

What are your Top Five Bible Study Tips?

Brother Jim Cowie

1. Careful reading and re-reading of the Scripture being studied for themes, repetition and what is included and excluded and ask why the language is constructed that way.
2. Familiarity with translation including checking the meaning and usage of significant words using reliable sources provided by programs like e-Sword.
3. Always read in context which is always the answer to any issue of interpretation and arbiter of the meaning and purpose of every section of Scripture.
4. Setting aside adequate time and creating the right quiet environment for careful research. Ruminantion is the ultimate key to revelation.
5. Prayer is key to uncovering the secrets of the Word of God and should precede every approach to it - Prov. 25:2; James 1:5-6; Deut. 29:29.

Brother Roger Lewis

Always try to alternate between Old Testament and New Testament topics
Seek the whole counsel of God by varying studies between - Book, Word, Character, Doctrinal, Prophetic, Thematic
Set specific times of study on your calendar, and consider them appointments with God
Always start each study session with earnest prayer that God will bless you to rightly divide His word
Develop the best spiritual library you can for a lifetime of Bible meditation

Brother Stephen Palmer

1. The best tip I was given as a young brother was to get a copy of Strong's Concordance (before computers). This allows us to overcome the foibles of translators and identify where the same Greek and Hebrew words are being used. With the Bible on computer this is so simple but in the old days we had to turn every page. The benefit of that was there was a lot of thinking time involved. Also, I was shown that the definition of the meaning of a word is given by the way it is used in scripture (so avoid going too far into the etymology of a word, because usage may change over time).
2. Look for key words and phrases in the passage we are studying, usually indicated by repetition in the passage. Often these are unusual or rarer words. Mark them (in pencil first) in your Bible.
3. I really appreciated discussing and learning from others who were more experienced in studying the Word of God. For example, bro Colin Badger showed me Englishman's Concordance, and when the On-line Bible first came out and we shared the excitement that we could search for verses that contained two or more key words. This has proved to be a great way of having confidence that we are correctly linking passages of scripture.
4. Search for multiple links between passages of scripture - using the passages' own key words and phrases. So for example we will find that as well as direct quotations there will be many allusions - intentional linking of passages bringing the whole context of the original words into our thoughts as we try to understand the later scripture. In this way scripture interprets scripture.
5. The scripture is written by inspiration as literature that has form and shape. But this form and shape is often not the pattern that our western culture expects. Often the train of thought turns back to the beginning in a cyclical way. Therefore we need to read whole meaningful passages and try to ignore chapter and verse sectioning. Only when we see the whole passage do the subsections really make sense. Often I have in the past thought that scripture was sometimes unnecessarily repetitive - my mistake, since those repeating elements were the clue to the proper understanding of the whole.

Brother Ken Styles

In no special order...

- 1) Read, read, and re-read the section of Scripture, until you are utterly familiar with it; such a familiarity will enable you

to see divine connections that are not typically apparent from a cursory reading of the event, chapter, letter, etc.

2) If you are studying an event, put yourself there, and use your imagination (based upon the revealed details) to envision all that happened and from multiple perspectives of those who were present.

3) Prayer. Pray for understanding. Pray that God will reveal His principles and lessons to you. Pray for those issues you do not understand. Pray for help in capturing your thoughts. Pray for help in preparing a talk. Pray that God will help you put into practice the principles/lessons He has revealed to you.

4) Retain a humble spirit throughout. It is privilege to look into God's Word. It is an even greater privilege for God to reveal the principles, lessons, echoes, insights, wonderments of His Word to you. Receive your understanding with all humility, coupled with a commitment to share what you have learned with others in a way that will encourage all to glorify God by putting His principles/lessons into practice.

5) Live what you learn. God is educating you, not to become a Google resource of neat Bible knowledge, but to transform your character after the example of His Son. Christ didn't just study to know God's word, he studied it to live it. Your commitment to live what you learn will be reflected in how you present what you learn to others, to encourage them to also live what they learn. Ezra studied God's word to live it and then to teach others so they could live it (Ezra 7:10-28). If a student's learning about the Bible ever begins to outpace his living what he's learned, why would God reveal any further insights to him?

Brother Tim Young

1) Read, read and read it again slowly. Read it in different translations.

2) For historical narrative put yourself in the situation. Use your imagination. Make it come alive in your mind.

3) Create an outline. This will help with context, themes and the flow of arguments.

