

LIVING BY THE RULE OF FAITH

How to order your lifestyle according to God's Word

by James Nickel, B.A., B.Th., B. Miss., M.A.

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Living by the Rule of Faith: How to order your lifestyle according to the Word of God

I. Course Outline

- A. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ?
- B. Benefits of discipleship.

II. Course Outline

- A. How to approach Scripture.
- B. Reading the Bible.
 - 1. Outline of the Bible.
 - 2. Chronology of the Bible.
- C. Practical preparation for Bible study.
 - 1. Bible versions - which one(s) should we use?
 - 2. Tools needed for Bible study.
- D. Studying the Bible.
 - 1. How to read a book of the Bible.
 - 2. How to observe a passage of Scripture.
 - 3. How to interpret a passage of Scripture.
 - 4. How to correlate a passage of Scripture.
 - 5. How to apply a passage of Scripture.

III. Course Goal.

- A. Not to teach you what to believe, but provide you with the tools for studying and interpreting the Bible.
 - 1. Help you bridge the gap between our time and the writers of the Bible.
 - 2. As this gap is bridged, you will come to understand the meaning of the text and how to apply it to life here and now.
- B. Out from this knowledge and understanding, to encourage you to walk in obedient fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

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What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ?

I. Definition of disciple.

- A. Follower of a teacher (Luke 6:40).
- B. Learner, pupil, student, one who is taught.
- C. Learns the philosophy, practices and way of life of his teacher.
- D. James I. Packer, "Very few pastors today stress the learning of doctrine or 'learning the faith.' The emphasis is usually 'experiencing the faith.' But the Reformers would say that learning your faith is the first expression of faithfulness to your Lord ... First, evangelical Christians should accept the primacy of truth and, therefore, the need to learn their faith. They should go beyond the idea that Christianity is primarily an experience. The quality of their discipleship should ... improve. Second, Christians should embrace absolute truth and live it out. Studies show that half of all evangelicals say they don't believe in absolute truth. People must quit making moral excuses in their own favor. If we don't see reformation at these levels, nothing else we reform will matter. I believe that any new Reformation we see will begin as an improvement in the quality of discipleship among the Lord's professed people. He is sorting us out; the division between authentic Bible-based Christians and those who aren't such is going to get deeper and deeper as time goes on ... improved discipleship ... is the real key to a new Reformation."

II. Disciples in the New Testament.

- A. ... of John (Matthew 9:14).
- B. ... of the Pharisees (Matthew 22:15-16).
- C. ... of Jesus.
 - 1. John 8:30-31.
 - 2. John 15:7-8.
- D. Common designation for the followers of Christ.
 - 1. Acts 6:1-2.
 - 2. Acts 9:26.
 - 3. Acts 11:29.
 - 4. Acts 13:52.
 - 5. Acts 14:21-22.
- E. The introduction of another name.
 - 1. Acts 11:26 - a Christian is a disciple of Christ.
 - 2. Acts 26:28 (cf. I Peter 4:16).
 - 3. *Christian*.
 - 4. Mark 12:13.
 - 5. Herodian - a particular sect that follow Herod and champion his cause.

III. Tests of discipleship.

- A. Matthew 10:32-39 (priority is above the family).
- B. Luke 14:26-27, 33.
 - 1. Cross bearing.
 - 2. Renounce all that we have.

IV. Three aspects of discipleship.

- A. Worship.

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1. Walking in life.
 2. Fellowship with God.
- B. Witness.
1. Calling to life.
 2. Work of evangelism.
- C. Work.
1. Manifestation of life.
 2. Service, life, and world consecration.

He [the Holy Spirit] enlightens and empowers the believer and church in worship, evangelism, and service.

The Baptist Faith and Message (C.
God the Holy Spirit).

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Benefits of discipleship

I. Disciples bid to follow Jesus.

- A. Matthew 4:19.
- B. Matthew 8:19.
- C. John 1:43.
- D. John 10:4-5.
- E. John 10:27-28.
- F. John 17:3.

II. Eternal life: what is meant?

A. Previous condition.

1. Evil heart ruled by an evil master and unable to please God.
 - a). Evil heart (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23).
 - b). Evil master (John 8:34; Ephesians 2:3-4).
 - c). Cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8).
2. Bad record before God (Psalms 69:5; Psalms 130:3; Romans 3:19).
 - a). Waywardness (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:10-12).
 - b). Ingratitude (Romans 1:21).
 - c). Disobedience (I John 1:8; Romans 3:23; I John 3:4).
3. In summary, spiritually dead (Isaiah 64:7; Ephesians 2:1; I John 5:12).

B. Unavoidable consequences of spiritual death.

1. Present life full of grief, confusion, and misery.
 - a). Genesis 3:16-17; Proverbs 11:15; Proverbs 12:12; Isaiah 57:20-21.
 - b). "Appear" to prosper at times (see Psalms 73).
 - c). They can mask their sin, deceive themselves. e.g., the rich can numb themselves by surrounding themselves with pleasures and diversions.
2. Next life - repudiated by God and separated from Him.
 - a). Psalms 1:6.
 - b). Isaiah 59:2.
 - c). II Thessalonians 1:8-9.
 - d). Matthew 25:41.
3. Second death: for all eternity, know everlasting death and judgment.
 - a). Romans 6:23.
 - b). Revelation 20:10-15.

C. Three expression of eternal life.

1. In the past, salvation accomplished for us by Christ - Definitive.
 - a). Cleansed from sin (Hebrews 9:14).
 - b). Paid ransom¹ price for us (Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:14; Mark 10:45; I Peter 1:18-19).
 - c). Pacified the wrath of God (I John 4:10²).
 - d). Removed any alienation between us and God (Romans 5:10).
2. In the present, He is applying salvation to us - Progressive.

¹Liberation; freedom from the penalty and power of sin.

²Propitiation: stop being angry.

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- a). We stand justified³ before God (Romans 4:25; Colossians 2:13; I Corinthians 1:30; Romans 3:24; Romans 4:5).
 - (1) Forgiven of our sins.
 - (2) Given a good record in place of our bad record.
 - b). Rebirth to a new life (John 3:3-6; Titus 3:5; John 11:25).
 - c). Given a new heart with a new master by the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Romans 6:6, 11, 22; Romans 10:9).
 - d). Provision for life and godliness (II Peter 1:3; I John 1:9).
 - e). Knowledge of God (John 17:3; Hebrews 8:8-12).
 - f). Adopted into God's own family (Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:15).
 - g). Gives us assurance, love, joy, peace, and hope (I John 5:13; Romans 8:16, 38-39; Romans 5:1, 2, 5; Romans 14:17).
 - h). Sanctifies us by the Holy Spirit so that we persevere to the end (Romans 6:6; II Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:10-11; I Peter 1:5).
 - i). Inherit tribulation (Acts 14:22; Revelation 1:9; II Timothy 2:11).
 - j). Inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5; Romans 4:13).
3. In the future, salvation will be fully achieved - Final.
- a). At death, perfected and brought into the presence of God (Hebrews 12:23; II Corinthians 5:8).
 - b). At the second coming, our bodies resurrected and glorified before Him (I Corinthians 15:42-44; Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:21; Ephesians 5:27).
 - c). At final judgment, acquitted of all wrong and inherit the consummated kingdom of God enjoying everlasting life forever (Matthew 10:32; I John 2:14; Matthew 25:34; Revelation 20:12; Revelation 21:1-5, 27).

³just, right standing (legal).

⁴Advocate: speaks in our defense.

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Importance of regular Bible study

I. In Christ, we are part of the new creation.

- A. II Corinthians 5:17 (not KJV; see NKJV).
- B. How do we live our new lives?
- C. What sustains, nourishes, and guides the new life that we have?

II. The importance of God's objective word.

- A. Matthew 4:4.
 - 1. God's word sustains and nourishes us.
 - 2. NB. *Every*.
 - 3. Do we really believe this?
 - 4. Do we live this?
 - 5. Is God's word our sustenance or our dessert?
 - 6. How long do we digest God's word? 2-3 minutes a day?
 - 7. How long do we watch TV? 4-5 hours a day?
 - 8. Are we truly disciples of Christ?
- B. Psalms 119:105, 111.
 - 1. Read all of Psalm 119.
 - 2. Guides us.
 - 3. Are you confused? In the dark? Stumbling? Turn on the light of God's word!
 - 4. Does God's word rejoice your heart?
- C. I Peter 2:2-3.
 - 1. Tasted His grace implies you will want more.
 - 2. Are you hungry for God's word? If not, have you tasted of His grace?
 - 3. Law written on our heart (Hebrews 8:8-12).
 - 4. Are we alive?
 - 5. Baby with no desire to eat ⇒ a corpse.
 - 6. Babies scream for food/milk.
- D. Psalms 19:7-11.
 - 1. Word is *very* desirable.
 - 2. Which would you choose? To be proficient in God's word or get \$1,000,000?
- E. Psalms 1:1-3.
 - 1. Constant attention and delight.
 - 2. If you are not familiar with the Bible, you cannot meditate on it.
 - 3. This passage assumes Bible study.
 - 4. All day long you ruminate on it.
 - 5. Romans 7:22.
- F. Hebrews 4:12.
 - 1. God's word discerns us (not vice versa).⁵

The Scripture is both the breeder and feeder of grace. How is the convert born, but by *the word of truth*? (James 1:18). How doth he grow, but by *the sincere milk of the Word*? (I Peter 2:2)

Thomas Watson

⁵Goad: a pointed rod used to urge on an animal; makes the beast go in the right direction.

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2. Living and active.
3. Sorts out your thoughts and intentions.
4. Can harden you - lead to your destruction.
5. Never can be neutral (not inert).
6. Faithful reading (let Scripture correct you) will have a positive effect.

G. John 8:31-32; 6:45.

1. Abide in His word \Rightarrow true disciples. R. C. Sproul, "The Christian who is not diligently involved in a serious study of Scripture is simply inadequate as a disciple of Christ."
2. How can you follow Christ as a disciple if you do not know what He says?
3. How familiar are you with His word? R. C. Sproul, "If you have read the whole Bible you are in a small minority of Christian people. If you have studied the Bible, you are in an even smaller minority."
4. Do you pay attention to what He says?
5. Abide \Leftrightarrow live in (our atmosphere; what we live in and breathe).
6. Fruit \Leftrightarrow our decisions, talk, and walk will reflect His wisdom.

H. I Corinthians 2:16 .

1. Mind of Christ.
2. Do we think like He thinks?

I. II Corinthians 10:4-5.

1. Every thought into captivity \Leftrightarrow obey Christ in all thinking.
2. Every thought.
 - a). Shopping list.
 - b). Sin.
3. Prayer.
4. Reactions.
5. Your life.
6. School.
7. Church.
8. Home.
9. Family.
10. Amusements.
11. Entertainments.
12. Clothing.
13. Voting.

J. Hebrews 5:11f.

1. Dull of hearing.
2. Milk, not solid food.⁶
3. Use \Rightarrow practice.
4. Making yourself *fit* for heaven.
 - a). Your ability to enjoy heaven depends upon how much you study the Word of God.
 - b). What is heaven? Rich, full of blessing and spiritual realities.
 - c). At death our knowledge⁷ will not be made perfect (our morality will).

⁶Here milk is used as an unfavorable image (cf. I Peter 2:2-3). It means "not willing to grow up."

⁷We will always be creatures. Our knowledge then will be clear - no longer see through a glass darkly, but not omniscient!

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- d). In heaven, we may understand things better.
- e). There will be levels of awards (40W, 60W, 100W).⁸
- f). Our glory then will depend on glory cultivated now.

III. Bible study is hard work.

- A. With perspiration God will give understanding by His Spirit.
- B. It takes effort to learn to appreciate and enjoy God's word.
- C. We need self-government (a fruit of the Spirit that we need to cultivate).
- D. Work out our salvation (prepare the soil of our hearts to receive the riches of God's word).

⁸See I Corinthians 15:40-42.

