



EAT THIS BOOK

Devouring the Word of God



Eat This Book: Part 1

WHAT Bible We Study...

Psalm 19:7-11

- The Word is perfect.
- The Word is relevant.
- The Word is good.
- The Word is clear.
- The Word is eternal.
- The Word is true.
- The Word is available.
 - The need for translations...
 - Total world languages: 6,912.
 - Languages with no Bible: 2,286.
 - The question of translations...
 - Which translations should I use?
 - Look at the process behind the translation.
 - The process of translation...
 - A Divine Author.
 - Human authors.
 - Original text.
 - Copies of the original text.
 - Critical text.
 - Translator or translation team.
 - Translation.
 - Contemporary reader.
 - The continuum of translations...
 - The Formal Approach: "word-for-word."
 - The Functional Approach: "thought-for-thought."
 - A recommendation for English translations...
 - New International Version
 - English Standard Version
 - New American Standard Bible

WHY We Don't Study the Bible

- "I don't see how the bible really applies to my life."
- "I've tried, but I just don't know how to study the Bible."
- "I'm not a professional; isn't that the pastor's job?"
- "I just don't have time."
- "I'm not sure if the Bible is even true."
- "To be honest, it just seems boring to me."

WHY We Must Study the Bible

- Because it's essential for spiritual growth.

 **1 Peter 2:2**

*Like newborn babies,
— crave pure spiritual milk.*

- We need it.
- We want it.
- We can't grow up without it.

- Because it's essential for spiritual maturity.

 **Hebrews 5:11-14**

- Because it's essential for spiritual effectiveness.

 **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

WHO Can Study the Bible?

- Anyone can study the Bible.
- Only those who have the Spirit of Christ can understand the Bible.

 **1 Corinthians 2:12-14**

- The Spirit inspired the Word.
- The Spirit illuminates the Word.
- The Spirit instructs us in the Word.

So HOW Do We Study the Bible?

- Study the Bible prayerfully.
 - We NEVER study the Bible alone.
- Study the Bible humbly.
 - Do you really want to *know* Him?
- Study the Bible carefully.
 - We want to understand the text rightly.
- Study the Bible joyfully.
 - Bible study involved the thrill of personal discovery.
- Study the Bible simply.
 - You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit.
 - If you can read, you can study.
- Study the Bible confidently.
 - The Holy Spirit is in you to enable you to do this!
- Study the Bible consistently.
 - We need to be equipped to study every text of every book.
- Study the Bible diligently.
 - Learning to study the Bible will not happen overnight.
- Study the Bible intentionally.
 - Always study with a notebook and pen/pencil in hand.
- Study the Bible personally.
 - You will fall in love with the Author of the Book.
 - You will find true life under the authority of the Book.

Dangerous Approaches to Bible Study

- The Emotional Approach
 - What feels feels to me?
- The Spiritual Approach
 - What deep, hidden meaning is there for me?
- The Pragmatic Approach
 - What works best for me?
- The Superficial Approach
 - What does this mean to me?

A Dependable Approach to Bible Study

Imagine going on a mission trip...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?

Let's take a trip into the Word...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - This step involves exploration.
 - Discover what the text says.
 - A question of content.
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - This step involves interpretation.
 - Discover what the text means.
 - A question of context.
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - This step involves implications.
 - Discover how the text travels.
 - A question of connection.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - This step involves application.
 - Discover how the text transforms.
 - A question of conduct.

Observe Their Home: What Do I See?




Two Revolutionary Disciplines for Reading the Bible:

1. Learn to listen.
2. Learn to look.

Learn to Listen...

- Listen thoughtfully.
 - Bible study is not a mindless activity.
- Listen thoroughly.

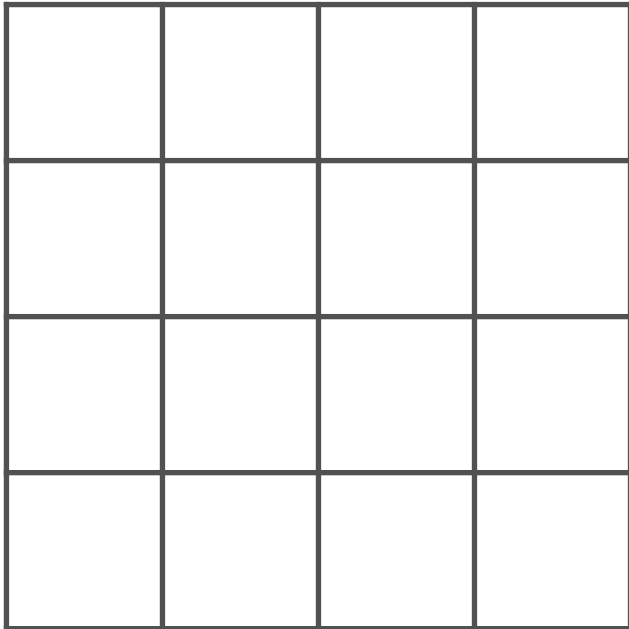
- If we want to understand the Bible, we've got to bombard it with questions.
 - WHO?
 - Who wrote it?
 - Who originally read it
 - Who are the main characters?
 - WHAT?
 - What is happening in the text?
 - What is wrong with the picture?
 - What is the author saying?
 - WHERE?
 - Where is the writer?
 - Where are the original readers?
 - Where is the text taking place?
 - WHEN?
 - When was it written?
 - When did the events take place?
 - WHY?
 - Why is the author writing this?
 - Why is this included in Scripture?
 - Why did the events happen the way they did?
 - Why did the author say what he said?
- Listen repeatedly.
 - Read the text over and over and over and over.... You get the point!
- Listen patiently.
 - Be patient with the text.
 - Be patient with yourself.
- Listen imaginatively.
 - See the sights, smell the smells, and experience the emotions.
- Listen meditatively.
 - Take time to reflect.
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "Just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but you accept them as they are said to you, accept the word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. That is meditation."

 **Joshua 1:8**
 **Psalm 1:1-2**
 **Psalm 119:97**

- Listen purposefully.
 - We want our lives transformed by the heart of God through His Word!

Learn to Look...

- The art of Bible reading is seeing.
- How many squares do you see below? (There are 30 squares below.)



- Look for what the word emphasizes.
 - Verbs
 - How does the author depict the action of the text?
 - Is the verb past, present, or future?

 **Ephesians 1:11**

- Is the verb imperative?

 **Matthew 28:19**

- Is the verb active or passive?

 **Genesis 12:1-3**

 **Ephesians 5:18**
 **Colossians 3:1**

- Space
 - Is the author devoting concentrated attention to a certain theme, character, event, etc?
 - Genesis 1-1, 12-50
 - Matthew
 - Of 1,062 verses, at least 342 of them (1/3 of the book) give us teachings from Jesus.
 - Ephesians
 - 1-3: Explanation of Salvation
 - 4-6: Application of Salvation
- Purpose statement
 - Does the author describe why he says something or why something happens?
 - Look for that, in order "that", "so that", "to", or "for".

