

Our Relationship With The Bible

Today, we are going to share on why we study the Bible and how to study the Bible. This will by no means be an exhaustive guide, however, it will provide us with insights, inspiration and some answers to questions we have had in our hearts and mind.

My prayer for you is that you will leave this sermon with a newfound understanding, commitment and passion for God's Word.

Meditate on God's Word

Joshua 1:8 (NLT) *Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. **Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.***

Within the scripture are the answers to every issue you face.

Jesus Himself knew the Word and used it to counter the temptations of the Devil.

Matthew 4:1-11 (NLT) *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. **2** For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. **3** During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." **4** But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' **5** Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, **6** and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.' **7** Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" **8** Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. **9** "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me." **10** "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" **11** Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.*

Reasons to Study the Bible:

Simon Sinek "Start With Why" - Overall, "Start with Why" encourages readers to rethink their approach to leadership, communication, and decision-making by emphasizing the importance of knowing and communicating their purpose. By understanding their why and using it as a guiding principle, individuals and organizations can inspire others, foster loyalty, and achieve greater fulfillment and success.

1. Guidance and Wisdom - The Bible is a source of divine guidance and wisdom that can help you navigate life's challenges and make wise decisions.

Psalms 119:105 *Your instructions are a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT) *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.*

2. Spiritual Growth - Studying the Bible nurtures your spiritual growth, deepens your faith, and strengthens your relationship with God. It also helps you grow in your cultural literacy and to know what it says first hand... not just believing something because you heard someone say it.

2 Peter 3:18 (NIV) *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 2:2 (NLT) *Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment.*

You shouldn't teach what you didn't learn or understand for yourself

Titus 2:1 (ESV) *But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.*

- read the whole chapter later for understanding

3. Transformation and Renewal:

The Bible has the power to transform your heart and mind, renewing your thoughts and attitudes to align with God's will. The more you read and understand The Word, the more you'll avoid passing down errors from generation to generation

1 Timothy 4:16 (ESV) *Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

Psalms 119:11 (NLT) *I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against*

Romans 12:2 (KJV) *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Romans 12:2 (NIV) *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

4. Grow in Faith

Romans 10:17 (NLT) *So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.*

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT) *For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*

How to Study the Bible

The Bible is not to be treated like a horoscope or tarot cards. You don't just open to any page and expect to magically get a word for your life. Doing so could be very dangerous. (Share example)

1. Believe that the Bible is God's Holy Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT) *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NLT) *Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.*

Psalms 19:7-8 (NLT) *The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living.*

The Languages of the Bible

2. Know what you are reading and why

The Bible was originally written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Here's a brief overview of the languages in which different parts of the Bible were written:

Hebrew:

- The majority of the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible) was written in Hebrew. This includes books such as Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah, and many others.
- Hebrew is a Semitic language that was spoken by the ancient Israelites.

Aramaic:

- Some portions of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic, a closely related Semitic language. These sections are primarily found in the books of Daniel and Ezra.
- Aramaic was a common language in the ancient Near East and was used alongside Hebrew in certain contexts.

Greek:

- The New Testament was written in Greek, specifically a form of ancient Greek known as Koine Greek.
- The Gospels, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation were all written in Greek by various authors such as Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, and others.

Exegesis is what it's called when you study what the original text means in its original language. *Hermeneutics* is gaining an understanding of the meaning behind the text. Both can be found by simply googling it. As with everything else in life, you need to consider your source. For example, you wouldn't take medical advice from Reddit over advice from WebMD. You can also invest in various translations, a concordance and a Greek / Hebrew Lexicon. At the very least, you need to own a Study Bible. Choose a translation that you can easily read and understand. There are thousands of translations of the Bible in different languages around the world. When possible, study the Bible in your native tongue

Translations of the Bible

Here is some basic information about five popular translations of the Bible: the King James Version (KJV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the English Standard Version (ESV), and the Amplified Bible (AMPLIFIED), The Message Bible:

King James Version (KJV)

- The KJV, also known as the Authorized Version, was first published in 1611.
- It is one of the most widely used English translations of the Bible.
- The KJV is known for its beautiful and poetic language, which has had a significant influence on English literature and language.
- It is a formal equivalence translation, which means it seeks to translate the original text word-for-word.

New Living Translation (NLT)

- The NLT is a modern translation of the Bible that was first published in 1996.
- It is known for its readability and contemporary language, making it accessible to a wide range of readers.
- The NLT is a thought-for-thought translation, which seeks to convey the meaning of the original text in clear and understandable language.
- It is often used for personal devotions, study, and outreach.

English Standard Version (ESV)

- The ESV is a relatively recent translation of the Bible, first published in 2001.

- It is known for its accuracy, readability, and literal translation approach.
- The ESV is a formal equivalence translation, which means it aims to provide a word-for-word translation that is as faithful to the original text as possible.
- It is widely used in churches, academic settings, and for personal study.