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How to approach Scripture

I. Beware of “how to” techniques.

- A. We cannot approach the Bible with the mind set of “10 easy steps to study the Bible.”
- B. They are good, but do not look at them as the end; they are a means to the end.
- C. What is the end of Bible study?
 1. To obediently interact with the infinite, personal God who speaks to us through Scripture.
 2. He has supremely made Himself know to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. The moment you reduce a relationship with Christ to a technique or a formula, that relationship has died.

II. II Timothy 3:16-17.

- A. The importance that the church historically has placed upon the Word of God.
 1. WSC #1: *What is the chief end of man?* Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.
 2. WSC #2: *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify Him?* The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God and enjoy Him.
 3. The Baptist Faith and Message, I. *The Scriptures:* The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.
- B. Four points to remember.
 1. Origin of the Bible:
 2. All Scripture is inspired by God; Spirit-breathed (Greek: Theo-pneust).
 3. cf. II Peter 1:21—men were “borne, carried along” by the Holy Spirit in their writings.
 4. Transmission and Preservation of the Scriptures.
 - a). The inspired Old Testament writings were copied and preserved by the priests who instructed God’s people in the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 31:24-26; 31:12).
 - (1) Moses and the prophets wrote.
 - (2) The priests copied and preserved.
 5. Christ’s perfect sacrifice abolished (put away) the Old Testament sacrifices and priesthood. The Inspired New Testament writings were preserved by the church (priesthood of believers) who copied and recopied the texts in great quantities (John 14:25-26⁹; I Peter 2:9; II Peter 1:21). Refer also to notes on Bible versions.
 - (1) Apostles and prophets wrote (Ephesians 2:20).
 - (2) “Priesthood of believers” copied and preserved.
 6. Hebrews 1:1-2. NB. Greek tenses.¹⁰
 - (1) Spoke (Imperfect tense).

⁹This passage has primary application to the apostles; it can only be applied to us in a secondary fashion (as we submit to apostolic testimony).

¹⁰The Greek language is capable of fine shades of meaning not always apparent in the English translation; verb tenses are often very significant.

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- (a) A continued past action: in Old Testament times God spoke in “prophet” language.
- (b) Comma, semicolon, comma, etc.
- (2) Has spoken (aorist tense: punctiliar action).
 - (a) Finished act: in New Testament times God has spoken in “Son” language.
 - (b) Period (full stop).
- 7. Benefits of the Bible—profitable for:
 - a). Teaching: doctrine (correct ideas about any particular subject). NB. Ideas have consequences.
 - b). Reproof: exposes areas in your thinking and acting that are not reflective of the standards revealed in God’s word.
 - c). Correction: reveals steps to take to adjust your thinking and acting.
 - d). Training in righteousness: handbook for living.
- 8. Purpose of the Bible: to equip the man of God for *every* good work.
- C. A Christian’s view of Scripture: *sola scriptura* (solely Scripture) and *tota scriptura* (totally Scripture).
 - 1. Scripture is necessary; absolutely needed.
 - a). Corrects our sinful and/or inaccurate thinking and practice.
 - b). Shows *the* way of salvation.
 - 2. Scripture is sufficient; enough to meet *all* of our needs.
 - a). No Pope (church authority) needed.
 - b). No new revelations needed.
 - c). No new experiences needed.
 - d). Shows us how to please and glorify God.
 - 3. Scripture is clear in what it teaches (perspicuity).
 - a). It clearly shows the way of salvation; its basic message is clear.
 - b). There are difficult passages, but Scripture does interpret itself.
 - 4. Scripture is authoritative; it is the final, objective standard whereby our thought, intentions, and actions are to be judged.
 - 5. Scripture is infallible.
 - a). Incapable of error.
 - b). “Thy word is truth.”
 - c). We do not judge Scripture; it is Scripture that judges us.
 - 6. Scripture is inerrant.
 - a). Free from error.
 - b). Does not reveal any error about any subject.

III. My attitude toward the Word of God.

- A. I am made in God’s image; redeemed by grace through faith in Christ.
 - 1. I am able to hear God speak in His word (given ears to hear).
 - 2. I can understand God’s word.
- B. Keep the following in perspective. How does God reveal Himself?
 - 1. *Not* by vision.
 - a). You can forget it.
 - b). It can be easily embellished.
 - 2. *Not* by subjective sensations (feelings).
 - a). Do *not* seek experiences.

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- b). Your experiences and feelings are always subject to change.
- 3. Absolute, objective revelation: a book.
 - a). It is there no matter how I feel.
 - b). It is to be studied and pondered (II Timothy 2:15).
 - (1) Meant to be read through to get its "feeling."
 - (2) Every word means something in the context in which it was written.
 - (3) Consider the *whole*, not the isolated parts.
 - c). God, my Creator and Redeemer, has revealed Himself to me in His Word.
 - (1) God has told me all I *need* to know in His word.
 - (2) His Word reveals to me who I am.
 - (3) His Word reveals to me creational matters:
 - (a) The beginning of the universe.
 - (b) The nature of the universe.
 - (c) God's plan for history.
 - (d) The goal of history.
- C. Is the Bible to be approached solely as a devotional manual?
 - 1. Quotes to ponder.
 - a). James B. Jordan, "The modern tendency is to read the Bible only to find out what it says to men as individuals. The Scripture is consulted only to find out what the Bible says to *me*, about *me*, for *me*, and so forth. Clearly there is nothing wrong with this in itself, but it produces a warped view of the Bible if this is the *only* way it is read. The Bible, God's written revelation, speaks not only about individual matters, but also about social and cosmic (creational) matters as well. This is because the Bible, while it is *man-oriented*, is *God-centered*."
 - b). Rousas J. Rushdoony, "Too often, the modern theologian and churchman goes to the Bible seeking insight, not orders ... when I go to the Bible I must go to hear God's marching orders for my life. I cannot treat the Bible as a devotional manual designed to give me peace of mind or a "higher plane" of living; it is a command book which can disturb my peace with its orders, and it tells me that I can only find peace in obeying the Almighty. The Bible is not an inspirational book for my personal edification, nor a book of beautiful thoughts and insights for my pleasure. It is the word of the sovereign and Almighty God; I must hear and obey, I must believe and be faithful, because God requires it. I am His property, and His absolute possession. There can be nothing better than that."
 - 2. Order of priorities: a Biblical Christian combines the rigor of scholarship with the fervor of devotion (to what? obedience).
 - a). We seek to let God transform our personal lives through Bible study.
 - (1) Be a scholar: What does this passage mean?
 - (2) Be devotional: How can I apply this passage to my life?
 - (3) Two extremes that plague the church today: undevotional theology and untheological devotion.
 - b). Then, we seek to apply God's word to broader issues: family, church, society, vocation, etc. The Bible is relevant to all of life because it speaks to all of life.
 - (1) Psalm 36:9.
 - (2) Proverbs 1:7; 8:14-21.

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(3) Psalm 1; 119:128.

IV. Inductive Bible Study.

- A. Reasoning from particular facts to a general rule or principle.
1. Do not come to the Word with pre-conceived ideas.
 - a). Common evangelical notions: “If you say something enough, it must be true!”
 - (1) Advice: turn off the TV/radio preachers.
 - (2) The majority of them speak from this “evangelical ghetto.”
 - (3) Most are just parroting what they have been taught.
 - b). Denominational traditions; if you are going to be serious about Bible study, then realize that some of your “sacred cows” are going to be sacrificed; that is the price you will have to pay for being a diligent student of Scripture.
 - c). “I’ve always been taught that!”
 - d). We bring much cultural and religious baggage to the Bible (more than we would think).
 2. Come to the Word to discover what God is saying, not what I think He is saying or what my denomination says He is saying.
 - a). Do not impose your ideas and your twentieth century culture onto Scripture.
 - b). Let Scripture judge you, your ideas, and your culture, not vice versa.
 - c). Be a detective.
 - d). This takes *time*.
- B. We are transformed *not* by visions, revelations, feelings, or experiences; we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2; I Peter 1:13-15). Therefore, THINK!

V. Practical suggestions.

- A. Need to set aside some time each day (First things first).
1. Do we spend five minutes a day in the Bible, and 2-3 hours a day watching TV? Come on now, where are our priorities?
 2. Pull back from the voices of the world.
 3. Be still and hear what God is saying.
- B. Get a notebook to keep a record of the interaction between God and yourself.
- C. How to “be still and know that God is God.”
1. Redirect all thoughts to be centered on God by praise and thanksgiving (Psalm 100:4).
 2. In praise we become aware and sensitive to His presence (Psalm 22:3).
 3. Put *content* to your worship.
 - a). Who God is.
 - b). Promises He has made.
 - c). What He has done.
 4. Write your own psalms of praise to God.

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Reading the Bible

I. Importance of understanding how the Bible is organized.

- A. Do we start by reading the Bible from “cover to cover”? No.
- B. Note the genre¹¹ used; much of the Bible is classified according to its genre. You must know how the Bible is organized or you will get lost.
 - 1. Poetry and wisdom.
 - 2. Historical narrative.
 - 3. Letters (epistles): contains instruction and correction.
 - 4. Prophetic writings.
- C. Guidelines to observe when reading the Bible.
 - 1. *Not* originally written in English.
 - 2. Old Testament written in Hebrew (except for small portions of Daniel written in Aramaic).
 - a). Note the Hebraic picture forms and symbols.
 - (1) I Samuel 9:15.
 - (a) Picture: uncovering the ear.
 - (b) Meaning: hearing.
 - (2) Isaiah 2:2.
 - (a) Picture: Nations streaming up (against the law of gravity) to a high mountain.
 - (b) Meaning: People responding to life in a way that is totally opposite and in contradiction to the “normal” (sinful) way of responding.
 - b). Very concrete language.
 - 3. New Testament written in Greek.
 - a). Very precise and scientific language.
 - (1) Chosen by God to reveal the salvation that is in His Son, Jesus.
 - (2) Greek has a word for just about every shade of meaning.
 - b). *Koine*: the language of the common man of the marketplace.
 - 4. Realize that a gap of understanding exists between the twentieth century and Bible times.
 - a). R. C. Sproul, “The better I understand the first century culture of Palestine, the easier it becomes for me to have an accurate understanding of what was being said.”
 - b). How to bridge this gap:
 - (1) Know customs and manners of Hebrew and Greek world: God speaks through historical situations and circumstances.
 - (2) Know the country of Israel: God speaks through mountains, valleys, and animal life of this land.
 - (3) Know the temperament of the men of the Bible: Who did God use to say this?
- D. *Suggested* Bible reading plan for newcomers. Take the whole in “bite” sizes first.
 - 1. Mark: short, action-packed summary of the heart of the story (the life of Christ).
 - 2. Luke: written for Gentiles.
 - 3. Romans: doctrinal foundation (a classic in systematic theology).
 - 4. Genesis & Exodus: Early history of God’s people.
 - 5. Isaiah: prophetic anticipation of the Messiah.

¹¹The type of literature. Particular rules of interpretation apply to each kind of writing.

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6. Matthew or John (written for Jews).
7. Acts: foundation of the church.
8. I Peter, I, II, & III John: a taste of other apostolic literature.
9. Pauline epistles: in historical order.
10. Revelation: New Testament prophetic book.
11. Psalms and Proverbs: wisdom literature.

