

Key Points From Each Lesson

Lesson 1 Key Points

(1) Reasons to study the Bible:

- God reveals himself through scripture.
- The Bible is a lamp.
- The Bible is spiritual milk.
- The Bible is sweet as honey.
- The Bible is the sword of the Spirit.

(2) There are three steps in the process of Bible study.

- Observation: What do I see in the Bible? Study:
 - Terms
 - Structure
 - Literary Form
 - Atmosphere
- Interpretation: What does the Bible mean?
- Application: How do I apply the Bible to life and ministry today? Ask:
 - How does it work for me?
 - How does it work for others?

(3) We must have the illumination of the Holy Spirit when studying the Bible. Because of this

- Our study of scripture should be preceded by prayer.
- Our study of scripture should be followed by a personal response.

Lesson 2 Key Points

(1) Begin the process of observation by studying a single verse. Ask as many questions as possible of the verse.

(2) Steps to improve your power of observation include:

Read for understanding.

Ask questions as you read.

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?

Read the same passage or book many times.

Study the grammar. Look for:

- Verbs
- Nouns
- Modifiers
- Prepositional phrases
- Connecting words

Look for special details in the text. Look for:

- Repeated words
- Contrasts
- Comparisons
- Lists
- Purpose statements
- Conditional clauses

Pray as you read.

Lesson 3 Key Points

(1) You continue the process of observation by studying a paragraph and then an entire book. The Bible was not originally divided into chapters and verses. You must make sure that you follow the natural division of the text in your study.

(2) When reading a paragraph, look for:

- General to specific relationships
- Question and answer sections
- Dialogue
- Emotional tone

(3) When reading an entire book, look for:

- Things that are emphasized. The writer can emphasize things with:
 - The amount of space
 - The stated purpose
 - The order of the material
- Things that are repeated.
 - Repeated terms or phrases
 - Reappearing characters
 - Repeated incidents or circumstances
- Shifts of direction.
- Literary structure.
 - Biographical structure
 - Geographical structure
 - Historical or chronological structure

(4) Making a chart of a section of scripture or an entire book can clarify the structure.

Lesson 4 Key Points

- (1) The step of interpretation asks, "What does the text mean?"
- (2) Some of the challenges that make interpretation difficult are:
 - Language differences
 - Cultural differences
 - Unfamiliar geography
 - Unfamiliar literary forms
- (3) Some common mistakes that lead to improper interpretation are:
 - Misreading the text
 - Twisting the text
 - Giving imaginary meaning
 - Being overconfident

Lesson 5 Key Points

- (1) Proper interpretation requires us to study the context of any individual scripture passage.
- (2) Historical-cultural context considers the cultural setting of the Bible. It asks:
 - What do we know about the biblical writer?
 - What do we know about the biblical audience?
 - What do we know about the historical setting of the book?
 - What do we know about the cultural setting of the book?
- (3) Biblical context considers how a verse fits into the rest of scripture.

Lesson 6 Key Points

(1) Proper interpretation requires us to understand the literary form of the scripture passage we are studying.

(2) Some of the important literary forms found in the Bible include:

- History: accurate, historical accounts of real people and events.

When interpreting history, ask:

- What is the story?
- Who are the people in the story?
- Does the historical account give an example to follow?
- What principles are taught in this historical account?

- Old Testament Law

Old Testament law is important for New Testament believers because:

- It is an expression of the nature of God.
- It makes us wise for salvation.
- It helps us know God's will.

It can be helpful to think about three categories of Old Testament Law:

- Ceremonial laws
- Civil laws
- Moral laws

When interpreting Old Testament law, ask:

- What did this text mean to the original audience?
- What are the differences between the biblical audience and our world?
- What principles are taught in this text?
- Does the New Testament adapt this principle in any way?

- Poetry

Characteristics of Hebrew poetry:

- Parallelism
- Figures of speech

- Wisdom Literature: teaches how life works.
- Proverb: general observations of life stated briefly and clearly

When interpreting proverbs, ask:

- What general principle is taught in this scripture?
- What exceptions to this principle exist?

