

Dear Church: How to Study the Bible, Part I

A Bible study for individuals, groups or classes

Background scripture:

Acts 8:27-31

27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him

Podcast Sections:

- 0:00 Introduction. What is the Bible?
- 2:20 Discussion about taking the right approach to study
- 6:22 The Bible was not written to you, but it is for you
- 6:40 Three narrative levels in the Bible
- 12:28 Why the OT is important to Christians
- 15:05 We mistakenly want to read the Bible through Western eyes
- 17:57 How we fit into the story of the Bible
- 22:20 How the gospel fits this big narrative
- 26:06 Who is God? A Father with children
- 27:35 Reading the Bible vs studying the Bible

Discussion questions:

1. Have you ever tried reading through the entire Bible? How did that work for you? What made it hard and what could make it easier?
2. At 3:08 into the video, Sam says the Bible is the autobiography of God. Does looking at the Bible through this lens change the way we understand what we read?
3. Chris and Sam say Christians need to include the Old Testament in their Bible study (starting at 12:28 on the video). Have you included the Old Testament in your reading and study? How is it different than reading and studying the New Testament?
4. At 27:35, Chris and Sam discuss the difference between reading the Bible and studying the Bible. Based on this conversation, how much Bible study have you done in the last year? How can you increase your time in Bible study?
5. What did you take away from the program? What questions are you hoping will be answered in the coming segments?

Scriptures related to this study

Why we need to study the Bible:

Mark 4:20

20 But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Acts 17:11

11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

II Tim 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Proverbs 2:1-5

1 My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you,
2 making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding;
3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,
4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,
5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

II Timothy 2:15

15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Psalms 119: 18-20

18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
19 I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me!
20 My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.

Some study the scriptures without finding Jesus

John 5: 39

39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.