E. After this introductory reading, then you can read the Bible “from cover to cover.”

II. Outline of the Bible.

A. Old Testament.

1. Law (first five books: Pentateuch).
2. Genesis: origin of the world, man, and Israel.
3. Exodus: Liberation of Israel from Egyptian bondage.
4. Leviticus: Laws for the priests of Israel.
5. Numbers: Wilderness wanderings of the Israelites.
6. Deuteronomy: Law preparing Israel for entry into the Promised Land.
7. History.
 - a). Joshua: conquest of Canaan.
 - b). Judges: Early history of life in the land of promise. Cycles of:
 - (1) Disobedience.
 - (2) Punishment.
 - (3) Deliverance.
 - c). Ruth: birth of David, Messianic line.
 - d). I & II Samuel: Story of Samuel and David.
8. I & II Kings: Division of northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms.
9. I & II Chronicles.
 - (1) Retells the story of David and Solomon.
 - (2) II Chronicles: history of Judah.
10. Ezra: Return from captivity and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.
11. Nehemiah: Return from captivity and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem.
12. Esther: story of a Jewish girl who saves her people while in Persia.
13. Prophets.
 - a). Major (in length).
 - (1) Isaiah: Babylonian captivity of Judah and anticipating of the suffering Servant to come.
 - (2) Jeremiah: God’s covenantal curse against the city of Jerusalem.
 - (3) Lamentations: Jeremiah’s cry about the desolation of Jerusalem.
 - (4) Ezekiel: God’s word to Judah (the promise of restoration to those in exile in Babylon).
 - (5) Daniel: God’s word to pagan kings while in exile in Babylon.
 - b). Minor (in length).
 - (1) Pre-exilic.
 - (a) Hosea: Israel is an adulterous wife, but will be restored.
 - (b) Joel: Tells of the coming day of the Lord and the outpouring of the Spirit.
 - (c) Amos: apostasy of Israel and the future glory that God promises.
 - (d) Obadiah: Judgment against Edom (descendants of Esau).

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- (e) Jonah: Call to Ninevah (capital of Assyrian Empire) to repent.
- (f) Nahum: Judgment on Ninevah.
- (g) Micah: Messiah's coming birth and universal reign (a contemporary of Isaiah).
- (h) Habakkuk: Why is a wicked nation (Chaldeans or Babylonians) allowed to punish God's wicked people?
- (i) Zephaniah: Judgment of Judah and glorious days to follow.
- (2) Post-exilic:
 - (a) Haggai: Call to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
 - (b) Zechariah: Night visions about the coming Messiah and His kingdom.
 - (c) Malachi: Disobedience of God's people who came back to the Promised Land.
- c). Wisdom literature.
 - (1) Job: Sovereignty of God in life and creation. NB. Job, an Edomite, was a contemporary of Abraham.
 - (2) Psalms: Prayers and praises to God.
 - (a) Written mostly by David.
 - (b) They reflect his life experiences (I & II Samuel).
 - (3) Proverbs: a collection of wise sayings authored mostly by Solomon, David's son.
 - (4) Ecclesiastes: Solomon's account of the vanity of life through various pursuits.
 - (5) Song of Solomon: Story of Solomon's harem and loves.
- B. New Testament.
 - 1. History.
 - a). Matthew: Christ portrayed as the King of the Jews.
 - b). Mark: Christ portrayed as the wonder working Redeemer.
 - c). Luke: Christ portrayed as the Savior of men.
 - d). John: Christ portrayed as the Son of God.
 - e). Acts: Establishment of Christ's kingdom (from Jerusalem to Rome).
 - 2. Epistles (letters).
 - a). Pauline.
 - (1) Romans: justification by faith.
 - (2) I Corinthians: Disorders in the church.
 - (3) II Corinthians: Vindication of Paul's apostolic credentials.
 - (4) Galatians: Salvation by grace alone, not by works of the law as taught by the Judaizers (first epistle written by Paul).
 - (5) Ephesians: Unity of the church.
 - (6) Philippians: Joy in Christ.
 - (7) Colossians: Pre-eminence of Christ as God Himself.
 - (8) I Thessalonians: The return of Christ.
 - (9) II Thessalonians: Day of the Lord and coming apostasy.
 - (10) I Timothy: Pastoral advice to Timothy.
 - (11) II Timothy: Final words of Paul; deals with the life of the church.
 - (12) Titus: Pastoral instructions.
 - (13) Philemon: Treatment of a converted, runaway slave.
 - b). General.
 - (1) Hebrews: Proclaims the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant so that these Hebrews would not go back to Judaism.

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- (2) James: New Testament proverbs (how to live by wise and good works).
 - (3) I Peter: Prepares the church for coming persecution (by Nero Caesar).
 - (4) II Peter: Apostasy in the church and the coming of the Lord.
 - (5) I John: Love and obedience are the marks of a Christian.
 - (6) II & III John: Deals with false teachers.
 - (7) Jude: Deals with apostates and false teachers.
3. Prophecy: Revelation.
 - a). Triumph of God's kingdom over all His enemies.
 - b). Written before 70 AD.

III. Chronology of the Bible.

A. Old Testament.

1. Genesis (Job).
2. Exodus.
3. Leviticus.
4. Numbers.
5. Deuteronomy.
6. Joshua.
7. Judges.
8. Ruth.
9. I Samuel (Psalms).
10. II Samuel.
 - a). Psalms.
 - b). I Chronicles.
11. I & II Kings.
 - a). II Chronicles.
 - b). Proverbs.
 - c). Ecclesiastes.
 - d). Song of Solomon.
12. See attached chart for how the prophets fit into the history books.

B. New Testament (most of it, if not all of it, written before AD 70).

1. Birth of Christ (3 BC).
2. Passover, crucifixion, ascension of Christ, and Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit (30 AD).
3. Stephen martyred and conversion of Saul of Tarsus (32-33 AD).
4. First visit of Paul to Jerusalem (35 AD).
5. Paul brought to Antioch by Barnabas (43 AD).
6. Paul and Barnabas visit Jerusalem with relief for the brethren in time of famine (45 AD).
7. Famine at its worst (46 AD).
8. Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas (47-49 AD).
9. First church council at Jerusalem (49 AD).
10. Paul's second missionary journey with Silas (50-53 AD).
 - a). Galatians (probably the first NT book written): 49 AD.
 - b). James (may have been the first NT book written): late 40s (at height of famine) or early 50s.
 - c). I Thessalonians: 50 AD.

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- d). Jews driven out of Rome (50 AD).
- e). II Thessalonians: 51 AD.
11. Paul's third missionary journey (53-57 AD).
 - a). I Corinthians: 55 AD.
 - b). II Corinthians: 56 AD.
 - c). Romans: 57 AD.
12. Gospel of John Mark: late 50s with the help of Peter.
13. Paul sails for Rome (59-62 AD) and writes the prison epistles.
 - a). Gospel of Luke: 60 AD with Paul in Rome.
 - b). Philemon: 60 AD.
 - c). Colossians: 60 AD.
 - d). Ephesians: 60 AD.
 - e). Philippians: 61 AD.
14. Paul journeys to Macedonia, Asia Minor, and perhaps Spain (63-66 AD).
 - a). I Timothy: 62 AD from Macedonia.
 - b). Titus: 62 AD from Nicopolis.
 - c). Luke writes Acts: 63 AD.
 - d). First letter of Peter (63 AD) from Babylon (Rome) with John Mark.
 - e). Gospel of Matthew: mid 60s from Antioch (Syria).
 - f). Jude: mid 60s.
 - g). The great Neronian persecution begins (64 AD).
15. Second letter of Peter (66 or 67 AD) written just before his death at the order of Nero Caesar.
16. II Timothy: 67 or 68 AD
 - a). Paul's last letter from his second stint in a Roman prison.
 - b). Written hours before his death at the order of Nero Caesar.
 - c). Beheaded with the sword, "without the gate," on the road to Ostia.
17. Hebrews (late 60s) by a second generation Christian author.
18. Gospel of John (late 60s or early 80s) from Ephesus.
19. First, second, & third letters of John (late 60s or early 80s) from Ephesus.
20. Revelation of John (late 60s) from the island of Patmos (banished there by Nero Caesar).
21. 70 AD: the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies.

IV. Bible time line.

A. Promise–root–shadow.

1. Genesis 3:15–key to whole Bible
 - a). Organic prophecy of the Coming One.
 - b). Enemy defeated/Seed of woman victorious motif.
 - c). The rest of Scripture unfolds and extends the meaning of this promise.
2. Patriarchs: one man over whole family; the unfolding of the promise (Genesis 18:18).
3. Exodus: little families become a great nation.
4. Joshua, Judges, I Samuel: entrance into the land (the theater on which the whole drama would be enacted).
5. II Samuel 7:12–David's seed to build a house for God; an everlasting kingdom.
6. Prophets *fit into* history books: expand on the idea of the coming kingdom, its nature and its King (Isaiah 7:14; 53:4-5).

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7. Malachi: Sun of righteousness to rise with healing in His rays.
 8. 400 years of silence.
 9. Birth of Christ, the coming One (Matthew 1:18-21¹²; 8:16-17)
 10. John the Baptist: The kingdom is *at hand*.
 11. Jesus: The kingdom is in your midst (He is the focal point of the Old Testament; He is the apex of the kingdom of God).
 12. New Covenant in His blood (Jeremiah 31): new order of things is about to burst upon the world.
- B. Fulfillment—flower—substance.
1. Acts.
 - a). The kingdom has come (19:8-20; 28:23); it has happened. What? all Old Testament predictions concerning the coming of the kingdom.
 - b). Paul was in jail because he taught that the Old Testament had been fulfilled in Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (5:29-42; 6:10-14; 7:54-60; 9:22-23, 29; 11:2; 13:45, 50; 14:2, 19; 17:5; 18:12-13; 21:27-31).
 2. Epistles: *fit into* Acts I Corinthians 16:22, Paul declares “Maranatha.”¹³

¹²Jesus means “Jehovah-Savior.”

¹³Meaning: Our Lord is come.

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Practical preparation for Bible study

I. Bible versions: Which one(s) should we use?

A. Manuscripts.

1. We do not have the autographs (self writing).
2. We have many apographs¹⁴ (away from, i.e., copied writing).
 - a). The preservation of the text.
 - (1) As Biblical Christians we believe the God providentially preserved the original text of Scripture through the copying process.
 - (2) Westminster Confession of Faith¹⁵ (chapter 1, *Of the Holy Scripture*, paragraph VIII), “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right unto, and interest in, the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the language of every people unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.”
 - b). Copying process.
 - (1) Old and well-worn copies were deliberately destroyed¹⁶ when new copies were made from them (a tradition handed down from Jewish scribes).
 - (2) Corrupt copies (with errors, omissions, etc.) were “put away on the shelf.”¹⁷
 - c). Some very ancient copies¹⁸ have escaped decay and destruction for the simple reason that they were not regarded as accurate enough for copying purposes or for common use.¹⁹
 - (1) It is these manuscripts that have been used by modern scholars²⁰ (since 1881) as a

¹⁴According to the scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon, there are about 4,489 Greek New Testament manuscripts known to be extant (in existence): 170 papyrus fragments (dating from C2 to C7), 212 uncial (all CAPS) manuscripts (C4 to C10), 2,429 minuscule (cursive) manuscripts (C9 to C16), and 1,678 lectionaries (lesson books for public reading containing extracts from the New Testament).

¹⁵This is the “confession of faith” used by most Presbyterian churches. The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 says exactly the same thing.

¹⁶To prevent them from getting in the hands of infidels or heretics.

¹⁷Why not destroyed? Those who corrupted them (e.g. Marcion, Origen) hid them so that they would not be destroyed. Some survived. God preserved the truth, but Satan is always active (under God’s control) to pervert the truth.

¹⁸Particularly the Codex Vaticanus (B) and the Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph).

¹⁹In this case, the maxim, “Older is better,” does *not* apply. Why accept the reading of 2 manuscripts when over 900 agree? What kind of logic is this? This is an example of presuppositional bias - a man’s faith determines how he views the facts. The “cultural atmosphere” governing most Bible scholars of late C19 (note Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* was published in 1859) permeated with a pre-commitment to rationalism and naturalism (man’s mind is the judge; all facts and processes can be explained in naturalistic terms). In contrast, the “cultural atmosphere” governing most Bible scholars of early C17 was permeated by a pre-commitment to revelation and supernaturalism.