 **Deuteronomy 4:5-6**
 **Psalms 119:11**
 **John 3:16**
 **John 15:16**
 **John 20:30-31**

- Order
 - Is the author giving strategic importance to something by putting it in a certain order?

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:13-19	Luke 6:12-16	Acts 1:12-14
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James/Alphaeus	James/Alphaeus	James	James/Alphaeus

Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Judas/James	Judas/James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	(Matthias)

- Exaggeration
 - Does the author exaggerate something for intentional effect or emphasis?

 **Psalm 119:20**
 **2 Corinthians 11:8**
 **Matthew 23:24**

- Chiasm
 - Does the author (especially in the Old Testament) highlight a main idea through a parallel structure in the text?

Psalm 76:1

- In Judah
 - God is known
 - His name is great
- In Israel

Genesis 3

- Introduction of Sin (3:1-7)
 - Confrontation of Man (3:8-12)
 - Confrontation of Woman (3:13)
 - Confrontation and Promise to Serpent (3:14-15)
 - Promise to Woman (3:16)
 - Promise to Man (3:17-19)
- Consequence of Sin (3:20-24)

Genesis 11

- The whole world (1)
 - Had one language (1)
 - Shinar, and settled there (2)
 - Come, let's make bricks (3)
 - Come, let us build (4)
 - A city with a tower (4)

- But the Lord came down. (5)
 - To see the city and the tower (5)
- That the men were building (5)
 - Come, let us go down and confuse their language (7)
- Babel - because there (9)
- The Lord confused the language (9)
- The whole earth (9)

1 and 2 Kings

- Two Chapters: Introduction and Rise (1 Kings 1-2)
 - Nine Chapters: Single Kingdom - Solomon (1 Kings 3-11)
 - Twenty-Nine Chapters: The Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17)
 - Six Chapters: Single Kingdom - Josiah (2 Kings 18-23)
- Two Chapters: Conclusion and Fall (2 Kings 24-25)
- Look for what the Word repeats.
 - Does the author intentionally repeat anything in the text?
 - Terms, phrases, and clauses
 - Psalm 136 - His love endures forever!
 - Matthew 5:34-6:34 - God is our Father!

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 **1 John 2:15-17**

- Characters
 - Barnabas in Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:22; 15:36-39.
- Patterns
 - Pharaoh hardens his heart (Exodus 7:13, 14, 22; 8:11, 15, 28; 9:7, 34, 35; 13:5).
 - God hardens Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17).
- New Testament use of Old Testament passages
 - Matthew 5:21-47 - "You have heard that it was said..."
- Look for what the word connects.
 - Does the author establish certain relationships between certain items, ideas, or individuals?
 - Conjunctions
 - Look for "and", "for", "but", "therefore", "since", or "because".

 **Romans 12:1**
 **Hebrews 12:1**
 **2 Timothy 1:7-8**








- Prepositions
 - Look for “by”, “with”, “from”, “in”, “upon”, “through”, or “to”.

 **Galatians 2:20**
 **Romans 5:1-2**

- General and Specific
 - Look for times when an author introduces a general idea and then provides an explanation through specific supporting ideas (or vice versa).
 - From general to specific: Galatians 5:16-23

 **Galatians 5:16-23**

- From specific to general: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- Question and answer.
 - Look for questions that are answered and also rhetorical questions in which the answer is implied.

 **Job 38:2-3**
 **Malachi 1:6**
 **Matthew 26:40**
 **Romans 3:1**
 **Romans 4:1**
 **Romans 6:1**
 **Romans 7:1**

- Cause and effect.
 - Look for particular causes stated by the author which result in a particular effect or multiple effects.

 **Proverbs 15:1**
 **Romans 6:23**
 **Acts 8:1**

- Means

- When something happens in the text, look for the means that brought about that particular action or result.

 **Psalm 119:9**
 **Romans 8:13-14**

- Conditions

- Look for specific clauses that demonstrate certain conditions which bring about a desired response.
- Look for "if" (the condition) and "then" (the consequence).

 **Deuteronomy 28:1**
 **2 Corinthians 5:17**
 **1 John 1:6**

- Lists

- Look for any instances of two or more itemized things and observe how and why they are ordered in a certain way.

 **1 John 2:16**
 **Colossians 3:5-8**




- Pronouns

- Look for how pronouns connect relationships in the text.

 **Ephesians 1:3-14**
 **2 Peter 2:20**

- Major Shifts

- As you read larger units of text, look for critical places where the text seems to take a new turn.
- 2 Samuel 11-12

 **Acts 8:26**
 **Romans 3:20-21**
 **Ephesians 3:21-4:1**

- Look for what the Word compares.
 - Does the author compare certain items, ideas, or individuals to others?
 - Simile
 - Look for expressed comparisons of two things that are different.
 - Look for "as" and "like".

 **Psalm 42:1**

 **John 3:14**

 **1 Peter 2:2**

- Metaphor
 - Look for implied comparisons between two things that are different.
 - Comparisons without using "as" or "like".

 **James 3:3-6**

- Allegory
 - Look for instances where the author uses a certain image or comparison to communicate a deeper meaning in the text.

 **Galatians 4:21-31**

- Type
 - Look for instances where the author uses a symbolic picture to demonstrate something to come in the future.

 **Romans 5:14**


 **1 Corinthians 15:45**

- Look for what the Word Contrasts.
 - Does the author contrast certain items, ideas, or individuals with one another?
 - Look for "but".

 **Proverbs 14:31**

 **Romans 6:23**

- Look for contrasting metaphors.
 - Look for implied contrasts between two things.

 **Luke 11:11-13**

- Look for what the Word Communicates.
 - Does the author use certain words, images, phrases, or other literary tools to communicate certain emotions, moods, or tones in the text?
 - Emotions
 - Look for words that convey particular feelings or emotions.

 **Jeremiah 3:19-20**

 **Galatians 4:12-16**

- Mood
 - Look for evidence of the author's demeanor as he writes.

 **Philippians 4:4**

- Tone
 - After looking at individual emotional terms and instances of mood, continue on to discover the overall tone of the text and/or book.

 **Lamentations 3:1-6**

 **Matthew 23:33-35**

 **Galatians 3:1-4**

Observation overall...

- Observe individual verses.
- Observe paragraphs.
- Observe entire discourses.
- And remember... be patient!

Observation in action...

 **Acts 1:8**

UNDERSTAND THEIR HOME: What Does It Mean?

Moving from exploration to interpretation...

- From what the text says to what the text means.
- From questions of content to questions of context.

Context, context, context...

