

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Written by Jerry Schmoyer <http://www.mainstreetbaptist.org/blog>

Adapted by Tim Schmoyer <http://timschmoyer.com>

DAY ONE – INTRODUCTION

Some time ago I read a story about a man who died in deep poverty. In fact, he died from lack of proper food and housing. Among his possessions was found a Bible and in the Bible thousands of dollars were stuffed. The Bible was left to him by his parents -- but he never opened it! How often we are like that man -- our soul is starving and we are living in spiritual poverty while the provision for our needs lies between the covers of our Bible. We must get it and use it.

Suppose you want to sit down and study your Bible. You open to a passage and read a few verses, wondering how to begin. "How does that man in the pulpit find the things he talks about? I never see those things when I read the Bible," you say. In frustration and guilt you read a few more verses, check the footnotes, then go answer the telephone. Thus ends your Bible study for the day. It's like a miner walking along looking for gold nuggets or diamonds lying on the ground. Usually he comes up empty! It doesn't have to be that way! There is no quick, easy, magical formula that allows instant insight into a passage. Like anything else worthwhile, it takes work. However that work must be purposeful and worthwhile or nothing good will come of it. That is where this series comes in.

My purpose here is to provide some practical help for those who are motivated to improve their Bible study skills. This certainly isn't the only way, but it is one way of study. As I see it, Bible study is broken down into three main steps: Observation ("What do I see?"), Interpretation ("What does it mean?") and Application ("How should I respond?"). The Bible provides spiritual nourishment for our souls as food provides physical nourishment for our bodies (I Peter 2:2; Psalm 119:103; Hebrews 5:13-14). There is a close similarity between partaking of physical and spiritual food, also. First you thoroughly analyze your food (cut and chew), then break it down so it can be used (digestion) and finally apply it (used by bones and muscles). We will develop this over the next several days, but first the Bible gives some important concepts to understand.

In your Spiritual Journal:

- Read Nehemiah 8:8; John 5:39; Acts 17:11 – Is there an example to follow here? What is it?
- Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, but it is full of reasons why we should study the Bible. Read through this chapter and list all the reasons that you see there. (See, verse 11 for an example.)
- Look over your list from Psalm 119. How many of these things would you like to be true about yourself? Will you commit yourself to studying God's Word in order to make those things a reality for you?