Amplified Bible (AMPLIFIED)

- The Amplified Bible, first published in 1965, seeks to provide readers with a more nuanced understanding of the original text by amplifying key words and phrases.
- It uses a unique system of brackets, parentheses, and explanatory notes to expand upon the meaning of words in the original text.
- The Amplified Bible is designed to help readers dig deeper into the nuances of the original languages and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the text.
- It is often used for in-depth study, teaching, and personal reflection.

Message Bible

- A contemporary English rendering of the Bible by Eugene H. Peterson, a pastor, scholar, and author. It was first published in its complete form in 2002. The Message is known for its unique, modern language that seeks to convey the original meaning of the biblical text in a fresh and accessible way to contemporary readers.
- Uses the paraphrase approach and is not a word for word translation.
- Can be controversial and will grow in controversy as language evolves.
- Useful for a fresh perspective, devotions and inspiration

Each of these translations offers unique strengths and can be valuable for different purposes depending on the preferences and needs of the reader.

3. Prepare Yourself and Your environment - Begin by seeking God's guidance and wisdom through prayer before you open the Bible. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your understanding and open your heart to receive the message God has for you. If literacy is a concern for you. There are audio bible options.

James 1:5 (NLT) *If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.*

John 16:13 (NIV) *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."*

- limit distractions
 - Choose a time of day when you can switch off your phone
 - Pray before you begin and when you finish
 - Decide ahead of time how long you will study (you can always go longer, but, try set a realistic minimum)
 - Get a bookmark, a highlighter and/or a pen.
 - Keep a journal handy so that you can write down what the Holy Spirit reveals to you and areas where you would like to delve in deeper. Some people journal a summary of what they are learning with each day of study
4. Be Consistent - Develop a habit of reading the Bible regularly. Set aside time each day to engage with God's word, whether it's through a structured reading plan or simply opening the Bible and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you.

Psalms 119:105 (NLT) *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.*

Luke 11:28 (NLT) *Jesus replied, 'But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice.'*

If you miss a day or week, a month or a year, the key is to restart again immediately. Don't let the enemy accuse you or make you feel ashamed.

Romans 8 (KJV) *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Reading the Bible is not a matter of salvation, but, it certainly makes your salvation experience relevant to every part of your life.

5. Study with your friends and Create a Community - Engage in discussions about the Bible with other believers to gain different perspectives, insights, and interpretations. Participating in a Bible study group or sharing your reflections with fellow Christians can deepen your understanding and help you apply the teachings to your life.

Proverbs 27:17 (NLT) *As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.*

Colossians 3:16 (NLT) *Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts."*

6. **Methods of Bible Study** - There are various methods of studying the Bible, and different individuals may prefer different approaches based on their learning style and goals. Here are five common methods of Bible study:

Topical Study:

- In a topical study, you choose a specific topic, theme, or subject (e.g., love, forgiveness, prayer) and explore what the Bible says about it by examining relevant passages throughout the Bible.
- This method allows you to gain a comprehensive understanding of a particular topic by exploring related verses from different books and passages in the Bible.

Verse-by-Verse Study

- In a verse-by-verse study, you examine the meaning and context of individual verses or passages in detail.
- This method involves reading and analyzing each verse sequentially, considering its historical context, original language, and theological implications.

Chapter Study

- Chapter study involves focusing on a specific chapter or passage of the Bible to delve deeper into its content, themes, and messages.
- This method allows for a more in-depth exploration of the context and flow of a particular chapter, helping to uncover the broader narrative and teachings within it.

Character Study

- A character study involves examining the lives, actions, and characteristics of individuals or figures in the Bible (e.g., David, Moses, Ruth) to draw lessons and insights from their experiences.
- This method helps you understand the qualities, strengths, weaknesses, and faith journeys of biblical characters and how they relate to our lives today.

Book Study

- There are 66 books of the Bible, 39 in Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. OT is before Christ, NT is after Christ.
- Book study involves studying an entire book of the Bible from start to finish, focusing on understanding the book's message, themes, and overall context.
 - This method allows for a comprehensive exploration of the content and structure of a specific book, helping to grasp the author's intended message and the book's relevance for contemporary readers.

These are just a few common methods of Bible study, and individuals may also combine different approaches or use additional resources such as commentaries, concordances, and study guides to enhance their understanding of the Scriptures. Ultimately, the best method of Bible study is one that resonates with you personally and helps you grow in your faith and knowledge of God's Word.

Conclusion: The purpose of today's sermon is not to confuse you but rather to inspire you. Prayerfully, we have been inspired to grow in our faith, understanding and knowledge of God's Word, to be consistent in our commitment to spiritual maturity and to connect with a community of believers whom we can grow with.

Psalms 1 (MSG) *How well God must like you—you don't walk in the ruts of those blind-as-bats, you don't stand with the good-for-nothings, you don't take your seat among the know-it-alls. 2-3 Instead you thrill to God's Word, you chew on Scripture day and night. You're a tree replanted in Eden, bearing fresh fruit every month, Never dropping a leaf, always in blossom. 4-5 You're not at all like the wicked, who are mere windblown dust— Without defense in court, unfit company for innocent people. 6 God charts the road you take. The road they take leads to nowhere.*

James 1:22-25 (NKJV) *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*