

# Studying the Word of God

*The Bible waits to be mined for its treasure. God intentionally hid some of these treasures so that they are only obtained by those who really desire Him and seek His truth. Those who seek, find; to those who knock, the door to the Scriptures will be opened. Frank's method of Bible study can be adapted and used by any diligent seeker of God's truth. Get started; try your own hand. Discover what can be found.*

Bible study is one of the most intriguing experiences of the life of a believer. The Bible is the written Word of God. When we read and study the Bible, we experience the voice and Spirit of God that gives life to us.

Bible study can be a chore but does not have to be a chore. It can be the most amazing joy of your life.

## **Some terms may be helpful to begin:**

**Revelation** – God disclosing Himself in Scripture and in nature.

**Inspiration** – God's moving in persons to write Scripture.

**Illumination** – God opening the human heart to understand Scripture.

**Exegesis** – the process of discovering and extracting the content of Scripture.

**Eisegesis** – to impose one's own beliefs upon the text (this is very wrong).

**Graphe** – The written text of the Scripture – All Graphe is given ...

**Logos** – The Word spoken by God – Jesus is the Logos of God.

**Rhema** – The Sword of the Spirit is the Rhema of God.

## Guidelines for interpretation of the Scripture

1. Determine the natural, actual, intended divisions of the text of Scripture.
  - Note repeated concepts, words, and themes.
  - Deal with the text in those groupings.
2. Derive the outline from the text.
  - Take care not to impose an artificial outline on the text.
  - Message is frequently found in the structure.
3. Perceive the text as God speaking to you.
  - Receive the message with a sense of awe.
  - Lay aside preconceived notions and presuppositions.
  - Use a Bible that contains text only; do **not** use “study Bibles”.
4. Read, read, read, read, read, read, read, read.
5. Pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit in this study – I Cor. 2:9-16.

Study in small groups of people who have been reading and meditating on the passage for a week.

Use a white board or paper to outline the passage and make a chart or diagram of the verses.

Read the passage in several different versions of the Scripture.

## The Tools

1. The Scripture text
2. A concordance
3. Note paper and pencil
4. Vine's book of Bible words

## The Process

1. Observation – **What does it say?**
  - Read very carefully, and read often.
  - Give full attention – turn off distractions, be quiet...
  - Ask questions: who, what, where, why, when, how,...?

- Is the passage teaching, exhortation, prophecy, prayer, ...?
  - Make a list of observations; those **expressed** and those **implied**.
  - Organize observations into an outline or diagram showing relationships between the ideas in the passage.
2. Correlation – **What other Scripture passages relate to this one?**
- Use a concordance or references to find related passages.
    - This will give a balanced picture of the passage studied and (hopefully) prevent “proof texting” and errant (wrong) interpretations.
  - Record the cross references in your notes or in Bible margin for future use.
3. Interpretation – **What does it mean?**
- Ask – “Why is this passage in the Bible?”
    - “What does God want us to learn from this passage?”
  - Summarize the passage in one sentence – include all key elements.
4. Application – **What does it mean to my life/What impact should it have on my life?**
- Write the application(s) in form of exhortation, commitment, prayer, Psalm, doctrine, instruction, etc...

## Notes

- Give adequate time to observation before attempting other steps
- Begin to listen to lessons and sermons with an ear for what step of the process the teacher is emphasizing (without being judgmental).
- Be careful in your personal study to give appropriate time and attention to the parts of the process.
- Realize that the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture and can open your heart to truth.  
**He wrote the Bible and now He lives in each believer.**
- Do not jump to interpretation without having completed observations,
- Do not hasten to application without having thoroughly studied interpretation.
- When presenting a lesson do not woodenly move from step to step.
- Organize the presentation into a smoothly flowing message.
- Do not force “pet illustrations” into passages where they do not serve to explain the text.  
Do not “proof text.”
- Do not force artificial outlines on the text.
- Allow the text to produce its own outline.
- Look for structure in the text.

- Do not bring your own structure to the text. Outlines are useful – BUT...resist the urge to always have a three-point alliterated outline
- Use a “text and concept” approach to presenting the message – What it says and how it applies.
- See *Methodical Bible Study* by Robert A. Traina 1952/1980
- ISBN 0-9601396-1-3

## Personal note:

Bible study has been the greatest joy of my Christian life. The knowledge that the Holy Spirit, the author of the Word, lives in me and speaks truth and love to me through the Word, gives unspeakable joy and blessings that cannot be taken by any circumstance of life. It is also a steadying influence of daily life and in times of difficulty.

I have seen people of all ages enjoy and easily grasp Bible Study. In fact, sometimes the least experienced persons see the most profound concepts and truths in the Scripture. God’s Spirit can and does reveal truths to His children according to His will.

The Anabaptist beginnings were based on the study of the Scriptures. Their study directed them to the beliefs that they adopted that differed from the Catholic and Protestant teachings and understandings. For us to continue today as faithful Anabaptist believers means diligent Bible study for all of our lives and especially in our Church gatherings.

Bible study fills your mind with wonderful information which provides content on which to meditate throughout the day. During times of lesser stimulation, your mind can recall the scripture and enjoy the rumination on truth instead of being focused on the problems of the day. This process of truth brings health to mind and body.

Jesus said in John 6:63 that the words He speaks are Spirit and Life. Scripture is such a huge treasure and untapped source of blessing. It will change your life to invest time in God’s Word. God bless you as you include diligent Bible Study in your life as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.