

Dear Church: How to Study the Bible, Part 5

A Bible study for individuals, groups or classes

Background scripture:

Psalm 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
(referenced at 27:07)

Podcast Sections:

- 0:00 Introduction to today's segment, interpreting scripture
- 0:44 Interpretation answers the question, "So what?" through five questions
- 1:40 Bible not written to us, but for us, but we have to take it personally
- 5:03 "The best preachers are the ones that preach to themselves first."
- 6:27 Take what it meant to what it means now
- 8:27 Discussion of the meaning of Jeremiah 29:11
- 10:59 Forcing a scripture to sound "inspirational" shortchanges us from the truth
- 12:29 The harm of turning the Bible into a self-help book or a rules book
- 15:38 The danger of "putting ourselves" in the Bible
- 19:55 The "Just Do It" aspect of Bible study and its result
- 22:50 Becoming proficient in Bible knowledge requires persistence
- 24:45 Becoming proficient in Bible knowledge requires patience
- 25:47 Trust God in your Bible study
- 26:47 Our goal in Bible study
- 27:45 Review of tools that can help in Bible study, including prayer
- 30:01 Talking about what you learn can help energize your Bible study
- 31:55 Be humble about your new knowledge and understandings
- 34:12 This is God's book and we don't have the authority to challenge Him

The five questions referenced at 0:44:

Interpretation answers the question, "So what?" by answering:

- What should I do? (the question of obligation)
- What should I be (the question of character)
- What should I devote my time and energy to (the question of priorities)
- How can I determine right and wrong and best from good (the question of discernment)
- What does this say about God (the question concerning relationship)

Discussion questions:

1. Chris talks about how people misuse Jeremiah 29:11 (at 8:27). Below is Jeremiah 29, from verses 10 to 12. Discuss how combining all three verses shifts the understanding of verse 11.
2. Fred discusses (at 21:07) how Bible study wouldn't be an issue if we approached it as an infant longing for milk (I Peter 2:2, below). Why is it so hard to get into a habit of studying the Bible?

3. Read II Peter 1:3-7 (below) and discuss how the Bible and Bible knowledge relate to this passage. (Hint: part of this is discussed by Sam at 25:47)
4. After listening to this program and, hopefully, this series, has it changed your attitude about Bible study? Do you think you might improve your study of God's word?

Scriptures related to this study

Jeremiah 29:10 "For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. (referenced at 8:27)

I Peter 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. (referenced at 20:19)

II Peter 1: 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Job 23:12 I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food. (referenced at 27:10)

All scriptures are from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.