

Engaging in Active Christianity

How to Study Your Bible, Lesson 3

Four phase Bible Study:

1. Reading program, (foundation) read through once a year or more.
 2. Expositional book study, with resources (exhaustive concordance, expository dictionary, Bible atlas, commentaries expositional commentaries,)
 3. Special research projects, topical, word study, doctrines, etc.
 4. Memorization program, memorize the verse and the start with a Psalm that is short so that you get some success under your belt.
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Basics of Study:

1. Personal Tutor, the Holy Spirit will teach you all things and guide you into all truth.
 - ✓ Point of Bible study is a relationship, not that you shouldn't go to someone, but ask and wait first on the Holy Spirit.
2. Context is critical but can be restrictive, whole counsel of God is the full context.

Questions to ask:

- How does it relate to the material around it?
 - You do NOT just find a verse that agrees with you and pronounce it as God's final word on the subject. Study more and dig deeper.
 - How does it relate to the rest of the book?
 - How does it relate to the culture and background to which it was written?
 - How does it relate to The Bible as a whole?
 - How does it relate to God's redemptive plan of salvation through Christ Jesus?
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3. Problem texts
 - ✓ Parallel passages will help: Revelation has 404 verses alluding to over 800 Old Testament Passages!
 - ✓ Put Christ in the middle of a problem passage and see what happens.
 - ✓ Appeal to the Holy Spirit.
 4. Interpret experiences in the light of Scripture, not Scripture in the light of experience.
 5. When an expression is out of Character with the thing described, it can be Considered figurative.
 - ✓ The correct term for this is "speaking in hyperbole".
 - ✓ If Jesus was not speaking in hyperbole, then how does this quote from Jesus himself sound?:
Luke 14:26, Matthew 5:29, Matthew. 18:3
 6. Obscure passages are to be interpreted in the light clear passages.
 - ✓ If you don't understand one reference pointed to by your concordance, go to another.
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7. About parables...

- ✓ Parables represent certain truths, or realities. Consider only these truths and realities when studying a parable.
 - ✓ Always interpret parables in context.
 - ✓ Do not give hidden meanings to everything in a parable.
 - ✓ Parables were given to illustrate doctrine, not declare it.
 - ✓ Most parables are there to make only one point in most cases not many.
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8. About prophecy...

- ✓ Interpret the words of the prophets literally unless there are obvious symbolic implications.
 - ✓ Prophecy not unlike doctrines are scattered like so many puzzle pieces throughout Scripture (anticipates hostile jamming)
 - ✓ You need those puzzle pieces to have the full picture.
 - ✓ Prophecy is often fulfilled in installments: **Isaiah 61:1-2**.
 - ✓ Revelation is progressive; later revelation explains earlier
 - ✓ When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement can be understood to be figurative.
 - ✓ Resist the urge to speculate!
 - ✓ A New Testament writer may ascribe a prophetic meaning to an Old Testament passage. They have a right to do that as they want, you do not!!
 - ✓ If the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense.
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9. Remember the historical setting...

- ✓ Some passages are not to be applied the same as the time that they were written. (i.e. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament.)
 - ✓ The promises in Scripture are available, but not necessarily for the believers of every generation.
 - ✓ Some promises were made to specific people, or groups of people and may apply only to them.
 - ✓ Many promises are conditional. God is not bound to a conditional promise until that condition is satisfied.
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