²⁰The Greek text was developed in the mid-nineteenth century primarily by two brilliant, but Biblically unorthodox, Greek “textual critics”; namely Bishop Brooke Foss Westcott and Dr. Fenton John Hort. Both men questioned the divine inspiration of Scripture and approached Scripture on purely naturalistic grounds (treat it like any other ancient book). Both also embraced the theory of evolution (theistic); a conviction that governed their view of the “progression” of the New Testament Greek texts, not the preservation of their integrity by the providential hand of God through His church, the priesthood of believers.

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basis to correct and revise²¹ the New Testament Greek text (called the Textus Receptus or the received text) used by the translators of the KJV in 1611.²²

(2) The Masoretic text²³ is the basis for the Old Testament translation.

B. King James Version of 1611 (KJV or AV or Authorized Version).

1. Positive.

- a). Highly regarded version.
- b). Majestic in style; a masterpiece of literary excellence.
- c). Composed by Bible believing scholars.
- d). The foundation of modern western civilization (economics, government, law, etc.).

2. Negative.

- a). Archaic vocabulary and form (e.g., thee, thou, havest, etc.).²⁴
 - (1) Can be a problem.
 - (2) Can be hard to read and understand.
 - (3) More examples:
 - (a) Mark 6:25, “by and by”—at once.
 - (b) Acts 21:15, “carriages”—baggage.
 - (c) Mark 6:25, “charger”—platter.
 - (d) I Corinthians 13:1, “charity”—love.
 - (e) Mark 6:21, “chief estates”—chief men.
 - (f) Matthew 2:16, “coasts”—borders.
 - (g) Galatians 1:13, “conversation”—conduct.
 - (h) Acts 17:23, “devotions”—objects of worship.
 - (i) II Corinthians 8:1, “do you to wit”—make known to you.
 - (j) Acts 28:13, “fetched a compass”—circled.
 - (k) Psalm 4:2; 5:6, “leasing”—lying.
 - (l) II Thessalonians 2:7, “let”—restrain.
 - (m) I Peter 2:5, “lively”—living.
 - (n) Matthew 3:4, “meat”—food.
 - (o) I Timothy 5:4 “nephews”—grandchildren.
 - (p) I Thessalonians 4:15, “prevent”—precede.
 - (q) Luke 14:7-10, “room”—seat, place.
 - (r) Matthew 10:10, “scrip”—bag.
 - (s) Matthew 6:25, “take no thought”—be not anxious.
- b). The New Testament was written in *Koine* Greek, the language of the *marketplace*.
 - (1) The translators of the KJV tried to develop a “timeless Biblical English” that transcended the ornate and affected diction of the literature of the time.
 - (2) This translation set the standard for literary works to follow.

²¹Not just corrections (e.g. I Timothy 3:16), but actual deletions occur; e.g., John 7:53-8:11 and Mark 16:9f.

²² Approximately 85% of the Greek text developed by Westcott and Hort is the same as the Received Greek text. However, the additions/deletions to the remaining 15% of the text is *not* insignificant.

²³The Masoretes were a group of Jewish scholars that made it their business to copy and preserve the Old Testament text for 500 years beginning in the 6th century AD! They succeeded Hebrew scribes who succeeded the Hebrew priests (after AD 70) that copied and preserved the Old Testament from the beginning of its writing. They were meticulous in their copying techniques (e.g., counted every letter and looked at each and every word first before copying it). They had a stringent quality control program (more than 4 errors ⇒ start over!)

²⁴These expressions were colloquial for the time. Some words used distract us from the real meaning (e.g. John 14:2 - mansions vs. abiding places, II Corinthians 5:17 - he is a new creature vs. new creation). Other words enhance the meaning (the castle “keep” of I Peter 1:5).

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- c). Some scholars say we have a better²⁵ manuscript tradition now (cf. 1611). *This is, of course, a statement open for serious debate.* These scholars posit:
 - (1) Subsequent manuscript discoveries have corrected some errors (made the translation more accurate) in this version.
 - (2) Not built on the best manuscript evidence available to us.
- C. New King James Version of 1982 (NKJV).
 1. Enhances readability by removing the archaic language and updating some other words (e.g., the “mansions” of John 14:2 are now rightly called “dwelling places.”)
 2. Built upon the same manuscript background as the KJV (the *Textus Receptus*).
 3. The marginal notes indicate the changes/deletions made by the Westcott/Hort Greek text (identified as NU).
 4. Example from Luke.
 - a). 22:19-20, “*which is given for you*” through “*is shed for you.*”
 - b). 24:3, “*of the Lord Jesus.*”
 - c). 24:6, “*He is not here but is risen.*”
 - d). 24:12 – whole verse omitted.
 - e). 24:36, “*and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*”
 - f). 24:40, “*And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet.*”
 - g). 24:51, “*and was carried up into heaven.*”
 - h). 24:52, “*worshipped Him.*”
- D. Revised Version of 1881 (RV).
 1. Positive: presumed “updated” manuscript evidence.
 2. Negative.
 - a). Kept archaic forms of expression.
 - b). Composed by men with mixed theological commitment.²⁶
 - c). Uses the new Greek text²⁷ developed by Westcott and Hort (in C19).
- E. American Standard Version of 1901 (ASV).
 1. Positive.
 - a). Composed by a team of scholars that were predominately sound theologically.
 - b). Not pedantic.
 - c). *Great* cross-reference system.
 - d). Good study Bible if used in conjunction with the KJV.
 - e). Current edition has a good Bible Dictionary and concordance along with the text of Scripture.
 2. Negative.
 - a). Based upon the 1881 Revised version.
 - b). Uses archaic language.
 - c). Translates LORD (YHWH) in Old Testament as “Jehovah.” This takes a little getting used to.
 - d). Hard to get.
 - (1) Most people have never heard of it.

²⁵Older, i.e. the 4th century Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. Their preservation over the centuries was primarily due to the fact that vellum (lamb or calf skin) was used as the paper source.

²⁶Westcott and Hort, because of their academic and textual credentials, forced the revisers to use their Greek text.

²⁷Based upon the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus.

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(2) Obtainable through Star Bible Publishers, Ft. Worth, TX 76182.

F. Revised Standard Version of 1948 (RSV).

1. Positive: nil.
2. Negative.
 - a). Much to be desired in its theological accuracy.
 - b). The scholars who composed this version did *not* believe in the deity of Christ; they embraced theological liberalism.
 - c). Stay away from this version as a study Bible.

G. New English Bible of 1961 (NEB).

1. Positive: nil.
2. Negative.
 - a). “English” diction.
 - b). Based upon RSV.
 - c). Not theologically accurate.

H. New American Standard Bible of 1970 (NASB).

1. Positive.
 - a). Composed by men committed to the inspiration of Scripture.
 - b). No archaic expressions.
2. Negative.
 - a). Questionable manuscript foundation.
 - b). Too pedantic (not that readable). NB. English syntax does not equal Greek syntax.
 - c). Questionable passages are slanted to a particular theological school of thought; i.e., dispensationalism.
 - d). Cross reference system is inferior to ASV.

I. New International Version of 1978 (NIV).

1. Positive.
 - a). Very readable.
 - b). Composed by evangelicals.
2. Negative.
 - a). Questionable manuscript foundation.
 - b). Alterations made for readability.
 - (1) E.g. the word “propitiation” not found.
 - (2) Underplays (dumbs down) the intelligence of the reader.
 - c). Some passages are interpretive paraphrases (dynamic equivalence).
 - (1) Paraphrases are a retelling of the text.
 - (2) This retelling always comes through a theological grid.
 - (3) This is why the Living Bible (TLB) is a “no-no” as a study Bible (and a reading Bible).
 - d). Poor choice for a study Bible where details are important.

J. Good study Bibles.

1. *New Geneva Study Bible* (NKJV)****: scholarly study notes that reflect reformation theology.
2. *International Inductive Study Bible* (IISB)*.
 - a). Comes only in the NASB and NIV versions, not in KJV or NKJV.
 - b). Designed by Kay Arthur of Precept Ministries; it does have a theological bias (i.e., dispensationalism).

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3. ASV*: great for cross reference work.
4. *NIV Study Bible* (Zondervan).

K. Recommendations: Have two Bibles:

1. A reading Bible (NKJV).
2. A study Bible (ASV [for its cross references], KJV, or NKJV).
3. Always have a copy of the KJV or NKJV around for reference and standard for textual variations.

II. Basic books to have in your library.

A. The importance of having the necessary tools.

1. Example: backpacking—Should I just go out into the woods alone (without training and proper equipment)? No, if you do, then you are a fool.
2. If you are serious about backpacking, then you will:
 - a). Learn from seasoned, qualified, and experience backpackers (personally or through books). R.C. Sproul, “Private study and interpretation must be balanced by the collective wisdom of teachers.”
 - b). Purchase the necessary equipment.
 - (1) Good intentions are not enough.
 - (2) Make a budget and buy these tools.
 - c). Try a few hikes with those more experienced.
 - (1) Consult with others about your interpretation.
 - (2) Do it and seek counsel.
 - d). Then, and only then, can you try it on your own or lead others. Teach others to do the same.
3. Solemn warnings.
 - a). Jeremiah 23:25-32.
 - b). James 3:1.

B. Historical background and understanding (bridges the gap between our times and Bible times).

NB. * indicates a “must have.” 📖 indicates “highly recommended for purchase.”

1. Bible Dictionary*.
 - a). *New Bible Dictionary* 📖 (InterVarsity Press), by J. D. Douglas.
 - b). *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Moody Press), by Merrill F. Unger.
 - c). *Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible* (Zondervan), 5 vols., edited by M. C. Tenney.
2. Other resources.
 - a). *Major Cities of the Biblical World* (Thomas Nelson), by R. K. Harrison.
 - b). *Handbook of Old Testament Rulers and Cities* and *Handbook of New Testament Rulers and Cities* (Accent Books), by Charles Ludwig.
 - c). *Eerdman’s Bible Handbook* (Eerdmans), by David Alexander, ed.
 - d). *Halley’s Bible Handbook* (Zondervan), by H. H. Halley.
 - e). *New Testament Survey* (Eerdmans), by M. C. Tenney.
 - f). *The Apostle: A Life of Paul* 📖 (Victor Books), by John Pollock.
 - g). *Strange Scriptures that perplex the Western Mind* (Eerdmans), by Barbara Bowen.
 - h). *The World of the First Christians* (Lion Publishing), by Edwin Yamauchi.
 - i). Any book by Alfred Edersheim 📖, all published by Eerdmans.
 - (1) *Old Testament History*.
 - (2) *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.

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(3) *The Temple*.

(4) *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*.

C. Concordance*: Hebrew/Greek word study help

1. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* 📖 (Baker Book House), by James Strong. NB. keyed to KJV.
2. *Young's Literal Concordance to the Bible*, by William Young.
3. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* 📖 (MacDonald), by William E. Vine.
4. *Old Testament Word Studies* (Kregel), by William Wilson.
5. *Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Baker Book House), by Joseph Thayer.
6. *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Baker Book House), by Gesenius (translated by S.P Tregelles).
7. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Eerdmans), by Geoffrey Bromiley.
8. *New Testament Words* 📖 (Westminster Press), by William Barclay.

D. Topical Bible.

1. *Nave's Topical Bible* 📖 (Guardian Press), by Orville J. Nave.
2. ASV 📖 has a superb cross reference system.
3. *Thompson Chain Reference Bible*, by Thompson.

E. Bible Atlas.

1. *Baker's Bible Atlas* (Baker Book House), by Charles F. Pfeiffer
2. *Oxford Bible Atlas*.

F. Guides to help with interpretation.

1. *Biblical Hermeneutics* 📖 (Zondervan), by Milton Terry.
2. *Exegetical Fallacies* (Baker Book House), by D. A. Carson.
3. *Knowing Scripture* (InterVarsity Press), by R. C. Sproul.
4. *Methodical Bible Study* (Asbury Theological Seminary), by Robert A. Traina.