- The definition of context...
 - Context = that which goes with the text.
- The dilemma created by context...
 - The Bible communicates eternal content.
 - The Bible communicates through specific contexts.
 - How do we go from "then and there" to "here and now".
- The dedication to context...
 - We work to step into the author's shoes and determine his original intent.
 - A biblical text can never mean what it never meant.
 - Context shapes meaning.
 - The rule of context: CONTEXT RULES !
- The diversity of contexts...
 - Our context.
 - Their context.

Consider our context...

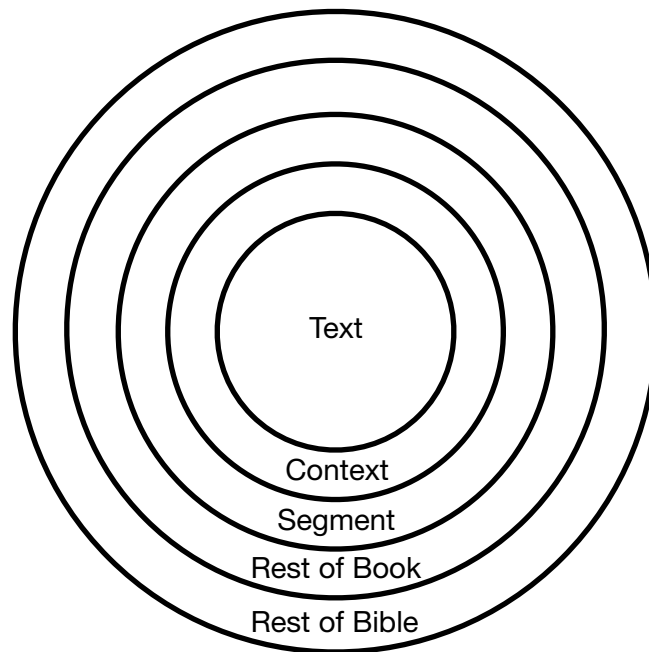
- Our preunderstandings:
 - All of our preconceived notions that we unconsciously or consciously bring to the text.
 - Our pride.
 - Pride knows before listening.
 - Our agenda.
 - Two options:
 1. Stand over the meaning of the text.
 2. Kneel under the meaning of the text.
 - Our familiarity.
 - Don't skip over a text just because it's familiar.

- Our culture.
 - Language.
 - Customs.
 - Stories.
 - Family.
 - Values.
 - Economics.
 - Politics.
 - Ethnicity.
 - Gender.
 - Religion.
 - Arts.
 - Images.
- Our goal: Minimize subjectivity!
 - But not completely...
- Our presuppositions:
 - The Bible is inspired.
 - The Bible is reliable.
 - The Bible is unified.
 - The Bible is diverse.
 - The Bible is supernatural.
 - Thus the Bible has tension and mystery to it.
 - The Bible is purposeful.
- So how can we best understand their context?

Consider their context...

- Never forget that Scripture was God's Word to other people before it became God's Word to us.
 - God cared deeply about them.
 - God cares deeply about us.
- Literary context:
 - Genres.
 - Different forms or kinds of biblical texts.
 - We need to know the rules involved with different genres.
 - Old Testament...
 - Narrative

- Law
- Poetry
- Prophets
- Wisdom
- New Testament
 - Letters
 - Gospels
 - Parables
 - Acts
 - Revelation
- Grammar.
 - Individual words, phrases, clauses all find meaning in context.
- Surroundings.
 - The Bible contains an integrated message in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



 **Matthew 18:20**

 **Revelation 3:21**

- **Historical-Cultural Context:**

- The time and culture of the author and his readers, including the social, geographical, topographical, and political factors that are relevant to the author's setting.
- Get to know the author.

 **John 21:24**

- Get to know the audience.

 **John 20:31**

- Get to know the geographical conditions.

 **John 4:3-4**

- Get to know the social conditions.

 **John 4:7**

- Get to know the religious conditions.

 **John 4:9**

- Get to know the economic conditions

 **John 4:11-12**

- Get to know the political conditions.

 **John 4:25-26**

- **Theological Context.**

- Where does this passage fit into the unfolding revelation of God in Scripture?

- J.I. Packer: "The Bible appears like a symphony orchestra, with the Holy Spirit as its Toscanini, each instrument has been brought willingly, spontaneously, creatively, to play his notes just as the great conductor desired, though none of them could ever hear the music as a whole... The point of each part only becomes fully clear when seen in relation to all the rest."

Basic Principles for Bible Interpretation...

- Remember that context rules.
 - Never take a Scripture out of its context to make it say something that is contrary to the text.
- Always seek the full counsel of the Word of God.
 - The more you study, the more you will be able to discern what Scripture means.
- Remember that Scripture will never contradict Scripture.
 - Compare Scripture with Scripture... use cross-references.
 - The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.
- Avoid basing your doctrine on an obscure passage of Scripture.

2 Peter 3:16

- Interpret Scripture plainly.
 - Use the literal sense unless there is some good reason not to.
 - Use the figurative sense when the passage tells you to do so.
 - Use the figurative sense if the expression is an obvious figure of speech.
 - Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation goes contrary to the context of the passage, the context of the book, or the purpose of the author.
 - Use the figurative sense if a literal interpretation involves a contradiction of other Scripture.
 - Use the figurative sense if a literal meaning is impossible, absurd, or immoral.
- Conclude the process of interpretation by describing the author's intended meaning in the passage.
 - The major question: "What's the point?"
 - In one or two sentences, write out what the author is saying to the original readers and why he is saying it.
 - Be responsible.

- Remember - a text cannot mean what it never meant.
- Be concise.
 - Keep it simple.
- Be specific.
 - The author communicated this text at that time for that purpose.
- Check your conclusions by leaning on the church.

Interpretation in action...

- Acts 1:8 - What's the point?

BRING IT BACK HOME: How does it relate?

The goal...

- Identify the timeless truth(s).
- This is the theological principle that applies to all people of all times.

The guidelines...

- The timeless truth is biblical.
- The timeless truth is compatible with the rest of Scripture.
- The timeless truth is eternal.
- The timeless truth is cross-cultural.
- The timeless truth is applicable both here and there.

Implication in action...

- Acts 1:8 - What is (are) the timeless truth(s) in this verse?

APPLY IT IN YOUR HOME: What Do I Do?

The differences between interpretation and application...

- Interpretation focuses on meaning.
 - Application focuses on action.
- Interpretation involves a singular meaning.
 - Application involves multiple actions.
- Interpretation is the same for all Christians.
 - Application is different for specific life situations.
- Interpretation involves getting into the Word.
 - Application involves the word getting into us.
- Interpretation asks, "What does this text mean?"
 - Application asks, "How does this meaning apply to my life?"

Three steps to responsible, biblical application...

- Meditate on the timeless truth(s).
- Relate the timeless truth(s) to today.
 - See the timeless truth in its original situation.
 - Look for key elements (people, places, relationships, ideas, items, etc.) in the original situation.
 - Identify a contemporary situation that parallels the original situation.
 - Look for key elements (people, places, relationships, ideas, items, etc.) that parallel the original situation.
 - Relate the timeless truth specifically to that contemporary situation.
- Practice the timeless truth.