- Which people in the Bible model this principle?
- Old Testament Prophecy: communication of messages from God.

When interpreting Old Testament prophecy, ask:

- What did the prophet say to his world?
- What was the response of the people to his message?
- What principle from the prophet's message speaks to our world today?

- Apocalyptic Literature

When interpreting apocalyptic literature, remember:

- It is highly symbolic.
- It does not necessarily describe events in chronological order.
- It may repeatedly describe the same events, giving different details.

The most important themes of apocalyptic literature are:

- The challenge of keeping faith in the present evil world.
- The sovereign God who helps his people.

- Parable: teaching that compares spiritual truth with things in nature or situations in life. Most often parables were told in response to a question or an attitude.

When interpreting parables, ask:

- How was the parable introduced?
- What was the conclusion of the parable?
- What response or change of attitude does the parable call for?
- What reaction would the original audience have had?

- Letter

New Testament letters are:

- Authoritative
- Situational
- Addressed to believers

When interpreting letters, ask:

- Who is the recipient of the letter?
- Who is the author? How is he related to the recipient?
- What circumstances inspired the letter?

- Exposition: orderly teaching

Lesson 7 Key Points

(1) Word study is the examination of significant words in a passage for the purpose of discovering their meaning within context. Word study helps us to correctly interpret the passage we are studying.

(2) Two common mistakes to avoid when doing word studies:

- Ignoring a word's former meaning
- Assuming a word has the same meaning in every context

(3) The process of word study:

- Choose the words to study.
 - Words that are significant for the meaning of the passage
 - Repeated words
 - Figures of speech
 - Words that are unclear or difficult
- List the possible meanings of each selected word.
- Discern what each selected word means in the context of the passage.

(4) Questions that help you discern what the word means in context:

- Is there a contrast or comparison in the passage that helps define the word?
- How does the author use this word in other places?
- What does the context show about the meaning of the word?

(5) Things to remember when studying figurative language:

- The idea that is symbolized is what is important.
- A figurative picture, phrase, or word represents something else.
- Figurative language calls attention to the traits of what it represents.
- We must try to understand the text in the way the author intended it to be understood—whether the meaning is literal or figurative.

(6) When to interpret a scriptural statement figuratively:

- When the passage tells you to do so
- When a literal meaning is impossible or absurd

Lesson 8 Key Points

- (1) An understanding of basic principles of Bible interpretation will help to keep you from coming to wrong conclusions in study.
- (2) Start with the text, not with your conclusion. Do not allow your presuppositions to cause you to ignore the text.
- (3) Scripture teachings do not contradict scripture teachings. If two passages seem contradictory, consider whether you have misunderstood one of the passages.
- (4) Scripture is the best interpreter of scripture. Allow plain passages to explain more difficult passages.
- (5) Scripture was written to be understood. Look for the plain sense of the text.
- (6) A biblical command implies a biblical promise. The God who gives a command empowers our obedience.
- (7) The Bible contains all knowledge necessary for salvation.
- (8) We look at scripture through three lenses that help us understand God's Word:
 - Tradition: the insights of other Christians throughout history
 - Reason: a rational understanding of the meaning of the text
 - Experience: the spiritual experience of Christians

Lesson 9 Key Points

(1) It is not enough to properly interpret God's Word; we must apply it in our daily lives.

(2) Satan tempts us to replace application with substitutes:

- We can substitute interpretation for application.
- We can substitute partial obedience for complete obedience.
- We can substitute excuses for repentance.
- We can substitute emotion for transformation.

(3) In order to apply scripture in our lives, we should follow three steps:

- Know the meaning of the scripture.
- Understand how the scripture applies to life.
- Obey the scripture.

(4) To find ways to apply scripture in your life, ask these questions:

- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there an action to take?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there an example to follow?