G. Commentaries. NB. Use as a last, not first, resort.

1. *Tyndale Bible Commentary Series* (basic introduction).
2. *New International Bible Commentary Series* (for detailed).

H. Dictionary of Theology (capstone of your study): *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* gives a fair treatment of controversial issues.

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How to read a book

I. Know what the book is *saying*.

A. Read it *aloud*.

1. The way the Jews and early Christians read until 400 AD.
2. Ecclesiastes 4:12 (three fold cord).
 - a). Eyes see.
 - b). Mouth speaks.
 - c). Ears hear.

B. Read it through many, many times.

1. We begin to hear what God is saying by doing this.
2. Read with your journal beside you.
3. Jot down questions (by asking questions, you will find answers).
4. Note any insights.

II. Questions to ask as you read.

A. Who wrote this? The human author is part of God's word.

B. When did the writer write this? Note the historical situation.

C. What kind of mood (emotions) was the writer in when he wrote this?

1. Philippians (joy).
2. Jeremiah (sadness).
3. Isaiah (triumphant).
4. II Corinthians (sarcastic, battling).

D. How much space does the writer give to the subject?

1. One main idea is the key to the whole book.
2. What word is continually emphasized?
3. Hebrews (better).
4. I Peter (suffering and glory).

E. What kind of book is this? Note the genre.

1. Plain narrative? Gospels.
2. Poetry? Psalms.
3. Letter? Ephesians, Romans.
4. History? Acts, I & II Samuel.
5. Prophecy? Revelation, parts of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.

F. Divisions: Note main outline and main points.

III. Take your *time*.

A. You are not in a 100 meter race.

B. Do not be in a hurry, but do not go so slow that you become bored.

C. Do not allow yourself to be pressured by schedules of Bible reading.

IV. Write out what you feel the book is saying in one paragraph.

Model: Ephesians

Who wrote it?

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NB. Look to Acts (it forms the historical background for all of Paul's letters).

When? In prison. *Where?*

Where is Ephesus?

What contact did Paul have with Ephesus?

Why did he write it? See 3:1-3.

Why did he write it to the Ephesians in particular? Jews arrested him there.

Why did the Ephesian Jews hate him? Gentiles in the kingdom.

What is his mood? jubilant.

Outline? 4:1 ⇒ 1-3 (calling).

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How to observe a passage

I. Commands of Scripture.

A. Proverbs

1. 2:1-5.
 - a). Do I know how to “see” what is there?
 - b). I need to train my eyes to search out every word that is there.
2. 4:5-7—the beginning of wisdom is to have the desire to find it.
3. 6:20-22—to bind the Word of God around you means a total giving of yourself to it.

B. You must understand what the Bible says before you can say what the Bible means.

II. Learning to use your spiritual eyes and ears.

A. Never assume anything.

1. John 12:28-29.
2. People assumed that any noise from above is thunder.

B. Two ways of reading the Word.

1. Exegesis (to guide out of): let God speak out of it.
2. Eisegesis (to guide into): you speak into the Word your own preconceived ideas.²⁸

C. Never leave a stone unturned: be a *true* detective.

1. Open your eyes to see.
2. Open your mind to *question*.

III. Questions to ask of a passage; these questions will wake us up to hear what is there.

A. Any important words here?

B. What do these words mean?

C. What does the writer mean when he uses this word? Any shades of meaning?

1. Romans (Paul): Faith is resting in what God has done (justification).
2. James (James): Faith without works it is dead (justification \Leftrightarrow vindication).
3. Hebrews (author questionable, maybe by a group): Faith is reaching out; looking ahead toward the end.

D. Are any figures of speech used?

1. Simile (Latin: similes).
 - a). Two apparently unlike things compared.
 - b). The word “as” or “like” is used.
 - c). Modern example: He is as quick as a flash!
 - d). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Matthew 10:16.
 - (2) Matthew 13:31.
 - (3) Isaiah 57:20.
 - (4) Jeremiah 23:29.
2. Metaphor (Greek: meta + pharo ... to carry from one thing to another).
 - a). A word that is applied to something for which it does not literally stand.
 - b). The word “as” or “like” is *not* used; it is a direct assertion.
 - c). Modern examples.

²⁸Beware of newspaper eisegesis. e.g. “War in the Middle East! Wow! The end is near!”

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- (1) “You dirty rat!”
- (2) “That car is a lemon.”
- d). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Genesis 49:9.
 - (2) John 10:9.
 - (3) John 14:6.
 - (4) John 15:5 (cf. Jeremiah 2:21²⁹).
3. Personification.
 - a). Where inanimate things are referred to as if they have human (personal) qualities.
 - b). Modern example: “That car sure eats up the road!”
 - c). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Jeremiah 55:12.
 - (2) Matthew 6:34.
4. Anthropomorphism (Greek: man + form ... attributing human form to God or animals).
 - a). Isaiah 59:1.
 - b). Psalms 103:12.
5. Hyperbole: exaggeration or magnification beyond reality (Psalms 6:6).
6. Interrogation.
 - a). Questions method.
 - (1) Important truths are expressed by interrogation.
 - (2) The implication being they are undisputed truths.
 - b). Modern example: Ain’t I the boss of this gang?
 - c). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Romans 3:1.
 - (2) Romans 6:1.
 - (3) Romans 8:35-39.
 - (4) Romans 9:21.
 - (5) John 3:10.
7. Euphemism (Greek: sounding well; spoken in a kindly spirit).
 - a). An indirect word or phrase because the writer wants to avoid sounding harsh, distasteful, or offensive.
 - b). Modern example: He is less than honest.
 - c). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Acts 1:24, 25.
 - (2) Leviticus 18:6 (sexual relations).
8. Metonymy (Greek: meta + onoma ... name change).
 - a). A thing is designated by the name of something else that is closely associated with it.
 - b). Modern example: “The White House says”
 - c). Biblical examples:
 - (1) The cause is referred to rather than the effect.
 - (a) Luke 24:27.³⁰
 - (b) Luke 16:29.
 - (2) Adjunct: secondary idea or circumstance is put for the main subject and vice versa.

²⁹Figurative language is where something is said about a thing that is at variance with its nature.

³⁰The author is named instead of his writings.

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- (a) Exodus 12:21.
 - (b) Ezekiel 36:1.³¹
 - (3) The sign for the thing signified (I Corinthians 1:18³²).
 - 9. Synecdoche (Greek: sun + ek + dexomai ... to receive out from).
 - a). Metonymy deals with a mental relationship, synecdoche deals with a material or physical relationship.
 - b). Modern example: "All hands on deck!"
 - c). Biblical examples.
 - (1) The part for the whole.
 - (a) Acts 27:37.³³
 - (b) Revelation 20:4.
 - (2) The whole for the part: Matthew 3:5.³⁴
 - (3) The material for the thing.
 - (a) Psalms 46:9.
 - (b) Micah 4:3.
 - (c) Joel 3:10.³⁵
 - 10. Litotes (Greek: smooth, simple, plain).
 - a). Something that is expressed with a negative statement to declare an affirmative truth.
 - b). Modern example: "Not a few came to the party."
 - c). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Acts 1:5.³⁶
 - (2) I Thessalonians 2:15.
 - 11. Repetition.
 - a). Used to stress a thought.
 - b). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Acts 2:30.
 - (2) Revelation 14:8.
 - (3) Revelation 4:8.
 - 12. Irony.
 - a). To denote the exact opposite of what is declared.
 - b). Biblical example: Matthew 27:30.
- E. Any figures of thought used?
- 1. Summary (Hebrews 8:1).
 - 2. General followed by particular (Matthew 6:1-2).
 - 3. Note parallelisms.
 - a). Synonymous: same idea express by restating it with the same or nearly the same words.
 - (1) Proverbs 6:2.
 - (2) Psalms 78:10.
 - (3) Proverbs 19:5.

³¹The mountains - the dwelling place of the Israelites (something closely associated with them) - is named, instead of the people.

³²The Cross signifies Christ's atoning death for His people.

³³276 persons, not disembodied spirits!

³⁴Meaning many, but not every single inhabitant!

³⁵Meaning: God will end war.

³⁶Meaning: soon.

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- (4) Psalms 95:6.
- (5) Matthew 6:13.
- (6) Numbers 6:24-26.
- b). Antithetic³⁷: contrasting ideas in one sentence.
 - (1) Proverbs 14:34.
 - (2) Proverbs 13:1.
 - (3) Proverbs 10:4.
 - (4) Isaiah 45:6-7
 - (5) Matthew 7:24-27.
- c). Synthetic:
 - (1) Correspondent: agreement of related sentences.
 - (a) Psalms 27:1.
 - (b) 1st and 3rd.
 - (c) 2nd and 4th.
 - (2) Cumulative: variation of words and ideas accumulate and build to a climax (Psalms 1:1-3).
4. Climax of a passage (look for “then” or “therefore”).
5. Parable (Greek: para + ballo ... to throw alongside of).
 - a). Definition.
 - (1) An extended simile (often introduced by the word “as” or “like.”
 - (2) The illustration of some truth using daily life or nature.
 - (3) A parable is always confined to realistic facts and experiences, but not necessarily an historical event.
 - b). Why used? Matthew 13:3, 10-17, 43³⁸ (cf. Isaiah 6:9-10).
 - (1) To reveal truth to believers.
 - (2) To conceal truth from scoffers.
 - c). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Isaiah 5.
 - (2) Matthew 21:33-46.
 - (3) Matthew 13:31-33.
6. Allegory (Greek: allos + agoredo ... to speak in another fashion).
 - a). An extended metaphor.
 - b). It may contain its interpretation within itself.
 - c). Uses words in a metaphorical sense.
 - d). Biblical examples.
 - (1) I Corinthians 3:10-16.
 - (2) Ephesians 6:10-18 (soldier allegory. NB. self-interpreting).
 - (3) John 15 (vine/branches allegory).
 - (4) Proverbs 5:15f (fountain allegory).
 - (5) Psalms 80:8f (vine allegory).
 - (6) I Corinthians 5 (leaven allegory).
 - (7) Galatians 4:21-31 (Sarah/Hagar allegory ⇔ old/new covenants).
7. Fable (English/French).

³⁷Compound: two or more sentences for each antithesis (Isaiah 1:3).

³⁸Early in His ministry, Jesus spoke to the people plainly and directly. When opposition arose, He changed his style and used parables.

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- a). A story drawn from nature where inanimate things and animals portray human actions and ideas.
 - b). Fables (like editorial cartoons) lend themselves to irony, sarcasm, and ridicule.
 - c). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Judges 9:7-20.³⁹
 - (2) II Kings 14:9.⁴⁰
8. Riddle.
- a). Hebrew: to tie in knots mentally.
 - b). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Judges 14:14.
 - (2) Genesis 4:23-24.
 - (3) Revelation 13:18.
9. Enigma (Greek: darkly).
- a). Used for spiritual sayings or heavenly revelation.
 - b). Biblical examples.
 - (1) I Corinthians 13:12.
 - (2) John 3:3.
 - (3) John 4:10, 32.
10. Symbols (Greek: *sum + ballo ... to throw with or together*).
- a). Spiritual truth in visible form, either visionary or material.
 - b). Biblical example: Genesis 9:9-17.
11. Typology (Greek: *tupos ... the result of a blow*).
- a). Use in the New Testament.
 - (1) Mark (John 20:27).
 - (2) Image: coins punched (*tupos*) with an image.
 - (3) A model or pattern: that which has received an image or impression and can serve as a mold or a pattern for a future reproduction.
 - b). A divinely purposed Old Testament shadow of a New Testament reality (may be a person, event, object, institution, place, or office).
 - c). Biblical example: Romans 5:12-21.
12. Analogy (Greek: according to + ratio ... similarity, partial resemblance).
- a). Comparing one thing to another.
 - b). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Isaiah 1:18.
 - (2) Jeremiah 35:14.
 - (3) Matthew 7:9-11.
13. Motif (French: to move).
- a). A main theme or subject to be elaborated on or developed.
 - b). Biblical examples.
 - (1) Genesis 3:15.⁴¹
 - (2) Judges 4:17-22.
 - (3) Job 40:12.