2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:2

- Five questions...
 2. Who should I be?

- Any application of the text is dependent on Christ in you.
3. How should I think?
 - We need to learn from the Word how to think with a Christlike mindset.
 4. What should I do?
 - Is there a sin to avoid?
 - Is there a verse to memorize?
 - Is there a promise to claim?
 - Is there a prayer to repeat?
 - Is there a command to obey?
 - Is there a condition to meet?
 - Is there a challenge to face?
 5. Where should I go?
 - All of Scripture is intended to be understood in the context of mission.
 6. Who will I teach?
 - The best way to learn is to give it away... this is what disciple-making is all about!

Application in action...

- Identify the key elements involves in the timeless truth(s) in Acts 1:8:

- Identify any situations, i.e. real-world scenarios, that contain those key elements:

- Now write out how the timeless truth(s) in Acts 1:8 affects this particular real-world scenario:

- Finally, ask the five questions and write out any response to the Word that you need to take based on them:

7. Who should I be?

8. How should I think?

9. What should I do?

10. Where should I go?

11. Who will I teach?

Eat This Book: Part 2

JOURNEYING THROUGH DIFFERENT GENRES The Challenges of Various Types of Literature in the Bible

- Difficulties involved in reading certain genres...
- General guidelines for reading certain genres...
- A practical process for reading certain genres...
- Examples of reading certain genres...

JOURNEYING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Letters

Difficulties involved in reading the letters...

- What in the world does that mean?

 **1 Corinthians 15:29**

- What in the world are we supposed to do?

 **Romans 12:10**

 **Romans 13:1**

 **Romans 16:16**

General guidelines for reading the letters...

- New Testament letters are occasional documents.
 - Written to a specific audience.
 - Written at a specific time.
 - Written to address a specific situation.
 - Behaviors that needed to be corrected.
 - Doctrines that needed to be straightened out.
 - Misunderstandings that needed to be clarified.
 - We have the answers, but we don't always have the questions!

- We are careful not to conclude too much from only one letter.
- We are confident that God has clearly communicated to us what is most important.
- New Testament letters are NOT theological treatises.
- Overall, New Testament letters have a common form:
 - Introduction
 - Identification of the author.
 - Identification of the audience.
 - Greeting.
 - Prayer or Thanksgiving.
 - Body
 - Conclusion
 - Final greeting.
 - Farewell.
 - Various elements...
 - Travel plans (Titus 3:12; Philemon 22).
 - Commendation of workers (Romans 16:1-2).
 - Prayer (2 Thess. 3:16; Hebrews 13:20-21).
 - Prayer requests (1 Thess. 5:25; Heb. 13:18-19).
 - Greetings (Romans 16:3-16, 21-23; Heb. 13:24; 2 John 13).
 - Final instructions and exhortations (Col. 4:16-17; 1 Tim. 6:20-21a).
 - Holy kiss (1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14).
 - Autograph (Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17)
 - Benediction (1 Cor. 16:23-24; Eph. 6:23-24).
 - Doxology (2 Peter 3:18; Jude 24-25).
- Differences in form are often clues to meaning.

A practical process for reading the letters...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Read: Begin by reading the letter aloud through in one setting.
 - Reconstruct: As you read, reconstruct the original situation behind the letter.
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Think paragraphs!

- For each paragraph and series of paragraphs, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: What's the point?
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Focus on truths that are central to the message of the text and all the Bible.
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Focus on truths that are consistently taught in Scripture.
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Focus on truths that are inherently true in all situations.
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - See the timeless truth in its original situation.
 - Look for key elements (people, places, relationships, ideas, items, etc.) in the text.
 - Identify a contemporary situation that parallels the original situation.
 - Look for key elements (people, places, relationships, ideas, items, etc.) that parallel the original situation.
 - Relate the timeless truth specifically to that contemporary situation.
 - Practice the timeless truth.
 - Who should I be?
 - How should I think?
 - What should I do?
 - Where should I go?
 - Who will I teach?

An example of reading the letters...

- Hebrews 12:1-3

The following pages are an example of a study guide you can use in your personal study of the God's Word. Each time you see "An example of..." at the conclusion of a teaching segment, it's an opportunity to use this format to guide your study. Blank copies of these pages are available in the back of this participant guide.

STUDYING THE BIBLE: From Their Home to Our Home

Observe Their Home: What Do I See?

Write down significant notes concerning who, what, where, when, why, and how. What does the Word emphasize, repeat, connect, compare, or contrast, and how does the Word communicate?

Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish Christians facing threat of persecution to trust in Jesus.

"Therefore" - connects text with preceding chapter - "Hall of Faith" amidst trials.

Followed by instruction to persevere in discipline: obviously talking about endurance in faith.

Imagery - running a race with effort and endurance toward the finish line.

"Let us" - verb mentioned three times - throw off, run, fix our eyes...

Throw off two objects: "everything that hinders" and "sin that entangles"

Run with endurance (a prevalent theme in all of Hebrews and this particular context.

Fix our eyes on Jesus - He's run the race ahead of us - He endured and enables me to endure. He endured for joy - he was motivated by joy.

He scorned the shame of the cross - it could not stop him.

"At the right hand" - Romans 8:34 - He is interceding for us there.

Big Idea - We look at Jesus so that we will not grow weary and lose heart.

Understand Their home: What Does It Mean?

Taking into account literary, historical-cultural, and theological contexts, identify in one or two sentences the primary meaning of the text for its original readers.

The author of Hebrews encouraged these Jewish Christians to endure in their faith despite opposition.

He reminds them that the only way they can endure is by focusing on Jesus himself.

Bring It Back Home: How Does It Relate?

Identify the timeless truth(s) in this passage that relates to both the original readers and us. (If studying an Old Testament passage, filter theological principles through the New Testament.)

The Christian life is like a race that requires effort and endurance.

The saints who have gone before us provide valuable examples of endurance that encourage and inspire us.

To run the race successfully, Christians need to reject things that hinder their progress and focus completely on their relationship with Jesus.

Apply It In Your Home: What Do I Do?

Identify parallel situations between the biblical context and ours. Make specific application of the timeless truth to our life today by asking the five questions:

Who Should I Be?

I want to be completely focused on Jesus in every facet of my life, especially in the trial I am going through right now.

How Should I Think?

I need to think about the trials I am facing right now in light of Jesus' endurance. I need His perspective on my troubles.

What Should I Do?

I will go back and read about others in the Bible who faced difficult challenges and see how God provided in their lives.

Where Should I Go?

Even though I do not understand why I am going through this, I will continue to gather together with the church for worship (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Who Will I Teach?

I will look for opportunities to intentionally show the supremacy of Christ in suffering to my co-workers who do not know Christ.

