



Personal Bible Study Tips

Personal Bible study is meant to be a life-changing experience with the Word of God. A study that is meaningful, applicable and life-affecting will have the following five main characteristics.

- **It Must Be Systematic And Consistent.**

Jesus explained the Scriptures systematically (Luke 24:27), and the Berean Jews evaluated the gospel they heard by its consistency with Scripture (Acts 17:11). Your study must also be consistent and systematic. R.A. Torrey, a great Bible teacher of another generation, advised, *“Have some good system of Bible study and follow it. System counts in everything, but it counts more in study than in anything else, and it counts more in Bible study than in any other form of study.”*

- **It Must Be Original Investigation In The Bible Itself.**

Personal Bible study does not depend on what others have said *about* the Scriptures, but it must involve the student in the Bible itself. Again Torrey says, *“Do not study about the Bible; study the Bible.”* There are many books that have been written about the Bible, but there is only one Bible. So go yourself to the source. As you study, compare Scripture with Scripture. One portion sheds light on another, enriching your Bible study experience and answering your questions.

- **It Must Be Written Reproduction Of Your Findings.**

An important part of learning process is reproducing in your own words what you have studied. Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, said, *“Thoughts disentangle themselves passing over the lips or through pencil tips.”* If you want to master the truths of the Scriptures, write them down in your own words.

- **It Must Be Personally Applied To Daily Living**

You need to follow the psalmist's example when he wrote:, *“I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments”* (Psalm 119:59-60). The Scriptures are the means by which the Holy Spirit

changes our lives, but in this ministry He needs our co-operation.

- **It Must be “Pass-on-able”**

A good personal Bible study method is one that is simple enough to be easily passed on to others. Teaching someone else how to study the Bible for himself is far better than sharing what you have received from your own study, though that is helpful too.

As You Begin...

Good Bible study methods cannot guarantee a changed life. The Bible can only be understood fully with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Apart from a growing personal relationship with God, the academic study of the Word will produce little change. Some important steps of personal preparation are necessary.

- **A Cleansed Life**

Refusing to deal with sin in your life brakes fellowship with God. The secret of restored fellowship and the cleansed life is very simple. John tells us what we should do in 1 John 1:9. Before beginning your Bible study preparation, stop and confess to God any known sins.

- **Prayer for Illumination**

Since understanding the Scripture can only come through the Holy Spirit's work in your life, you need to follow the example of the psalmist *“Praise be to You, O Lord; teach me your decrees...Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things from Your law...Let me understand the teachings of Your precepts; then I will meditate on your wonders...direct me in the path of Your commands for there I find delight”* (Ps. 119:12,18,27,35)

- **Dependence On the Holy Spirit**

One of the Holy Spirit's ministries is to teach Christians the truths of the Scriptures. (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:12). You must rely on His instructions following Solomon's wise advice, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”* (Pro. 3:5-6).

- **Willingness to Obey**

Jesus pointed out that a prerequisite to knowing the truth is willingness to obey the truth. *“If any chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching is from God or whether I speak on My own”* John 7:17). The one who is willing to obey will receive God's instruction.