³⁹Abimelech is portrayed as the bramble.

⁴⁰Judah challenges Israel to submit or be destroyed. In the battle that ensued (v. 12), Judah was defeated.

⁴¹Also an example of organic prophecy.

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- (4) Psalms 44:5.
- (5) Malachi 4:3.
- (6) Romans 16:20.

F. Is this a prophecy?

1. Prophet: (Hebrew) to boil forth; to gush out; to flow as a fountain (II Peter 1:21).
2. Definition: the proclamation of that which God has revealed.
 - a). Received by prophets:
 - (1) Dreams.
 - (2) Visions.
 - (3) Inner communications.
 - (4) Oral communications.
 - b). Delivered by prophets to the people by:
 - (1) Describing dreams/visions.
 - (2) Verbally repeating or writing it.
 - (3) Symbolic actions.
3. Questions to ask of the text.
 - a). The text itself.
 - (1) What symbols are used, if any?
 - (2) Look for general usage of similar symbols in other passages of Scripture.
 - b). Historic setting.
 - (1) Note the prophet's situation and mission.
 - (2) To whom is the message directed?
 - (3) Does the prophecy take the form of a promise or warning?
 - c). Other Scriptures.
 - (1) Is the prophecy divinely interpreted elsewhere?
 - (2) Is the prophecy already fulfilled or is it still future?

G. What is the mood of the author?

1. Sarcasm (I Corinthians 4:8-10).
2. Anger (Galatians 1:1).
3. Incredulity (Galatians 3:1).

H. What would this passage mean to those who first read it?

1. *Very* important.
2. False teaching and cults "take off" by not recognizing this rule.
 - a). II Thessalonians 2:1f (the man of sin).
 - b). Matthew 24:34 (this generation shall not pass away ...).
3. Read the book of Revelation in this light and your interpretation will be correct.

I. Situation of the writer. Where is this man at spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and geographically?

J. Situation of the readers. Where are they at spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and geographically?

K. Use your imagination (be emphatic in your reading).

1. Hear Jesus talk to *you* through the ears of the disciples.
2. Be an Ephesian and hear Paul expound the gospel to *you*.

L. Go over the tone of the words.

M. Six questions that will teach you:

1. Where?
2. When?

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3. Who?
4. What?
5. How?
6. Why?

N. Then say “so what?”

1. What are the implications?
2. What is the relevance?
3. What would I have written?

Model: Ephesians 2:19-22

- v. 19 So then ⇒ summary or climax.
speaking figuratively, i.e. people ⇔ stones in a building
Who is *you*?
What is a stranger and alien? What does Paul mean here?
No longer ⇒ something has happened to them. Therefore, what were they now?
Fellow-citizens? What are the implications of citizenship?
Saints? What? Who?
Household of God?
- v. 20 *having been built*. Note the tense. Why?
apostles? prophets?
How are they a foundation of what is being built?
Chief cornerstone? Jesus?
tense of verbs are passive. How did that happen?
- v. 21 whole building?
How are stones fitted together?
How can a building *grow*?
Holy temple? “in the Lord”? is?
- v. 22 you *also*?
being built together (passive)
a dwelling, not *the* dwelling?
dwelling of God?
are being?
in the Spirit vs. in the Lord?

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How to interpret a passage

I. Answer your questions.

- A. Rely on the Holy Spirit (John 6:45).
- B. A passage of Scripture can have *only* one correct meaning.
- C. Use other books to help, i.e., tools for Bible study.
- D. Try not to rely on a commentary (use it as a last resort).

II. Write a paragraph summing your data and check it out with the whole book.

III. This type of analysis will be difficult.

- A. It will open up other sections of Scripture.
- B. The Holy Spirit will help you to renew your brain.
- C. You can do it!

IV. Some guidelines for interpreting Scripture.

- A. Do not interpret the Bible as if it dropped out of the sky and into our time (e.g. II Timothy 3:1f).
 1. Paul was writing to Timothy about a crisis occurring in the first century, not our time, and he told him what to do about it (cf. v. 5, 14).
 2. “in these last days” (cf. I Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:17f).
 3. In order for me to correctly hear God’s word, I must move from my time to the first century; God will speak to me as I hear Paul speak to Timothy.
 4. Paul is *not* speaking to Timothy about our time (if the shoe “fits” in our time, then wear it), but do not say that our time is what Paul was talking to Timothy about!
- B. Four problems that many Christians have with interpreting the Bible.
 1. Not understanding the Scriptural and historical context of the words being used.
 - a). John 14:1-3.
 - b). Matthew 24:34
 - c). II Thessalonians 2:1f.
 2. Not reading enough.
 - a). II Timothy 3.
 - b). John 14:1-3, 15-16.
 - c). Romans 12:13-13:5.
 3. Reading into Scripture what you think it says.
 4. Not comparing Scripture with Scripture.
 - a). Matthew 7:13-14.
 - b). Luke 13:23-30.
- C. Note the “Spaghetti” principle.
 1. The “now and the not yet.”
 2. Principle defined:
 - a). Definitive: you have it.
 - b). Progressive: there is more to come.
 - c). Final: you have it all.
 3. Examples:
 - a). Salvation.
 - (1) Definitive: Ephesians 2:5.
 - (2) Progressive: I Corinthians 15:2.

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- (3) Final: Matthew 10:22.
 - b). Sanctification.
 - (1) Definitive: Jude 1; I Corinthians 7:14; Hebrews 10:14.
 - (2) Progressive: Romans 8:13; I Thessalonians 4:3; Philippians 2:13.
 - (3) Final: Hebrews 12:23; Romans 8:30; Revelation 14:5.
 - c). God's kingdom.
 - (1) Definitive: Mark 1:15; Psalms 2:6.
 - (2) Progressive: Psalms 110; Isaiah 9:7.
 - (3) Final: Is. 11:9; Revelation 21-22.
 - d). Satan's defeat.
 - (1) Definitive: John 12:31; Hebrews 2:14.
 - (2) Progressive: I John 5:4-5; Romans 16:20.
 - (3) Final: Revelation 20:7-10.
- D. Pay attention to "sensus literalis."
1. Pay attention to the *littera* or to the letters and words being used; rules of grammar, speech, syntax, and context.
 2. Pay attention to the genre of the passage (type of literature).
- E. Scripture will interpret itself.
1. "Sacra Scriptura sui interpretis" (Sacred Scripture is its own interpreter).
 2. R. C. Sproul, "No part of Scripture can be interpreted in such a way as to render it in conflict with what is clearly taught elsewhere in Scripture."
 3. The unclear is to be interpreted by the clear.
 - a). Unclear: Colossians 1:15.⁴²
 - b). Clear: John 1:1-3.⁴³
- F. Determine *carefully* the meaning of words.
1. The same word can have different meanings *according to the context*.
 2. Examples:
 - a). Leaven: does it always represent evil? (cf. Matthew 13:33).
 - b). Justification by faith (Romans) vs. justification by works (James)
 - c). Coming (Greek: *parousia*) of Christ.
 - (1) May refer to His coming to judge a nation (the way is used in the Old Testament; see Isaiah 19:1f) or the physical return of Jesus at the end of time.
 - (2) The context will determine the usage.
 - (3) *Key interpretive principle*: where the text mentions the resurrection of the body along with the *parousia* of Christ, you can be certain that it refers to the physical return of Jesus at the end of time.
- G. Interpreting parables.
1. Guidelines.
 - a). Note the historic settings and occasion.
 - b). Note the story itself.
 - c). Look for the main truth.
 2. Biblical examples.
 - a). Isaiah 5.

⁴²Used by Arius, Greek theologian of Alexandria (280-336 AD), to attack the divinity of Christ.

⁴³First-born is a Messianic title of Christ (Psalms 2:7; 89:27, Hebrews 1:6) and indicates preeminence.

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- (1) Historic setting: In Isaiah 1, the whole house of Israel is called to task for its unfaithfulness to God.
 - (2) Story: The owner of the vineyard has taken great care in cultivating the land, planting a very fruitful vine, etc. But, instead of bringing forth good grapes, it produced wild grapes.
 - (3) Main truth: God punishes unfaithfulness. In this case He will withdraw divine protection, exposing His people to natural and military judgments.
- b). Matthew 21:33-46.
- (1) Historic setting: After cleansing the temple, the Jewish leaders challenge the authority of Jesus. Note the previous parable (21:28-32).
 - (2) Story: The vineyard of a householder is left in charge of husbandmen, who, when the owner sent servants to receive the fruits of his vineyard, beat and killed them. Finally they killed the master's son hoping to seize his inheritance for themselves. For this the wicked husbandmen would be evicted and the vineyard given to others.
 - (3) Main truth: 21:43-45. Other texts: Luke 21, Acts 11:18; Galatians 3:29.
- c). Matthew 13:33.
- (1) Historic setting: Parables of the kingdom (13:1-52).
 - (2) Story: The kingdom is compared to yeast in bread ... it expands to fill the whole loaf.
 - (3) Main truth: the fullness of the internal growth of the kingdom. Christianity is an inside-out faith (cf. Philippians 2:13; I Corinthians 10:31; 3:22-23).
- d). Matthew 13:31-32.
- (1) Historic setting: same as v. 33.
 - (2) Story: The kingdom is compared to a small seed that grows to become a large tree.
 - (3) Main truth: God's kingdom will enjoy great growth externally.

H. Interpreting allegories.

1. Guidelines.
 - a). Has one central truth (like a parable).
 - b). Warning: subject to misuse! Be careful (e.g., Origen).
2. Biblical examples.
 - a). I Corinthians 3:10-16 (building allegory).
 - (1) Imagery: Two buildings erected on one foundation (Jesus). When tested by fire, one is destroyed (wood, hay, stubble) and the other remains (gold, silver, precious stones).
 - (2) Central truth.
 - (a) Setting: Paul writing to carnal babes in Christ.
 - (b) Application: to church leaders (v. 5, 9): there is something wrong with the way the congregation is being built.
 - (i) Carelessness in admitting members.
 - (ii) Teaching erroneous doctrine and no discipline under the Word.
 - b). Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 (old house allegory).
 - (1) Imagery: v. 3 (keepers: arms and hands), v. 3 (grinders: teeth), v. 4 (rise up at the voice of a bird: insomnia).
 - (2) Central truth: v. 1 ... a youth is warned to fear God so that old age will not be an

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utter ruin.

I. Interpreting symbols.

1. Rules for interpreting.
 - a). First understand them literally.
 - b). Stand for something quite different from themselves.
 - c). Some connection, more or less, is traceable between the symbol and the thing symbolized.
2. Biblical examples.
 - a). Heavenly bodies.
 - (1) Angels.
 - (a) Job 38:7f.
 - (b) Isaiah 14:12.
 - (c) Revelation 8:10.
 - (d) Revelation 9:1.
 - (e) Revelation 12:4.
 - (f) Jesus, angel of Jehovah (Exodus 6:3; John 8:58) is referred to as a “star” (Revelation 2:28; II Peter 1:19).
 - (2) God’s people.
 - (a) Revelation 1:16, 20.
 - (b) Revelation 12:1-2.
 - (3) Nations.
 - (a) Isaiah 13:1, 10.
 - (b) Isaiah 13.
 - (c) Isaiah 24:23.
 - (d) Isaiah 30:26.
 - (e) Ezekiel 32:2, 7-8.
 - (f) Joel 2:17-32.
 - (4) Family: Genesis 37:1-10.⁴⁴
 - b). Rainbow: Genesis 9:9-17.
 - c). Lord’s supper: Mark 14:24.⁴⁵
 - d). Numbers.⁴⁶
 - (1) 7: completion, perfection, totality.
 - (a) Genesis 41:2f.
 - (b) Revelation 1:4.
 - (2) 12: God’s people.
 - (a) Genesis 49:29.
 - (b) Exodus 28:21.
 - (c) Matthew 10:1.
 - (d) Revelation 21:12, 14.
 - (3) 40: testing or judgment.
 - (a) Genesis 7:4.
 - (b) Deuteronomy 25:3.

