

How to Study the Bible

Digging Deeper - Series 1 - Session 1

Session Dates for the first series

25th Sept - Brian

9th Oct - Brian

23rd Oct - Chris

Main scripture verse?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

What is Digging Deeper?

- bible study group
- increase our overall understanding of God and the Bible.
- to discover hidden treasures within the scriptures
- people at different places in their knowledge of the scriptures
- so we'll start of the first easy for the few series' and get progressively deeper as we go.

Explain the format

- Usually every two weeks or so on a Tuesday evening
- Sessions will be organised into a 'Series' covering differencing topics
- each series will vary according to the number of sessions and depending on the subject matter
- Each session is split roughly into roughly three parts,
 - teaching
 - group study
 - sharing

Summarise the first Series - 'How to study your bible'

- The first series is different
- focussing on the Bible itself
- rather than the teachings it contains
- Brian to lead first two session
- Chris to lead the 3rd and last session
- The start of each session
 - focus verse to consider and meditate on till next session.
 - to hopefully provide insight...
- Near the end of each session we will look at a piece of scripture that is commonly taken 'out of context', then we see what the bible really says.

The readily available bible

Today, we are absolutely blessed when it comes to having access to the bible with the various study aids and materials we have at our disposal, to help us gain a deeper insight when studying God's Word.

- hundreds of years ago, it was purely by hearing the word read out
- usually in the synagogues of Jesus' day
- they heard the scriptures being read to them
- copies of the scriptures were kept in the synagogues
- People didn't own personal copies as they took huge amounts of man hours copy just one book, by highly skilled 'Scribes'
- you would also need a lot of storage too, as these books came on large scrolls.
- the way books/scrolls were known and named, was by the first few words of the book..... opening a scroll to see name.

In Jesus's day, it was the religious rulers who had access to, read and taught from these scrolls, and it was those religious rulers who would interpret and tell you what the scriptures meant.

Skip forward 400 years we had the fledgling state church of the Romans that later grew to become the Roman Catholic church, a church that amassed huge wealth, influence and authority.

They held close guard on the scriptures too. They would preached them in Latin, irrespective of the local language. Like the Pharisees and scribes, the Catholic priests would interpret the scriptures and told you what they meant. It was forbidden for you to even read the scriptures in those days, without risk of severe punishment. The Catholic church taught, only priests had the ability to understand the scriptures.

Because of the Reformation back in the 16th century, it is because of reformers like that of William Tyndale who risked his life, and indeed ended up paying with his life, so that the common people might have access to the bible.

Skip forward to today. The scriptures are freely available. It does not cost a king's ransom to purchase a bible. You are free to read it and study it at your pleasure.

A bit about the bible

- The Bible is the most quoted of sources
- It is the most studied
- it has been translated into over 2,200 languages
- it is the most published book of all time
- it is the most widely distributed book of all time
- it is the most widely read of any book that has ever existed
- it is the best-selling book of all time
- its influence is at the heart of many legal systems around the world
- it is the most communicated: eg preaching and missionary work
- paradoxically, whilst being one of the most cherished of all books, it is also one of the most despised and attacked books of all time

Not just one book – 66 books, 39 in OT, 27 in NT, 1,189 chapters

Trivia:

Q. What is the longest chapter in the Bible? (Psalm 119)

Q. can anyone quote the shortest verse in the bible and know which book it's in? (John 11:35)

Despite being written over a period spanning 1,500 years and by different authors at different times in history and in different cultures, the bible remains cohesive and comprehensive, as if there was just one author.

The authority and trustworthiness of scriptures

Which brings us back to our opening scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Mini Study

The scripture here seems to be plain and clear in what it is speaking about, but let's consider a few things:

NIV is translated 'God-breathed' - other versions translate the same Greek word as 'inspired',

this gives us the idea of God breathing on the individual which results in inspiring them to write down God's word as he wills.

This is the same process for ALL scriptures.

So those who were involved in writing the holy scriptures were 'breathed on' by God, and they wrote, or in some cases dictated as God inspired them. so ALL scripture has the authority of God behind it.

