

BIBLE STUDY TIPS



The discipleship process can take on so many facets in our life. With a new Christian or one that is progressing in their walk, teaching them how to “feed themselves” from the Word of God is an important part of their Christian life in order to discern God’s Word and His truth for themselves.

The time of study can be compared to a “sit-down” dinner. Before preparing to partake of the dinner, there is some set-up that is needed. We have illustrated this in the diagram below.

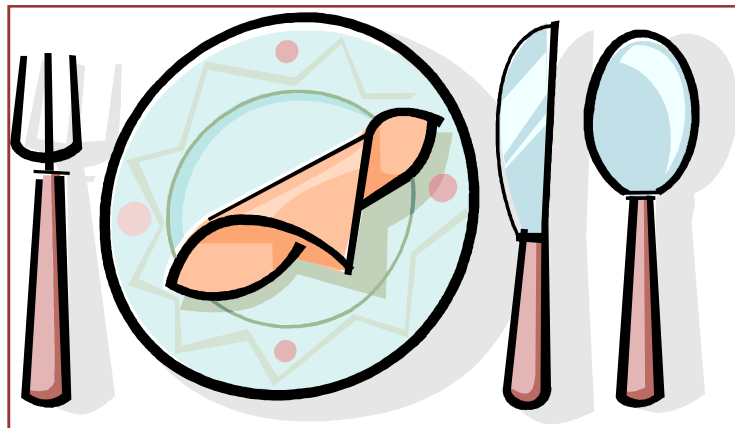
First:

We lay out the placemat which represents prayer. It is the basis for our time, committing our time and ourselves to the Lord in order to hear what He wants to speak to us during our time in His Word. A prayerful attitude is essential to a successful Bible study. Some reasons are as follows:

1. It prepares the heart to receive the Word of God
2. It prepares the mind to accept the Word of God. It creates an attitude of expectancy.
3. It helps the mind to focus on a spiritual activity.

Some possible results of your study without prayer might be:

1. Deeper spiritual insights may be lost because the heart and mind are not prepared.
2. There may be a development of a critical attitude.
3. There could be an acceptance of human interpretation of divine truth instead of a Holy Spirit interpretation/revelation.



Second:

We have our plate which will represent our mind and spirit. As we pray, we want to have the Lord place on that “plate” what He wants to place there which will in turn be beneficial for our growth and benefit.

Third:

The “eating utensils”: These represent the tools we can use to study the Word, get the understanding, and discover those “treasures” that are to be found in His Word.

How many “utensils” we use at each setting depends on how big or how involved our “meal” will be. As we grow and mature, we learn to use more utensils and see their purpose. When a child begins to learn to eat, they are not usually handed a fork. It starts with a spoon and they progress from that point. It is the same in learning how to use the various “utensils” to study God’s Word. We start with the simplest and begin to work our way to the more involved. Our suggestion for anyone just beginning is to begin learning to use a concordance.

Some basic items to have available as you sit down to begin would be:

1. A Bible (even a couple of different versions are good for comparison).
2. A journal/paper or notebook
3. Concordance (our recommendation is a Strong’s)
4. A Bible dictionary
5. A regular dictionary (we even recommend the Webster’s 1828 Dictionary which often includes Scripture references along with the meaning of words).

As one begins to expand and become comfortable in these basic items, you can then begin to add word study books such as Vines and others for “digging” even deeper into God’s Word. Other items which can be added are books dealing with customs of Biblical times, atlases. If you have a computer, there are several very good Bible computer programs which have the capability to add a lot of Bible study resources to them.

SOME SUGGESTED STUDY METHODS

As you disciple others and help them to learn to study God’s Word on their own, the following are various types of studies that can be done. You can choose the type of study each one is capable of doing (whether they are just starting out or if they have been just “stuck” in one form of study and it is now time to be “stretched” a little. It is sometimes easy to just get stuck and that is when our time in the Word may become sometimes a struggle. God speaks to us in many different ways and forms and that is what makes His Word as exciting as we learn to discover other ways of looking at His Word. Our suggestion is that as you are mentoring others in this area, that you go through the process with them so that as you meet you can discuss what each of you have discovered from God’s Word.

TIP #1:

1. Read the passage
2. Define any difficult words in the passage (or even look up words that you may think you already know the meaning.
3. Relate what the message of this portion is saying (write it down)
4. Who is the passage speaking to/ who is it for?
5. Find other Scripture passages which may relate to what this portion is saying.