⁴⁴Fulfilled in Genesis 42-47.

⁴⁵Cup symbolizes Christ’s atoning death.

⁴⁶Warning: not all numbers are meant to be symbols.

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- (c) Numbers 14:34.
- (d) Deuteronomy 8:1-5.
- (e) Matthew 4:2.
- (4) 4: Fullness of the earth.
 - (a) Jeremiah 49:36.
 - (b) Ezekiel 37:9.
 - (c) Isaiah 11:12.
 - (d) Luke 13:239.
 - (e) Revelation 7:1.
- (5) 3: Triune nature of God.
 - (a) Isaiah 6:3.
 - (b) Matthew 28:19.
 - (c) II Corinthians 13:14.
 - (d) Revelation 4:8.

e). Clothing.

- (1) Isaiah 64:6.
- (2) Revelation 19:8.

f). Water.⁴⁷

- (1) John 7:37-39.
- (2) Acts 2:17.

J. Interpreting types.

1. Rules of interpreting types.

- a). Find the *main* point of the resemblance between the type and the antitype (the type's fulfillment).
- b). There must be Scriptural evidence that the type was designed by God to represent the antitype. Mere resemblance is not enough.
- c). The type must prefigure something in the future (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1).

2. Biblical examples.

- a). Adam ⇒ Christ (Romans 5:12-21).
- b). Brazen serpent in the wilderness ⇒ Cross of Christ.
 - (1) Numbers 21:4-9.
 - (2) John 3:14-15.
- c). Passover lamb ⇒ Christ, the Lamb of God.
 - (1) Exodus 12:3-13.
 - (2) I Corinthians 5:1-8.
- d). Elijah ⇒ John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11-14).
- e). Abraham, justified by faith ⇒ all believers.
 - (1) Romans 4:9.
 - (2) Romans 3:28.
- f). Sacrificial lamb ⇒ Christ.
 - (1) Leviticus 17:11.
 - (2) I Peter 1:19.
 - (3) Hebrews 9:28.

⁴⁷Can refer to the Holy Spirit or the Word of God.

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- g). The Sabbath ⇒ Believers spiritual rest.
 - (1) Exodus 20:8-11.
 - (2) Hebrews 4:9.
- h). High priest ⇒ Christ.
 - (1) Hebrews 4:14.
 - (2) Hebrews 9:12.
- i). Melchizedek, king of righteousness ⇒ Christ (Hebrews 7:2).
- j). Moses ⇒ Christ (Deuteronomy 18:15).
- k). Jonah's experience ⇒ Christ's resurrection (Matthew 12:39).
- l). Isaiah wearing a yoke ⇒ Sign to nations of conquest (Jeremiah 27:1-14).

K. Interpreting the Psalms.

- 1. Genre: lyrical poetry.
- 2. Written in response to historical circumstances and personal experiences.
- 3. They instruct God's people of all ages.
- 4. Types.
 - a). Messianic.
 - (1) Directly refer to Christ.
 - (a) Psalm 2
 - (b) Psalm 22.
 - (c) Psalm 45.
 - (d) Psalm 110.
 - (2) Indirectly refer to Christ (Psalm 72, Psalm 89): note type (King) and antitype (Jesus).
 - b). Imprecatory.
 - (1) Imprecate (Latin): to pray for evil or to invoke a curse on God's enemies.
 - (2) Examples (Psalm 109, Psalm 137).
 - (3) Application.
 - (a) We are to love our enemies and hate God's enemies.
 - (b) Why are these Psalms strange to our ears? Do we know God as David knew Him?
 - (c) God often destroys His enemies by converting them (Psalms 83:16; Saul).
 - (d) Pray against God's enemies to be:
 - (i) Transformed by the Gospel (Romans 5:10).
 - (ii) Discredited or removed.
 - (e) Motive: the glory of God (vindication of His Name) and the protection of His church (Revelation 6:10; Revelation 8:3-5).
 - c). Rules for interpreting the Psalms.
 - (1) Note the historic occasion (Psalm 3, 32, 51, 63).
 - (2) Study the character and life of the author (David).
 - (3) Consider that these words are utterances of a redeemed heart and that they reveal God's will.

L. Interpreting prophetic passages.

- 1. Correct interpretation depends upon your mastery of figurative language, symbols and types ... and an understanding of Biblical visions and dreams.

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2. May apply to three time zones.⁴⁸
 - a). Explain the past: history. e.g., Acts 7 (Stephen is giving a prophecy that explains the past; he also relates it to the present)
 - b). Address the present: now. e.g., II Samuel 12. Nathan, a prophet, used a parable to convict David of his sin.
 - c). Disclose the future. e.g., Isaiah 11:9. NB. symbols used.
 - (1) Mountain: symbol of a kingdom (cf. Hebrews 12:22).
 - (2) “As” (simile): a comparison of the way water covers the sea (completely) to worldwide knowledge of the Lord.
3. Note carefully the difference between the spirit and the letter: literal or spiritual fulfillment.⁴⁹
 - a). Letter: Christ born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
 - b). Spirit: John the Baptist is the fulfillment of the prophesied coming of Elijah (Malachi 4:5-6; John 1:19-28; Mark 9:12-13; Matthew 11:13-15; Luke 1:17).
4. Biblical examples.
 - a). Short term: I Kings 21:17-23 (fulfilled in I Kings 22:34-39).
 - b). Organic: Genesis 3:15 (refer to Bible time line).
 - c). Jeremiah’s prophecy of the 70 years of Babylonian Captivity.
 - (1) The text.
 - (a) Jeremiah 25:11; 70 years of desolation (literal).
 - (b) cf. Jeremiah 19:1-13; a symbolic description of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon.
 - (2) Historic setting
 - (a) Jeremiah is very unpopular with the rulers because of his message (Jeremiah 38:6).
 - (b) He is a prophet to Judah and surrounding nations.
 - (c) His message is one of rebuke and warning.
 - (3) Other Scriptures
 - (a) See later part of Jeremiah for fulfillment of these words
 - (b) See also Daniel 9:2.

M. Note cultural/custom distinctives in the text.

1. Guidelines.
 - a). Examine the Bible itself for apparent areas of custom.
 - b). Allow for Jewish and early Christian distinctives.
 - c). Creation ordinances are indicators of a transcultural principle (e.g. Matthew 19:4-6).
 - d). Be humble in areas of uncertainty.
 - e). Obey the spiritual principle reflected by the custom that is practiced.⁵⁰
2. Examples.
 - a). Evangelism (Luke 10:4).
 - (1) We wear shoes now! Do we buy some sandals?

⁴⁸Prophecy is *not* “history written in advance.”

⁴⁹The Bible will interpret itself with regard to this difference. Sometimes a prophecy is fulfilled in the letter (Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem) and other times a prophecy is fulfilled in the spirit (i.e. not literally; John was a literal person, but he fulfilled the prophecy of the coming of Elijah in Malachi 4:5-6 by ministering in the spirit of Elijah according to Luke 1:17).

⁵⁰This is how you apply the many laws (including case laws) of the Old Testament, e.g., put a railing on the top of your house (Deuteronomy 22:8). Apply the spirit of the law to modern times.

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- (2) Principle: a commitment to evangelism when it may be inconvenient.
- b). Good Samaritan (Luke 10:37).
 - (1) Do likewise \Rightarrow get a donkey?
 - (2) Principle: be prepared practically and spiritually to take care of the needy.
- c). Hair covering (I Corinthians 11:2-16).
 - (1) Entirely custom.
 - (a) No covering \Rightarrow a prostitute.
 - (b) Covering (Jewish custom) \Rightarrow under man's protective headship.
 - (2) Entirely principle.
 - (a) Women must be submissive to men during prayer.
 - (b) Women must always give a sign of that submission by covering their heads.
 - (c) Women must cover their heads with a view as the only appropriate sign.
 - (3) Partly principle/partly custom.
 - (a) Principle: female submission to protective headship of the male.
 - (b) Expression of this headship is customary; i.e. required only if customary.
 - (4) Partly principle: the symbolic act of some type of covering must occur in every culture.
- d). Foot washing (John 13:15).
 - (1) We wear shoes now and travel in automobiles.
 - (2) A household servant was assigned the duty to wash the feet of guests (to remove the dirt and dust).
 - (3) Principle: Practically and humbly serve one another at their point of need.
- e). Greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26; I Peter 5:14).
 - (1) Typical Jewish custom.
 - (2) The early church appropriated it as a greeting of brotherly love and affection.
 - (3) Due to persecution, this appreciation for each other was intensified. You might not see each other again!
 - (4) Principle: we need to cultivate a sincere and warm appreciation for our brothers and sisters in Christ because we will be spending eternity with them!

V. Why are there so many different interpretations of Scripture?

A. Areas of difference.

- 1. Sacraments (ordinances). e.g., baptism (Baptistic vs. Presbyterian).
- 2. Church government. e.g., elders (presbytery) vs. congregationalism.
- 3. Eschatology. e.g., different view on the end times.
- 4. Soteriology (doctrine of salvation). e.g., different views on the extent and nature of Christ's atonement.
- 5. Spiritual gifts. e.g., the validity of all the spiritual gifts for today.

B. Answers.

- 1. Modern skepticism: The Bible is full of contradictions and is not clear in its message.
- 2. Roman Catholicism.
 - a). Scripture is insufficiently clear (agrees with the modern skeptic)
 - b). The authority vested in the Church settles all interpretive disputes.

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3. Common reason (excuse) given by Protestants.⁵¹
 - a). “In the essentials unity; in the non-essentials charity.”
 - b). Who determines what is essential and what is non-essential?
 - c). Remember: Ideas have consequences.
 - d). However, keep the spirit of charity and peace when faced with different interpretations of the same Scripture passage.
- C. A Biblical theology of doctrinal controversy.
 1. God’s word is clear (perspicuity).
 2. Doctrinal controversy is included in God’s plan for His church (I Corinthians 11:19).
 - a). Factions (heresies) bring the blessing of clearer understanding to God’s people.
 - b). The Holy Spirit uses factions and heretical interpretations within the church as vehicles for doctrinal advance, bringing God’s people a greater maturity in distinguishing truth from error.
 - c). Old Testament view of false prophets: Deuteronomy 13:1-3.⁵²
 - d). We now see through a “mirror darkly” (I Corinthians 13:12): only the resurrection will bring final clarity.
 - e). Until then, we can expect factions to press God’s people toward continual reformation.
 3. Disunity results as God’s chastisement for our unfaithfulness.
 - a). Note the solemn warning of Amos 8:11-12; the absence of *hearing* God’s word brings about doctrinal confusion.
 - b). Note also Zechariah 7:8-14; Proverbs 1:20-28.⁵³
- D. How to handle doctrinal controversies.
 1. In areas of doctrinal confusion, we must agree that God has *not* removed our obstacles to understanding His word.
 2. Our present-day confusion evidences a famine of hearing God’s word.
 3. We must repent:
 - a). Of our refusal to hear.
 - b). Of our hardness of heart.
 - c). Of our vested interest in our interpretations.
 4. Only as the church corporate (trans-denominational) repents can we expect God to remove our corporate inability to hear His word.
 - a). This repentance will result in a new reformation.
 - b). Today’s factions will become tomorrow’s clarity.

Model: Ephesians 2:19-22

- v. 19 So then ⇒ whole book moving towards this.
- alien ⇒ different in quality or nature (at one time a Gentile) at worst.
- stranger ⇒ not a citizen, but live at location; God-fearers, tolerated by Jews at best.
- fellow-citizens (of true Israel) ⇒ you have your citizenship papers.
- with saints ⇒ all other members of true Israel (company of set apart people).
- God’s household ⇒ house mates of God; an “insider”; live inside God’s house.