JOURNEYING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels

Difficulties in reading the Gospels...

- Unexplained differences:

📖 **Matthew 26:63-64**

📖 **Mark 14:61-62**

📖 **Luke 22:67-70**

- *Apparent discrepancies*

📖 **Mark 11:12-14, 20-25**

📖 **Matthew 21:18-22**

General guidelines for reading the Gospels...

- The Gospels are written about the same person.
 - Two components at work in the Gospels:
 - The teachings of Jesus.
 - The stories about Jesus.
- The Gospels are written by different authors.
 - Two settings at work in the Gospels:
 - The historical setting of Jesus.
 - The historical setting of the authors.
- The Gospels are written for different audiences.
 - Three principles at work in the Gospels:
 - Selectivity.
 - Arrangement.
 - Adaption.

A practical process for reading the Gospels...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Think in terms of stories and discourses.
 - Individual stories and discourses: Look for answers to the standard questions...

- Collective stories and discourses: Look for connections.
- Look for special literary forms in the Gospels.
 - Exaggeration.

 **Matthew 5:29-30**

 **Luke 14:26**

 **Mark 10:24-25**

- Irony.

 **Luke 12:16-21**

- Rhetorical Questions
 - Questions designed to make a point rather than retrieve an answer.

 **Matthew 5:46**

 **Matthew 6:27**

 **Mark 4:40**

 **Luke 12:51**

- Parallelism
 - When certain lines are structured to be read together.
 - Synonymous.
 - The lines say basically the same thing in a similar way.

 **Matthew 7:7**

 **Mark 4:22**

- Contrastive
 - The second line contrasts with the first line.

 **Mark 4:25**

 **Matthew 12:35**

- Developmental.
 - The second line repeats part of the first line, then advances the thought of the first line to a climax.

 **Matthew 10:40**

 **John 6:37**

- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Two challenges for interpretation:
 - Think vertically.
 - How the Gospels represent Jesus.
 - Think horizontally.
 - How the Gospels relate to one another.
 - For each story/discourse and series of stories/discourses, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: What's the point?
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - See how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament law (Matthew 5-7; 22:37-40; Luke 24:13-35).
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - See how Jesus teaches and demonstrates the Kingdom of God.
 - Look for the applicable...
 - See the larger context of the individual stories in order to identify the timeless truths.
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading the Gospels...

- Mark 4:35-41

JOURNEYING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Parables

Difficulties in reading parables...

- The distance between the original audience and us.
- The depth of meaning intended by Jesus in the parable.

General guidelines for reading parables...

- The main point of the parable is crucial.
- The main purpose of the parable is to lead hearers to respond in a certain way.

A practical process for reading parables...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Read the parable over and over again from the hearer's perspective.
 - Identify the key point of reference that are familiar to Jesus and his hearers.
 - Determine how the original hearers would have responded to the parable.
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - At most, look for one main point for each main character or group of characters in the story.
 - In one or two sentences, write down the main point(s) intended by Jesus when he shared this parable with his original hearers.
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - In our efforts to tie the parable into overall truths in Scripture, avoid looking too deeply.
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading parables...

- Luke 10:25-37

JOURNEYING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Acts

Difficulties in reading Acts...

- Is it precedent or principle?

 **Acts 2:4**

 **Acts 8:15-17**

 **Acts 20:9-12**

- Consider a both - and approach...

General guidelines for reading Acts...

- The book of Acts is a sequel.
- The books of Acts is a story with a specific purpose.
- The book of Acts is organized both thematically and geographically.
 - Central themes:
 - The Gospel
 - The Holy Spirit
 - The Church
 - The World
 - Central geographical structure:
 - The Witness of the Church in Jerusalem (1-7)
 - The Witness of the Church in Judea and Samaria (8-9)
 - The Witness of the Church to the Ends of the Earth (10-28)
- The book of Acts is a model for how God intends the church to take the Gospel to the world under the power of the Holy Spirit.

A practical process for reading Acts...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Ask questions about the characters (both negative and positive examples).
 - Ask questions about speeches.
 - Ask questions about commentary from Luke.
- Understand their home: What does it mean?

- Look for what Luke intended in each episode of the book of Acts.
- Look for repeated patterns and themes throughout Acts.
 - The filling of the Spirit and proclamation of the Word (1:8; 2:4; 2:17-18; 4:31; 8:15-17; 9:17-20; 10:44-46; 19:6).
- The spread of the Gospel throughout the World (6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20).
- Then look at every episode and summarize by asking, "What is the point?"
 - Write down the point of the episode in one or two sentences, making sure that your interpretation falls in line with the larger narrative of the book of Acts.
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Filter all implications from the book of Acts through the lens of Luke's intent.
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading Acts...

- Acts 6-7

JOURNEYING INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT Narratives

Difficulties in reading Old Testament narratives...

- A variety of stories.
 - Over 40% of the Old Testament is narrative.
 - Genesis, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jonah, and Haggai.
- A variety of character.
- A variety of challenges.

General guidelines for reading Old Testament narratives...

- On a whole, Old Testament narratives ARE NOT...
 - Allegories filled with hidden meanings.
 - Intended to teach moral lessons.
 - Intended to teach doctrines.
 - Man-centered.
- On a whole, Old Testament narratives ARE...
 - Stories with a specific purpose.
 - Accounts of what happened, not what should have happened or ought to happen every time.
 - Selective and incomplete.

A practical process for reading Old Testament narratives...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Read the passage carefully.
 - Look for five basic parts:
 - Plot
 - The development, the conflict, and the resolution.
 - Scene
 - Focus on time and place.
 - Characters
 - The characters in the Old Testament narrative are central.
 - Look for comparison and contrast.

- Dialogue
 - Dialogue contributes greatly to character development.
- Narrator
 - Look for the implicit meaning he conveys.
 - Look for irony.
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Interpret each Old Testament narrative on three levels:
 - Level One: Individual history.
 - Level Two: National history.
 - Level Three: Redemptive history.
 - Pay close attention to literary context.
 - At a minimum, read three chapters:
 - The entire chapter.
 - The preceding chapter.,
 - The following chapter.
 - Avoid these common errors in interpretation:
 - Allegorizing: Trying to find the hidden meaning beyond the text.
 - Decontextualizing: Ignoring the full historical and literary contexts.
 - Selectivity: Picking and choosing the parts of the story you like!
 - Moralizing: Asking, "What is the moral of this story?" at the end of every individual narrative.
 - Personalizing: Thinking that these narratives are all about you.
 - False appropriation: Misapplying the narrative in contemporary culture.
 - False combination: Combining elements in the narrative that are not directly connected by the narrator.
 - Redefinition: Redefining the story to accommodate what you wish it had said.
 - Imitation: Looking to narratives for permission and/or obligation to act in a certain way.
 - For each story and series of stories, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: What does this story mean?
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Identify a theological principle in its Old Testament context.
 - Filter that theological principle through the New Testament.
 - Ask two primary questions:

- Does the New Testament add to that principle?
- Does the New Testament modify that principle?
- Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
- Look for the applicable...
- Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading Old Testament narrative...

