



Living the Christian Life Bible Study

Lesson 5 (NIV)

Getting More From Your Bible Study

Student's Name _____ **Unit** _____

Instructor _____

Comments _____

5.0 Other Examples

For your own meditation, apply the questions to the following passages.

1. Luke 18:9-14
2. Psalm 1
3. Romans 8:12-17
4. Ecclesiastes 2:1-11
5. Acts 16:16-24
6. Acts 16:25-34

1.0 Introduction

The Bible is God's primary communication to us. The Bible *is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In the Bible we learn everything we need to know for our complete spiritual development, our service to God, and a great deal of practical wisdom for living. While it is a good thing to read the Bible and learn what it is saying, that alone is inadequate; when God speaks to us He expects a response. James says *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.*(James 1:22-25).

But the Bible can be a difficult book. It is really composed of 66 different books written over 1900 years ago, and in a language and culture very different from our own. So how do we determine its message to us for our time and circumstances? In this lesson we will learn a very basic technique for reading the Bible and applying it to our lives today. Because of the circumstances in which most of you find yourselves at the present time, we will be using no additional study materials; only the Bible itself.

2.0 The Fundamentals

There are certain fundamental concepts that apply to all personal Bible Study, regardless of what book of the Bible we are reading.

2.1 Prayer

In reading the Bible, we have the unique opportunity of consulting with the author; a privilege we don't have when reading most other books. So why not ask for His help? When you begin to read the Bible, ask God to help you understand it and ask Him how to apply what you read to your life. If you do this, you will find the Holy Spirit guiding your thoughts and conclusions.

2.2 Select a Passage to Study

We must begin by selecting the passage of scripture we will study. A passage is a section that contains a complete thought, story, or sequence of logic. It may be as brief as a verse or as long as a chapter, but will usually consist of several verses. In the gospels or other narrative books, for example, a passage might be a parable, including its setting and interpretation, a story of a miracle, or a dialog between two people. In the epistles, we should think in terms of one or more paragraphs and logical thought flow. In some cases, such as some of the shorter Psalms, the whole chapter may be one passage. On the other hand, in Proverbs we may just study one verse at a time, such as: *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.* (Proverbs 15:1) In general, a passage should be as short as possible, while still containing a complete story or thought.

3.0 Asking The Right Questions

This very simplified technique for Bible study asks a series of questions about the passage we have read. Because of their very general nature, only a few of the questions will be answered in any one passage of scripture. In fact, it is hard to imagine a passage that would have answers to all the questions. However, it is equally hard to imagine a passage that would not have an answer to at least one of the questions. Let us first look at the questions:

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin for me to avoid or give up?
3. Is there a command for me to obey?
4. Is there a promise for me to claim?
5. What does this passage teach about God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit?
6. Is there a reason for me to praise or to worship God?
7. Do I need to get help in further understanding this passage?
8. Is there a prayer that should become mine for this day?

4.0 A Sample Study

Let's apply the questions to the story told in Matthew 8:1-4.

Matthew 8:1-4 1 When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. 2 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." 3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. 4 Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

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