⁵¹A major reason why there are different interpretations is the failure to apply sound principles of interpretation.

⁵²How many in the church today prefer to follow signs and wonders rather than the truth?

⁵³Our doctrinal confusion may continue long after we realize what we have done wrong.

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are ⇒ now.

- v. 20 apostles (means “sent ones”) & prophets (means to “speak forth on behalf of God”) are the foundation of the church. The men who held these offices in the NT wrote the objective word of God which is the foundation of our faith. NB. A foundation, by the very nature of the case, is laid but once, while the superstructure may be erected over a long period of time.

Jesus Christ, the cornerstone ⇒ stone which holds whole building together; point where everything is measured.

Passive tense ⇒ someone else (God) is doing the building (I will build My Church).

- v. 21. building (holy temple) ⇒ *naos* (Greek: holy of holies); sanctuary; innermost place where the immediate presence of God’s glory dwells.

fitted together ⇒ built together.

is growing ⇒ not yet complete.

holy ⇒ set apart.

in the Lord ⇒ in union with the Lord; tied to (vital, personal relationship with Jesus Christ).

now ⇒ present tense.

- v. 22 you also ⇒ specific (you in Ephesus)
together

a dwelling, not *the*, of God in the Spirit ⇒ The Gentiles have been built into the new temple and they, along with believing Jews, form the ultimate of God’s purposes: the holy of holies on the earth.

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How to correlate a passage

I. Take other parts of the Bible and co-relate them together.

- A. The Bible is ONE book.
- B. Be aware of how this passage relates to the whole Bible.

II. Review Bible time line.

III. Correlation between Old Testament and New Testament.

- A. To interpret the New Testament as if no Old Testament: error.
- B. To interpret the Old Testament as if no New Testament: error.
- C. The best commentary on the Old Testament is the New Testament.
- D. The best commentary on the New Testament is the Old Testament.
- E. Note: The New Testament is constantly quoted from, or alluding to, the Old Testament (I Peter 2:4-10).

IV. Beware and listen for echoes of the Old Testament in the New Testament: this is *significant*.

- A. John 1:29 (Leviticus).
- B. John 6:35 (Exodus and the provision of manna).
- C. John 10:14 (Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Isaiah 40:11, Micah 7:14).
- D. John 15:1 (Psalm 80:8; Ezekiel 19:10; Isaiah 5:1).
- E. John 3: Jesus talked about water, wind, and Spirit (Ezekiel 36 & 37).

V. God will pull your mind out to its fullest in studying the Bible.

- A. You are *not* actually studying the Scripture but holding it.
 - 1. Viewing it from every angle.
 - 2. Turning its passages over and over again to hear what God is saying.
- B. You are waiting upon the Lord.
 - 1. Expecting Him to break in with an explanation or flood your mind with light.
 - 2. When He does, write it down or you will lose it.

VI. What every passage has a relationship to.

- A. The immediate context.
- B. The historical and cultural context.
- C. The whole book.
- D. All other books within its testament.
- E. All other books within the other testament.
- F. The whole Bible.

VII. The focal point of all Scripture is the Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. The Church is close behind; you cannot have Jesus without His body, the Church.
- B. Get this straight and everything falls in line; it is the “first button on the shirt.”

Model: Ephesians 2:19-22

v. 19 so then ... (theme or purpose) ⇒ flower of chapters 1 & 2

v. 19 points to 4:1-3. Therefore...

5:1 Therefore ... ⇒ every verse relates to every other verse.

Galatians 3. Heard this before?

I Peter 2:4-10. Heard this before?

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Revelation 5:9-10. Flower (promise of Genesis 3:15 [root] made to every tribe, tongue, and nation).

Isaiah 2:1-4. *All nations in Mount Zion.*

Temple (Old Testament echo).

Naos: holy of holies ... Day of Atonement

Hebrews 10:20. Veil *broken*.

John 14:6. I am the way.

I Peter 2 (Psalm 118:23).

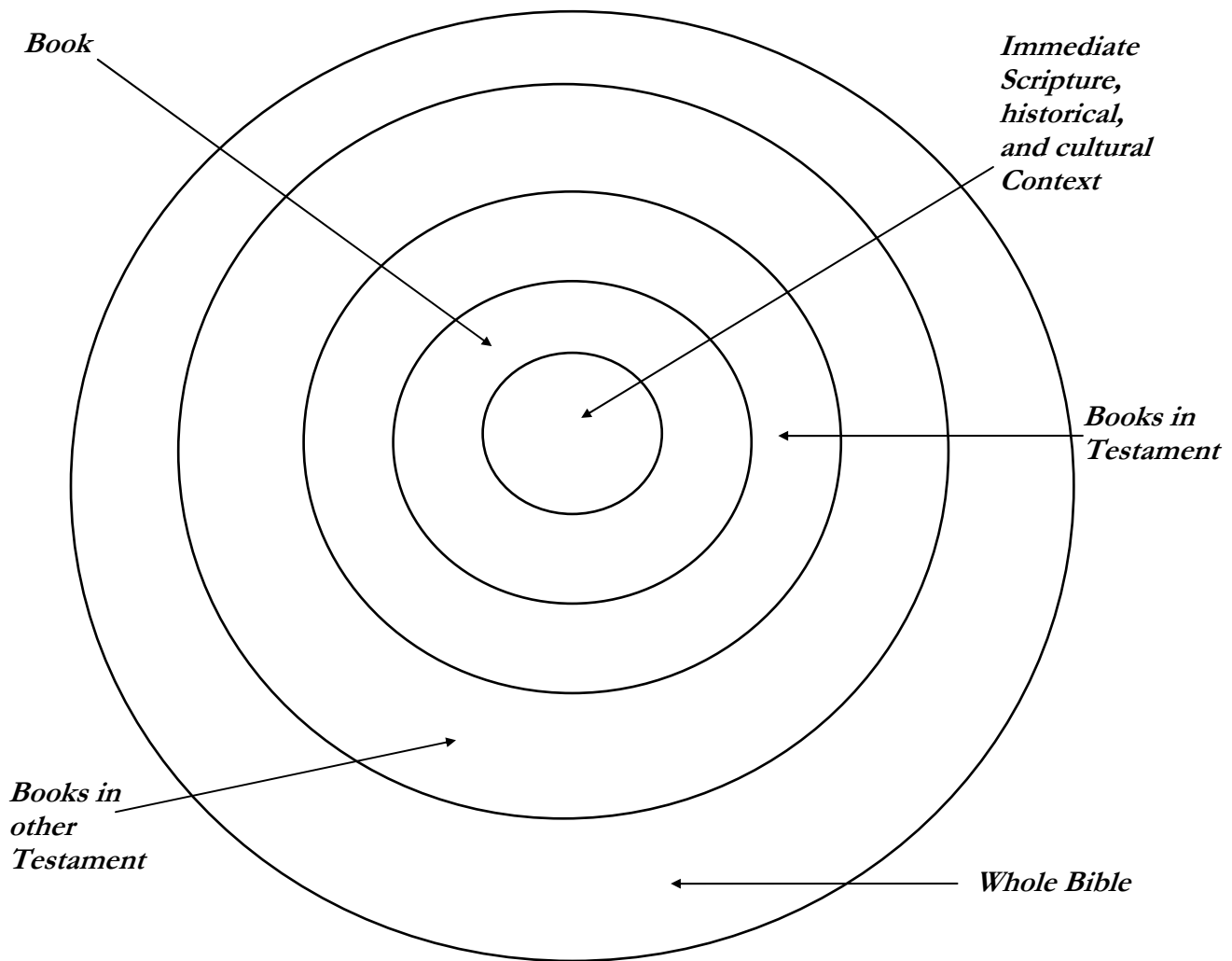
I Kings 6-9. How the temple was built (holy of holies a cube).

Mount Zion: dwelling of God (naos).

II Samuel 7. Build a house.

Hebrews 3. Whose house we are.

Revelation 21. New Jerusalem (a cube) ⇔ holy of holies (Hebrews 12:22).



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How to apply a passage

I. A response is *always* necessary.

- A. Most important; must learn to apply the passage to our own personal lives or it will be just “puffed up” intellectual knowledge (James 1:22-25).
- B. Key to applying the passage: look at what God receives—glory. The Holy Spirit’s ministry is to glorify Christ.
 - 1. Confession.
 - 2. Praise.
 - 3. Prayer.
 - 4. Intercession.
 - 5. Change of mind or thought pattern.
 - 6. Change of lifestyle.
 - 7. Action.
- C. Seek to apply the passage *beyond* yourself (family, church, culture) *after* you have applied the passage to yourself.

II. Practical suggestions.

- A. The Bible was not written *to* us; it was written *for* us.
- B. If the background so indicates, read the passage as if it were written exclusively to you *as a member of the church at Ephesus*.
 - 1. How does this apply to my own personal life?
 - 2. Must respond in *specifics*.
 - 3. How does this apply to my personal walk with God; i.e. new discoveries about His character, ways, plans, etc.
- C. A passage of Scripture can have many applications (only one meaning).
- D. What does this passage do to my world view?
 - 1. Who God is.
 - 2. Who I am.
 - 3. Why I am here.
 - 4. Where I am going.
 - 5. How the universe came into being.
 - 6. How the universe *works*.
 - 7. Where history is going.
 - 8. How I should then live.
 - 9. How my knowledge about the world is affected.
- E. Become aware; turn the Word of God over and over in your mind.
- F. Dare to believe that God can speak truth to you.
 - 1. Your thinking will be challenged.
 - 2. Your traditions (denominational blinders) will be challenged.
 - 3. Don’t be afraid if doubts or questions come into your mind.
 - a). This is true faith in the making.
 - b). You are working out your salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12-13).
- G. Carry a notebook with you wherever you go.
 - 1. God will speak to you in and through everyday situations.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit will take what you have learned in study and show you applications in the

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real world as you live your life for His glory.

H. Find an illustration in real life upon which you can hang truth on.

1. Note the parables of Jesus.
2. You will never forget truth that you:
 - a). Apply.
 - (1) Personal transformation.
 - (2) Public transformation.
 - b). Illustrate.
 - c). Teach others (II Timothy 2:2; Ezra 7:10).

Model: Ephesians

I was an alien, completely on the outside.

I need a radical change \Rightarrow humbling to my pride and self-sufficiency.

I am now on the inside (the household of God).

How did God put me there?

Ephesians 1:3-6. Father planned it (chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world).

Ephesians 1:7-12. Son accomplished it (redemption).

Ephesians 1:13-14. Holy Spirit sealed it (redemption applied).

Now, I'm a part of God's holy of holies.

People, not places, are sacred (set apart).

We do not "come" into His presence; we live there!

We bring the presence of God with us wherever we go (Exodus 33:14).

The church "assembles," but we never "go to church."

I belong to a holy nation; what glory, privilege, and responsibility!

The "new man" transcends all races, rank, and sex; unity based upon faith in Jesus Christ and sound doctrine regarding His finished work securing redemption for His people, true dignity in the kingdom of God.

I am a member of the new Israel; Old Testament (shadow) pointing to reality (life in the Holy Spirit).

Building in the *process* of growing (mustard seed, leaven) and it will eventually fill the whole earth.

See architect's plan (Revelation 21); His mind \Rightarrow we can better cope with the building site which is at times a mess.

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Conclusion

- I. **Goal of Bible study: to bring about a new lifestyle that is aligned to God's word.**
 - A. Spoken into our spirits by the Holy Spirit.
 - B. Spoken into our minds by the written word of God.
- II. **The Scriptures call us to do and to be.**
 - A. What the word of God commands us to do, the Spirit of God within empowers us to do (Joshua 1:8).
 - B. Scripture is a description of who I am in union with Christ, *not* what I ought to be. It is *not* a "bill," but a statement of my "assets" in Christ.
 1. Who I am.
 2. What I have.
 3. What I can do in Christ by His empowering Spirit.