- Joshua 2

JOURNEYING INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT Law

Difficulties in reading Old Testament law...

- We wonder about some laws:

 **Exodus 34:26**

 **Leviticus 19:19**

 **Leviticus 13:40**

 **Deuteronomy 22:5**

- We violate some laws:

 **Leviticus 19:32**

 **Leviticus 19:28**

 **Deuteronomy 14:8**

- We obey some laws:

 **Leviticus 19:18**

 **Exodus 20:13**

 **Deuteronomy 5:18**

- How do we know when to wonder, when to violate, and when to obey?

General guidelines for reading Old Testament law...

- The Old Testament "law" in the Bible...

- Over 600 specific commandments (Exodus 18:20).
- All of these commandments put together (Matthew 5:18).
- The first five books of the Old Testament - the Pentateuch (Joshua 1:8).
- The entire Old Testament religious system.
- The rabbis' interpretation of the Old Testament law (Acts 10:28)

- The Old Testament law is a gift from God to His people.

- The Old Testament law is a Covenant.

- The Old Testament law is not our Testament law.
 - The general rule: Unless and OT law is somehow restated or reinforced in the NT, it is no longer directly binding on God's people.
 - Laws that ARE NOT reinforced:
 - The Israelite civil laws.
 - The Israelite ritual laws.
 - Laws that ARE reinforced:
 - Laws renewed or reinstated in the context of the new covenant.

 **Matthew 22:40**

 **Deuteronomy 6:5**

 **Leviticus 19:18**

- All of the OT law is still the Word of God for us even though it is not still the command of God to us.

 **Deuteronomy 22:8**

 **Deuteronomy 15:12-17**

A practical process for reading Old Testament law...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Look at the laws collectively.
 - Look at the laws carefully according to two basic forms:
 - General guidelines - the apodictic law.
 - Specific cases - the casuistry law.
 - Example #1: Food laws.

 **Leviticus 11:7**

- Example #2: Laws about the shedding of blood.

 **Exodus 29:10-12**

- Example #3: Unusual prohibitions.

 **Deuteronomy 14:21**

- Example #4: Laws giving blessing to those who keep them.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

- Look at the laws in their context.
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Understand the law as God's inspired Word for you, not God's direct command to you.
 - Understand the character of God in the law, including His justice, holiness, mercy, and love.
 - Understand the law as a gift, not a limitation.
 - Understand the law as a basis for the old covenant and not binding in the new covenant.
 - Understand the essence of the law that is repeated in the New Testament.
 - For each law and series of laws, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: "What do these laws mean?"
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Identify a theological principle in its Old Testament context.
 - Filter that theological principle through the New Testament.
 - Ask two primary questions:
 - Does the New Testament add to that principle?
 - Does the New Testament modify that principle?
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Remember that the value of the OT law is eternal.
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading Old Testament law...

- Leviticus 5:2-6

JOURNEYING INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Poetry

Difficulties in reading Old Testament poetry...

- Old Testament poetry is bi-directional.
 - Some poetry includes God's word to us.
 - Some poetry includes our words to God.
- Old Testament poetry is blatantly honest.

Psalm 88:14

General guidelines for reading Old Testament poetry...

- Old Testament poetry is emotional.
- Old Testament poetry is metaphorical.
- Old Testament poetry is variable.
 - Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Lamentations, and the prophetic books.
 - Even the Psalms along...
 - Laments.
 - Individual (3, 22, 31, 39, 42, 57, 71, 88, 120, 139, 142).
 - Corporate (12, 44, 80, 94, 137).
 - Thanksgiving psalms (18, 30, 32, 34, 40, 65-67, 75, 92, 107, 116, 118, 124, 136, 138).
 - Hymns of praise (8, 19, 33, 103-104, 111, 113-114, 117, 145-150).
 - Salvation-History Psalms (78, 105-106, 135-136).
 - Psalms of Celebration and Affirmation (2, 18, 20-21, 24, 29, 45-48, 50, 72, 76, 81, 84, 87, 89, 93, 95-99, 101, 110, 132, 144).
 - Wisdom Psalms (36, 37, 49, 73, 112, 127, 128, 133).
 - Songs of Trust (11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131).

A practical process for reading Old Testament poetry...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Notice the brevity of Old Testament poetry.

Psalm 25:4

- Notice the structure of Old Testament poetry.
 - Parallelism.
 - One thought expressed by two-four lines of text.
 - Synonymous: Close similarity between lines.

 **Psalm 19:8**

- Developmental: Second line develops first line.

 **Psalm 121:3**

 **Psalm 31:21**

- Illustrative The first line conveys the idea and the second line illustrates it.

 **Psalm 140:7**

- Contrastive: Employs the use of contrast.

 **Psalm 1:6**

 **Proverbs 10:12**

- Acrostics.
 - Each successive line of poetry starts with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
 - Psalms 25, 34, 11, 112, and 145.
 - Proverbs 31:10-31.
- Notice the figurative imagery in Old Testament poetry.
 - Simile.

 **Proverbs 11:22**

 **Isaiah 1:18**

- Metaphor.

 **Psalm 23:1**

 **Psalm 68:5**

 **Proverbs 17:22**

- Indirect analogy.

- Assumes that the reader can make the comparison without explicit instruction as to what it means.

 **Psalm 22:13**

 **Psalm 18:16**

 **Psalm 91:4**

- Exaggeration.

 **Psalm 42:3**

 **Psalm 18:42**

 **Psalm 40:12**

- Personification and Anthropomorphism.

- Attribute to one entity the characteristics of another type of entity.

 **Psalm 24:7**

 **Isaiah 44:23**

 **Psalm 19:4**

- Cause and Effect.

 **Psalm 51:8**

 **Proverbs 19:13**

- Representation (part for the whole).

 **Psalm 40:2**

- Apostrophe.
 - Writers address a person like he or she is present when they are not.

 **Psalm 2:10**

 **Psalm 6:8**

 **Psalm 114:5**

- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Don't interpret Old Testament poetry like you would interpret a New Testament letter.
 - Letters appeal to logic; poetry appeals to emotion.
 - Rational arguments are central in letters; images are central in poetry.
 - Syntax and grammar are critical in letters; figures of speech are critical in poetry.
 - For each segment of poetry, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: "What does this segment mean?"
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Identify a theological principle in its Old Testament context.
 - Filter that theological principle through the New Testament.
 - Ask two primary questions:
 - Does the New Testament add to that principle?
 - Does the New Testament modify that principle?
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading Old Testament poetry...

