess to believe the bible is appalling. Is it any wonder that so many “believers” are swept along by emotion, nice sounding words, &c.?

I have been greatly distressed over the numbers of pastors and religious leaders who have not even read God’s Word through at least one time, yet they profess that they believe the Bible from cover to cover. (I had one pastor tell me that he did not know if he had read the Scriptures through even one time, but he does read with his family every day.) The same is truer of the average believer who may be trying to establish his doctrine from various books outside of Scripture. Example: One may establish his Calvinistic doctrine by reading what others said. Admittedly, it is much easier to search others for a particular doctrine rather than search for ourselves through the whole of God’s law-word. True and pure doctrine comes only from God’s word, not from the pulpit, men we respect, books, nor from word of mouth. How many claim to believe the 5 Solas, yet have never read the entire Word of God through for himself? Before one studies what others say about a basic doctrine, he should have his doctrine established for himself from Scripture Alone. How many study to justify a preconceived doctrine they want to follow by finding authors who agree with what they want to believe?

**2 Timothy 2:15** *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* **1 Peter 3:15** *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

**HOW TO STUDY:** There are many who feel that their way of proving they’re a Christian and love God is to spend a certain amount of time every day in devotional books or in reading the Bible, and in prayer. Hence, reading scripture and prayer can easily become rituals which may make us feel sanctimonious. However, the purpose of reading Scripture is to learn what God has in His law for each of us, and then apply those laws to every area of life and thought. The more we grow in our obedience to the law, the more we grow in sanctification, and in pleasing God. “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Holiness is the result of applying the law of God. Reading scripture is NOT to see how much we can read nor how fast we can get through the entire Scripture. It is far better to read one chapter a day and get something from it than to read many chapters a day and not get anything except a spiritual feeling, *i.e.*, self-devised devotion.

As you read the Bible as one would any book, page after page, here are some attitudes that must be present if one expects the Lord to teach him anything

**1. Must be teachable**, and even plead with God to re-teach, if re-teaching is required. I have found Psalms 119 very instructive in how to pray as I read: **V. 12** *Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.* **V. 26** *I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.* **V. 33** *HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.* **V. 64** *The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.* **V. 66** *Teach me good*

*judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments. V. 68 Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. V. 108 Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments. V. 124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes. V. 135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.*

[My favorite Psalms 119 passage is **98** *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. 99* *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. 100* *I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.*]

**2. One must be willing and able to lay aside any preconceived notions and teachings.** No matter how respected the teacher might have been, nor how emotionally attached to or committed we are to a pet doctrine, if it is not according to God's entire word, it must be abandoned.

**Philippians 3:15** *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

If one is unwilling, even anxious to be taught by God's Spirit how to be "Holey even as He is Holy" from His word, **then** he might as well leave Scripture alone, and continue serving the god of self. Make your time in God's word count.

**Here is the suggestion given by my pastor to the church in the 1970s:**

Keep a note book with your Bible. Maybe make the note book small, about the size of your Bible, so you can easily keep it with your Bible. At beginning of a Bible chapter, put the chapter name and date, e.g., Jeremiah 12, April 7, 1999 (the date I first put this article together). To make it easier to keep track of, use a new page per chapter. Here is a list of things to look for. Keep the list in the notebook, and number each paragraph accordingly. Write out what stands out to you, particularly in your present situation. Obviously, not every point will be addressed in the passage you read, but look for something profitable from the passage.

[Date: \_\_\_ Passage: \_\_\_]

- 1) Sin to avoid, or sin to confess and forsake.
- 2) Promise to claim.
- 3) Example to follow.
- 4) Command to obey.
- 5) Lesson to learn, or new truth to note.
- 6) Question to be answered. Take the time to look up at least one thing in the passage you have questions about.
- 7) Something to pray about.
- 8) Verse to memorize or meditate on (write it out).

## 9) Decision to make

As you read, remember three things:

- 1) the context of the passage.
- 2) to whom is the passage is directed. To whom is the Lord speaking.
- 3) the spiritual and historical situation that is being dealt with by the passage.

**Example 1:** 1 Corinthians 7 was written to believers who would very shortly enter into the Great Tribulation of Matthew 24. Caring for a wife during that time could be very daunting.

Though many Scripture passages were unique instructions for specific situations within the above three points, every passage has an application for Christians for all time. In other words, look for the basic teaching of a passage, and do not make it say something that neither the context nor author is saying. Do not torture the Word of God to make Him say something He does not say. (2 Peter 3:16)

**Example 2:** In Matthew 18:21 & 22 the Lord is teaching forgiveness, compassion and pity. He is not telling us that we must forgive those who owe us money, or who refuse to confess their sin against us. (Luke 17:4) Clearly, genuine repentance is required for forgiveness from God and man, Proverbs 28:13.

### 3. Is it God's will

1. The word of God must approve the action or decision.
2. The door must be open; that is, circumstances. Ideal circumstances cannot be the only measure of a decision.
3. The still, small voice; Godly peace in the heart.

The command is to *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Thus, is it not sin to fail to study?