

## HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

### GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY

#### Introduction

“The meaning of scripture is not our subjective thoughts read into the text, but God’s objective truth read out of the text”. Howard Hendricks

Did you hear about the man who was in a difficult situation and he wanted God to show him what to do. He prays, God I need help so show me from your word what I should do. He opens his Bible and his eyes see this verse, “Then Judas went away and hanged himself”

Matthew 27:5. Closing his eyes and asking for help once again, he opened his Bible and saw this verse, “Jesus told him, go and do likewise”. Luke 10:37. Frustrated he prayed once more and opened the Bible and it said, “Jesus said to him, what you do, do quickly”  
John 13:27

The Bible gives us guidance, promotes itself as truth, and says it is “so that the man of God may be fully equipped for every good work”.

The question is, how do we pull truth from the Bible?

#### Rules to Guide Our Study

1. We must always keep in mind the section of scripture we are in as to its type of literature and purpose.
  - A. Different language has different meaning according to the type of literature it is.
    1. The Law
    2. Historical Narratives
    3. Poetic books
    4. Prophecy
    5. Gospels
    6. Epistles
  - B. You will encounter certain forms of language depending on the section of scripture.
    - i.e. Psalms has metaphor, analogy, and exaggeration
    - i.e. Proverbs contains general statements of truth and wisdom
    - i.e. The Gospels will contain rhetorical questions, exaggeration, parallel lines, and parables

“The best interpretation of a historical record is no interpretation, but letting the divine author of the record say what He says and assuming He says what He means”.

Henry Morris

“If Proverbs are treated as statutes or case law, major interpretative and pastoral errors will inevitably ensue” D.A. Carson

2. The accuracy of your understanding of a text is directly proportional to the amount of time and effort taken to study the text.

3. Interpret the scripture literally whenever possible.

A. Scripture never contradicts itself. Therefore, if my understanding of a passage Contradicts the teaching of other scriptures, I have the wrong understanding.

B. If the plain sense of the scripture makes good sense, then do not seek to make some other sense out of it.

C. The wise student will look for a clear teaching, not some mystical or hidden teaching.

D. Scripture has one basic meaning.

4. Identify the key words in the passage and then seek to clearly define the meaning of those words.

5. Context is King!

A. You must see the “neighbors” of a text.

B. There are two levels of context:

1. immediate = the text surrounding the passage

a. Where is the action taking place?

b.

To whom is the text addressed?

c. What is the focus of the entire context?

i.e. “I saw the trunk” = to identify what that means, you must know where, to whom, background, focus, etc.

trunk may refer to a tree trunk, a luggage piece, an elephant, a car

2. remote = the book of the passage (theme, purpose, background)  
other related scripture passages.

“Ask yourself these questions, Is my interpretation of a scripture consistent with the theme, purpose, and structure of the book in which it is found? Is my interpretation consistent with other scriptures about the same subject? Am I considering the historical and cultural context?” Kay Arthur

6. Check your interpretation against other similar scriptures.

Use the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge.  
Use Naves Topical Bible.

7. Check your interpretation against other believers.

Commentaries  
Systematic Theology or another theological reference book  
Study Bibles

## Example John 14:14

“If you shall ask me anything in my name, I will do it”

1. What type of literature book is this?

What do I know about the gospels and some of the literature?  
may contain: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2. What does this verse literally say?

Does this literal reading make perfect since?

Why or why not?

3. Remember the scripture has one basic meaning.

4. What are the key words and what do the words mean?

Ask = aiteo, to ask, to beg for, to desire

Read Vines entry = gives a little more clarity because it says the one asking is in a lesser position

For a lot of detail read the Thayers entry

Anything = trust me in that this is just a connecting pronoun and basically covers whatever is connected to the asking

Name = onoma, for anything and everything for which the name covers

So far, we have seen this verse means I can pray for/beg for something and God will do it. This asking seems to be qualified by something---that I am in a lesser position, I am in subjection to God and that my asking must be connected to the name of Jesus. My asking carries a connection to His name and all its implies.

## 5. Context is King!

Immediate context:

Who is Speaking? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is He? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is He speaking to? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the focus of the passage? \_\_\_\_\_

We see in John 13 that Jesus takes His disciples into the upper room for the last supper. He is telling them the last things He wants them to know. He has just demonstrated the attitude of servant leadership by washing their feet.

**THEREFORE THE CONTEXT OF THESE WORDS IS SELF SACRIFICE**

Further we see that John 14 begins with the words “let not your hearts be troubled”. Jesus is speaking to them about concepts which should help them remain strong in their faith:

1. He is preparing an eternal place for them v.2-3
2. He is the way, the truth, the life v.6
3. He is God Himself v. 9-11

Then He says this verse 13, “whatever you ask in my name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son”

The He says verse 14

Then He says verse 15