- Psalm 116:1-4

JOURNEYING INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Prophecy

Difficulties in reading Old Testament prophecy...

- What do we do with gruesome texts?

Amos 3:12

- What do we do with insulting texts?

Jeremiah 2:23-24

- What do we do with texts of judgment?

Jeremiah 15:1-2

- We don't have a comparative genre in much contemporary literature?
- We don't hear much about the prophets themselves.

General guidelines for reading Old Testament prophecy...

- Old Testament prophets were enforcing and mediating the old covenant.
 - The prophets' message is unoriginal.
 - The prophets' message is confrontational.
 - The prophets' message is completed (about 99%).
- The Old Testament prophets were God's direct representatives.

A practical process for reading Old Testament prophecy...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Look at oracles individually.
 - Look at oracles historically.
 - 760-400 B.C.
 - Those years were characterized by three characteristics:
 - Political, military, economic, and social upheaval.
 - Religious unfaithfulness and reckless disobedience to the covenant.

- Shifts in populations and national boundaries.
- Look for certain figures of speech.
- Look for certain forms.
 - The Lawsuit.
 - The full lawsuit contains a summons, a charge, evidence, and a verdict.
 - Isaiah 3...
 - Full lawsuit (13-14a).
 - Indictment (14b-16).
 - Judgment sentence (17-26).
 - The Woe.
 - Contains three elements:
 - An announcement of distress (the “woe”).
 - The reason for the distress.
 - A prediction of doom.

Habakkuk 2:6-8

- The Promise.
 - A salvation oracle.
 - Reference to the future.
 - Mention of radical change.
 - Promise of blessing.

Amos 9:11-15

- The Enactment Prophecy.
 - God accompanies His Word with symbolic actions.

Isaiah 20:3-4

- The Messenger Speech.
 - “Thus says the Lord...”
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Think oracles!

- Three basic points in prophetic oracles:
 - You have broken the covenant; repent!
 - Idolatry.

 **Jeremiah 10:5**

- Social justice.

 **Micah 6:7-8**

- Religious Ritualism.

 **Isaiah 1:11-13**

- If you don't repent, you will experience judgment.
- Yet you have hope beyond judgment for future restoration.
- For each oracle, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: "What's the meaning of this oracle?"
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Identify a theological principle in its Old Testament context.
 - Filter that theological principle through the New Testament.
 - Ask two primary questions:
 - Does the New Testament add to that principle?
 - Does the New Testament modify that principle?
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading Old Testament prophecy...

- Jeremiah 7

JOURNEYING INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Wisdom Literature

Difficulties in reading Old Testament wisdom literature...

- Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.
- Difficult to follow the line of thinking.
- Difficult to understand literary styles.
- Difficult to determine meaning.

Song of Solomon 4:1-2

General guidelines for reading Old Testament wisdom literature...

- The goal of wisdom literature is to apply the Word to practical living.
- The wisdom books are not a collection of universal promises.
- They are insights and guidelines for development of godly character.

Proverbs 22:11

Proverbs 22:26-27

Proverbs 29:12

A practical process for reading Old Testament wisdom literature...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Look for figures of speech.
 - Look closely for the historical-cultural background.

Proverbs 25:24

- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Interpret wisdom literature in light of its specific book context.
 - Interpret wisdom literature in light of its overall biblical context.
 - The Basic Approach to Life - Rational and Ordered (Proverbs).
 - Exception 1: The Suffering of the Righteous (Job).
 - Exception 2: The Failure of the Rational, Ordered Approach to Provide Ultimate Meaning (Ecclesiastes).

- Exception 3: The Irrationality of Romantic Love Between a Husband and Wife (Song of Solomon).
- For each segment of wisdom literature, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: What does this segment mean?
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Identify a theological principle in its Old Testament context.
 - Filter that theological principle through the New Testament.
 - Ask two primary questions:
 - Does the New Testament add to that principle?
 - Does the New Testament modify that principle?
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading Old Testament wisdom literature...

- Job 19

JOURNEYING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Revelation

Difficulties in reading Revelation...

- So many details.
- So many images.
- So many numbers.
- So many different views!

General guidelines for reading Revelation...

- Look at Revelation with humility.
- Look for Revelation's message to the original readers.
- Avoid trying to construct a strict chronological map of future events.
- Take Revelation seriously, but not always literally.

A practical guide for reading Revelation...

- Observe their home: What do I see?
 - Look closely at the images that John specifically identifies.
 - Look at various segments as a whole, not always pressing every detail.
- Understand their home: What does it mean?
 - Stay focused on the main idea.
 - For each segment, write down in one or two sentences the answer to the overall question: "What's the point?"
- Bring it back home: How does it relate?
 - Look for the biblical and compatible...
 - Look for the eternal and cross-cultural...
 - Look for the applicable...
 - Write out the timeless truth(s) using present-tense verbs.
- Apply it in your home: What do I do?
 - Meditate on the timeless truth.
 - Relate the timeless truth to today.
 - Practice the timeless truth by asking/answering the five questions (Who should I be? How should I think? What should I do? Where should I go? Who will I teach?)

An example of reading Revelation...

- Revelation 12:1-17

Now What?

That's the most important question. The idea of studying the Bible is not meant to be confined to a four-week workshop. It's intended to affect our lives and affect others' lives through us. But where do you begin?

Listed below are seven simple steps to start putting the truths we saw during *Eat This Book* into action. We have seen the absolute necessity of studying God's Word, and we've seen our God-given, Christ-centered, Spirit-led ability to study it for ourselves. Let's put this thing into action and pray that God will draw us into deeper intimacy with Him and greater impact for Him as we unlock the beauty and power of His Word.

Step 1: Determine Your Objectives

In light of the fact that spiritual growth doesn't happen overnight, it's time to ignite the sometimes slow but always fulfilling process of spiritual transformation. In order to begin, it would be helpful to identify some objectives for moving forward in that process. Take a notebook or journal and write out some answers to the questions below:

- Where do you want to be spiritually six months from now? A year from now? Five years from now?
- What role do you believe Bible study plays in your spiritual objectives?
- Are you convinced that you need to study the Bible on a regular basis?
- What facets of your schedule or priorities in your life are you willing to rearrange in order to accomplish your objectives in the study of God's Word?
- Are you willing to pay the price?

Step 2: Pray For God's Grace

We can almost look at this step as a given, but we need not fly by it. If we are studying the Bible simply to fulfill a religious duty, then we're doomed from the start. Bible study is only intended to be a means by which and through which we experience the grace of God. His grace is what transforms us through the Word. So pray that God would give you grace:

- to desire and long for His Word.
- to know how to best balance your schedule to study His Word.
- to grow in the knowledge of His Word.
- to love Him more as a result of your time in His Word.