TIP # 2: A TOPICAL STUDY:

If there is an area of one's life that is a struggle or questions regarding other life issues, we can find the answers to these in God's Word. The Strong's Concordance is an excellent tool for this type of study. The newer versions have a topical section in the back of the concordance that is quite helpful when doing this study. This is the simplest, but yet most fascinating ways to study the Bible while bringing about immediate results. Some further suggestions when doing this type of a study would be:

1. Be thorough. Find as many references as possible that speak of the topic you are looking at. As you write down references, place your notes and thoughts under these references as you proceed.
2. When you have completed your study, try arranging your results in an orderly way...perhaps by categories or divisions.

TIP #3: A WORD STUDY:

In this type of study, once again the Strong's Concordance can become beneficial. When speaking of a word study, it can be similar to a topical but in this case with the different references you look up the meaning of that word in either the Hebrew or the Greek. It is quite surprising that our English meanings of words that we read in the Bible do not mean the same in the Hebrew or the Greek. We often read Scripture just assuming what God is saying and therefore interpreting the meaning of what is being said wrongly. When using the concordance, any Scripture reference in the Old Testament will have their meanings in the Hebrew section of the concordance (at the back). The New Testament words are located in the Greek section of the concordance (at the back). Another good source for word meanings is Vines. As one becomes more comfortable with a topical study and word study, the two can be combined as you study. To be able to use the Concordance in an effective manner, this is where a "hands-on" approach is necessary.

TIP #4: BOOK OF THE BIBLE STUDY:

1. Start out by reading through the book first to get an overview.
2. Go back and begin to study the book by chapters.
3. As you read through the chapter, begin to make note of the leading facts of each chapter in their proper order.
4. Make note of the various people mentioned in the chapter. As you do this, you can also make notes regarding any light thrown upon their character or actions (godly or ungodly).
5. Make note of any lessons important to take note of.
6. Do you see any key verse in the chapter? Is this key verse one that would be important to memorize?

In doing this type of study, you might even make up a chart (landscape orientation) ahead of time with some of these study headings going across and have a sheet for each chapter. This makes it easier to look at for an overall view. When you have completed the study, you can place these notes in a folder or notebook for future reference or adding more to it at a later time.

TIP #5: BIBLE CHARACTER STUDY:

In this particular study, look at the life of a Bible character. Many lessons can be learned from them. God places them in His Word so we can learn from their lives (good or bad) so that we can apply to our own lives.

Look at the different stages of their lives and make notes.

TIP #6: ANALOGY STUDIES:

Jesus (while on earth) used various word pictures and various things around Him as illustrations for spiritual lessons. He is still doing this today. When this occurs, it is just a wonderful open door to do some further “digging” and see why He uses the various word pictures. Examples of this as we see in God’s Word would be:

1. He compares the Word of God to a lamp, a fire, a hammer, a seed, a sword. Begin to do a study regarding these items and find out what they are, their purpose etc. and you can then begin to draw out the spiritual implications for them. As you do however, you should always back up your spiritual implication to Scripture from God’s Word.
2. Another example is when in Proverbs 6:6- consider the ways of the ant. Do a study on ants to see if you can see why this analogy was use. Again, you can make spiritual applications to that and as before, be sure you back up your applications with God’s Word which would apply.
3. Even in our own lives today, what we do as “routine” God may use something to make a spiritual application. Make note of those things for one of your quiet time studies. It may be something in particular that He wants to say at that moment and time in your life. It is also making yourself available to hear His voice at different times throughout the day...not just your time you set aside. He wants you to always be available to hear Him whenever and wherever He wishes to speak to you.

WHAT TO STUDY

1. When you enter the discipleship process with a new Christian, it is important to begin laying solid foundations. It is our suggestion that you start with the foundations (Elementary Teachings of the Doctrines of Christ) as found in Hebrews 6:1, 2. There is NOTHING more important than foundations in any of our lives.
2. As a follow-up to the foundations, a new Christian should have a good understanding about being a follower of Christ, what that means, what is expected. For instance: taking up our cross and following Him, denying oneself.
3. If there is an area of struggle or questions in an individuals life, doing topical studies on these is beneficial.
4. Using a topic or subject the pastor may have preached on during the Worship service and expanding upon it in your own study, how it can be further applied etc.
5. Being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Often He will direct us to God’s Word.

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