4) Print out the verses with much spacing and freely make notes, underlines and arrows. Use it for brainstorming, questions and any comments that come to mind.

5) In word studies follow the Strong's roots and TSK is your best friend.

In a few words, describe what you believe are the most important guiding principles for Bible students to follow.

Brother Jim Cowie

(Included in the above.)

Brother Roger Lewis

Find the facts

Establish the principle

Apply the exhortation

Brother Stephen Palmer

1. Approach the Bible prayerfully as the wholly inspired Word of God. This means we seek out what the Lord is wanting us to understand, and not what a human writer is thinking. Consequently, every word is important.

2. We must approach scripture with respect and take seriously study by being diligent and giving it the time it deserves. Only through diligence will we discover.

3. Bible study is discovery of hidden treasure; it is not invention or an exercise in imaginative thinking. There is truth to be discovered.

4. Be very wary of so called expert scholarship in Bible things and non-Christadelphian writers because they can seed wrong ideas in our minds and they often do not approach the Bible as the fully inspired Word of God. Nowadays it is too easy to search on the web for "answers" to our questions but beware of the pitfalls.

5. Be your own most severe critic. Especially if you think you have found something completely new - it's probably wrong. Always test your thoughts against other scripture.

Brother Ken Styles

You must be genuine in your desire to learn about God's Word, for the purpose glorifying Him with the understanding He grants you. You must be willing to put in a lot of time in your study - don't expect God to bless your study if you are dashing through His Word. Schedule time to ruminate/reflect upon what you have learned because this will typically result in new insights and take you to deeper levels of understanding than simply pouring over books or looking for more cross references. Expect to have questions that you cannot answer while you study. Don't ignore or gloss over these, but make a note of them because others will likely have the same questions. Look to answer these as you progress in your study. Always look to affirm your significant conclusions through reading the studies of other brethren (eg. Bre. John Thomas, Robert Roberts, John Carter, HP Mansfield, Harry Tennant, etc.).

Brother Tim Young

Give yourself plenty of time. Don't count out anything as inconsequential. It's all important. Most of all look for Christ in all the scriptures.

What have you learned about Bible Study that you wished you knew when you started?

Brother Jim Cowie

Careful reading and rumination after research. Younger people tend to be impatient and want outcomes straight away. It doesn't happen that way.

Brother Roger Lewis

I wished that I had been more intentional with making notes on Bible topics, in a format that would allow for constant growth in understanding.

I wish that I had been more diligent in marking notes into my Bible, when hearing good Bible talks.

Brother Stephen Palmer

Tip 5 above would have been good to know at the outset, and that is to see that scripture is written by inspiration as literature that has form and shape. But this form and shape is often not the pattern that our western culture expects. Often the train of thought turns back to the beginning in a cyclical way. Therefore we need to read whole meaningful passages and try to ignore chapter and verse sectioning. Only when we see the whole passage does the subsection really make sense. Often I have in the past thought that scripture was sometimes unnecessarily repetitive - my mistake, since those repeating elements were the clue to the proper understanding of the whole.

Brother Ken Styles

It takes a much longer time to properly study a subject than I originally appreciated. If you are to present a class, it is a great privilege to stand before any size audience and expound upon God's Word. Make sure your subject thoroughly so that you are rightly dividing the Word and rightly fulfilling your responsibility as a teacher.

Brother Tim Young

Just remember Bible study is a growing process. In some ways it becomes easier but in others it becomes even more deep and fulfilling.

If there are any other comments you would like to share, please add them here.

Brother Jim Cowie

Any efforts made to encourage the study of Scripture among our younger folk in these difficult and distracted times are to be highly commended and encouraged.

Brother Roger Lewis

No matter what topic you choose to study, there will already be good spiritual material on that subject in the writings of the brotherhood. Try not just to assemble a first rate spiritual library, but use it to discover the research of our own community on that topic as a priority. Doing this will enrich your understanding, and guard our heritage.

Brother Stephen Palmer

Serious Bible study is terrifically exciting and so rewarding. It stimulates the best parts of our minds and encourages and develops our faith. Bible study is not for boosting egos or showing off or showing up others' ignorance. There is a scriptural way to share our findings to encourage and edify.

Brother Ken Styles

None - you are free to use the above in any way that will be helpful.

*Compiled by brother Jay Mayock, Jr.
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