Step 3: Develop a Plan

Now it's time to dive in - into the power of His grace. As we've seen, study of the Word doesn't happen automatically every day. It takes time and work. It takes intentionality. So it's necessary for us to develop an intentional plan for what Bible study is going to look like in our

lives. Just as we plan to eat a few meals a day, just as we plan to go to work or take care of our children, we plan to get to know God through His Word. Use the following guidelines to form your plan for intentional study of the Word:

- Set a **time and place**. Consistency is a plus here. Where is the most effective place and when is the most effective time for you to study the Word?
- Set a **starting point**. If you're new to intensive study of the Word, don't let your ambition send you into the deep end just yet. It's not necessary to start in Jeremiah or Leviticus. Why not start in a simple New Testament letter like Philippians or James? They are shorter, they can be read altogether in one sitting, and then they are easily divided into paragraphs for study. Or you may try one of the Gospels - maybe Matthew or John - in order to dive into the life of Christ. Whatever you decide, keep it simple at the start.
- Set a **pattern**. So what are you going to do when you sit down to study the Word? Remember that Bible study always involves having a notebook and a pen/pencil nearby. You might be tempted to think, "But I don't have anything to write!" On the contrary, that's the beauty of how this thing works. The Holy Spirit is about to give you something to write. As you read the Word and He opens your eyes to understand it through study, He is going to reveal Himself to you in ways you have never experienced before. So get your notebook and pen/pencil ready. Once you've decided what you are going to read, use the guidelines from *Eat This Book* for that particular genre and begin to walk through the process. If you would like, take the "Studying the Bible" worksheet in this guide and use it each day or each week to help guide your study. Whether or not you use that sheet or something else altogether, simply set a routine for what you do when you sit down to read and study. And make sure that routine involves you reflecting on the text, praying in light of the text, and writing what you learn from the text.

Step 4: Study the Word

Now you're ready. You've got a time and a place. You've got a point to start from and a pattern to go through. It's time for implementation. Listed below are some of the reminders from the beginning of *Eat This Book* about how to study the Bible. And as you face various challenges in your study of the Word, go back to your notes to see if you can find help there.

- Study the Bible **Prayerfully**.
 - We NEVER study the Bible alone.
- Study the Bible **Humbly**.
 - Do you really want to know Him?
- Study the Bible **Carefully**.
 - We want to understand the text rightly.
- Study the Bible **Joyfully**.
 - Bible study involves the thrill of personal discovery.
- Study the Bible **Simply**.
 - You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit.

- Study the Bible **Confidently**.
 - The Holy Spirit is in you to enable you to do this!
- Study the Bible **Consistently**.
 - We need to be equipped to study every text of every book.
- Study the Bible **Diligently**.
 - Learning to study the Bible will not happen overnight.
- Study the Bible **Intentionally**.
 - Always study with a notebook and pen/pencil in hand.
- Study the Bible **Personally**.
 - You will fall in love with the Author of the book.
 - You will find true life under the authority of the book.

Step 5: Find and Join a Life Group

As you begin studying the Bible properly, you find yourself constantly asking, “How can I apply this text my teaching it to others? How can I use my time in the Word to make disciples of all nations?” This is the purpose of the word - it sends us out to be involved in others’ lives. So studying the bible in isolation completely misses the point of God’s design for His Word. He wants to enable you to share what He teaches you with others. If we only soak it in and never pour it out, we are taking a self-centered approach to God’s Word, always receiving but never reproducing.

Think about it this way: What if God is revealing things to you in His Word on someone else’s behalf or for their benefit? What if there is a person in your community who needs to hear God’s Word in a specific are of their life, and God has chosen to put that Word in your heart for them? You as, “Well, why doesn’t God just tell them instead?” And the answer is, “Because He loves you enough to involve you in His work!” God desires to use you to multiply His Word - that’s why He’s given it to us (Deut. 4:5-6). So if you are not in a small group where you can study the Word as the church, get involved in what God is doing in other peoples’ lives and let Him use that to grow your faith and encourage you in your spiritual transformation along the way.

Step 6: Dive In Deep

As we talked about, this is not a necessary step. You can study the Bible with simply you, the Holy Spirit, and the Word. However, there are great resources available to students of the Bible, and just a few simple resources can go a long way in increasing your understanding of the Word. Listed below are a few different categories of resources. As you study the Word, you will want to go deeper and deeper, and having resources like these at your fingertips will be extremely helpful!

How To Study The Bible

- J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word* (Zondervan).
- Gordon Fee and Douglass Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Zondervan).

- Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book* (Moody).
- Kay Arthur, *How to Study Your Bible* (Harvest House).

Bible Handbook

- David Dockery, *The Holman Bible Handbook* (Holman).

Bible Dictionary

- I. Howard Marshall, A.R. Millard, J.I. Packer, and D.J. Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary* (InterVarsity Press).
- Brian S. Rosner, T. Desmond Alexander, Carson Goldsworthy, *New Dictionary of Bible Theology* (InterVarsity Press).

Old Testament Introduction

- Raymond Dillard and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Zondervan).

New Testament Introduction

- D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Zondervan).

Word Studies

- Edward Goodrick and John Kohlenberger III, eds., *Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Zondervan).
- W.E. Vine, M.F. Under, and W. White Jr., eds., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Thomas A. Nelson).

Bible Atlas

- Thomas Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas* (Holman)

Bible Commentary Series

- *Logos Bible Software* (see www.logos.com).
- *Expositors Bible Commentary* (Zondervan).
- Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Chariot Victor Publishing).

Internet Helps

- www.biblicaltraining.org
- www.biblegateway.com
- www.youversion.com

Step 7: Keep It Up!

Well, you've made it this far, but the beauty of it is - your journey is just beginning. Can you imagine a lifetime of walking with the God of the universe through His Word? This journey is well worth it. One of the most interesting men in the Old Testament is Enoch. There's not a lot

said about him in Genesis 5, but what is said about him sure does stick out. Very simply, the bible says, "Enoch walked with God." That's it. That was the life of Enoch. He walked with God. But when you think about it - what life can even begin to compare with that?

As you study the Word, dive deep into the treasures He has stored for you. Resist the temptation to waver as life gets busy and demands get heavy. Bible study is intended to bring great freedom, great peace, and great joy as we experience this incredible privilege of walking with God on a day-by-day basis, listening to His voice, feeling His heart for the world, and experiencing His will in our lives. May God continue to give us grace for the journey ahead, and may He get great glory through His Word at work in us!

Eat This Book is a new adaption of material originally developed by David Platt and made available for group study by The Church at Brook Hills.

Bring It Back Home: How Does It Relate?

Identify the timeless truth(s) in this passage that relates to both the original readers and us. (If studying an Old Testament passage, filter theological principles through the New Testament.)

Apply It In Your Home: What Do I Do?

Identify parallel situations between the biblical context and ours. Make specific application of the timeless truth to our life today by asking the five questions:

Who Should I Be?

How Should I Think?

What Should I Do?

Where Should I Go?

Who Will I Teach?