There is no higher authority. The bible contains the very words of God.

So back to our verse....

The Bible is given to us by God for our learning, and as a guide to holy living.

So the results of following verse 16, found in the next verse, verse 17 summarises: that the servant of God..... 'may be thoroughly equipped for every good work'.

We now have a good idea of what this verse is saying, but if we left it like that we'd be missing some depth and our understanding of these verses would remain on a shallow level.

One of the things we can do is understand the context surrounding this verse, why is this verse there in the first place?
what is the need for it being there?

Context

Many times it can be enough to read just a few verses either side of the verses being studied

sometime you might have to read from the start of the chapter or to the end of the chapter

sometimes you might have to take in more than that
it depends on how long and complex the subject matter

2 Timothy 3:12–4:4 (NKJV)

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Points of note

before our focus verse

- people referred to as 'evil' and 'imposter', people pretending to be Christians (3:13)
- deceiving and being deceived - teaching things that was contrary to scripture and the gospel (3:13)
- Timothy was encouraged to 'continue' to live according to the scriptures, so he wouldn't be deceived. (3:14,15)
- Only the OT scriptures

After our focus verse

- Timothy is encouraged to continue preaching the Word (4:2)
- because there will come a time where people will no longer be interested in 'sound doctrine'.
- instead they will desire to listen to teachers that will preach to their own desires (4:3)
- no longer caring about the truth contained in scripture (4:4)

Summarising context

So we have gained a depth and richness to our study verses by reading them 'in context', which has provided us with the importance and reason for our focus verses being there.

Why we should read & study the scriptures?

- get to know God and who he is - explain - God is revealed in the bible
- how God sees us and relates to us
- by it we learn about sin and why there is death in the world
- Why we need salvation and how we can receive that salvation
- We grow spiritually by growing in our knowledge of and the bible

Types of bibles - Which is better for study?

- **Word for Word bibles (literal translations)**
- Thought for thought
- Paraphrase

Which type of Bible is better for study?

Examples of Word for Word versions - this type is better for deeper study

King James / Authorised (KJV)

New King James (NKJV)

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Amplified (AMP)

English standard version (ESV)

Thought for thought - Offers accurate translation with a hint of interpretation

New International Version (NIV)

New Century Version (NCV)

New Living Translation (NLT)

Common English Bible (CEB)

Examples of Paraphrases - Good for general reading as interpretation included inside text

Good News Bible (GNB)

The Living Bible (TLB)

The Message (MSG)

Common in-bible study tools that are helpful

- Contents
- words of Christ in red
- centre column ref.
- harmony of the gospels
- glossary of terms
- mini concordance
- maps

Study bibles

- Huge variety of study bibles available
- may contain all previously mentioned helps
- additional relevant information
- Overview of each book - author, approx. date written, overview
- commentary to help understand particular verses - *not all*
- CAUTION - commentaries do not have the authority of the scriptures it refers to

Other books to aid in study

- concordances
- bible dictionaries

Many of the above study tools have an online alternative

Digital Bibles

- Digital bibles (phones, tablets, online)
- AMAZING - Search tool
- Notes associated with each verse
- highlight words and verses with different colours
- multiple Bookmarks
- Daily reading plans

Free Desktop Apps

e-sword from (www.e-sword.net)

Olive Tree from (www.olivetree.com)

Best way to learn the bible

- reading the bible
- listening to preaching
- remember to ask God in prayer to help you understand and reveal his holy scriptures to you

Start reading your bible

- you need to put some time aside to read and study God's Word
 - be realistic, you know yourself and how much time you have
- A chapter of Proverbs a day
- Follow a reading plan

Out of context

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Many quote this verse to encourage and strengthen us when we come up against some 'mountain' or obstacle that seems too challenging or even impossible, but Paul doesn't use this phrase in a general sense. Look at the context of what Paul was saying.....

Philippians 4:10–14 (NKJV)

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.

Get thoughts and questions

In context, Paul has learned to be content in whatever circumstance he found himself in, in terms of his daily needs.