

# What Is Bible Study

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[Romans 12:2 NASB] says "2 And do not be **conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

When you see the word "conformed" think of Jello. Jello will "conform" to any shape that it is poured into. If we are not intentional about what we allow in our lives we will be conformed to the world. Carl Jung, a contemporary of Sigmund Freud, said "The world will ask you who you are and if you don't know it will tell you." You must always know who you are and most importantly whose you are. "Renewing" means "seeing things in a new way." Specifically to see things the way God sees them.

"When [Morgan Derham] was editorial secretary of the Scripture Union, [he] wrote: 'Bible Study is one of the most frequently praised and most consistently neglected activities in the Christian community today.' Limited impressions suggest that even in this do-it-yourself age it still remains necessary to plead with Christians to do Bible study for themselves." [Baigent 123]

## What Bible Study Is Not

It will be helpful to distinguish what is Bible study from what is not Bible study

1. **Bible study is not reading the Bible.** Bible reading is just that reading. Reading requires much less involvement with the Scripture and almost always will result in a lower level of absorption and comprehension.
2. **Bible study is not meditation on the Bible.** Bible meditation is taking a select verse or paragraph and simply reflecting on it. While more intimate than reading it is still not study.
3. **Bible study is not reading books about the Bible.** Reading what other people, who have studied the Bible, have to say about the Bible, book, chapter or verse is not a substitute for personal, direct engagement with the Scripture.
4. By the same token, **listening to sermons** or
5. attending a **Bible study** or Sunday School class and listening to **what** other people have learned from their own study of the Bible is not Bible study.

## **Bible study is....**

John Baigent said, “[Bible Study] is the personal investigation of the meaning of the Bible. It is an individual grappling with the biblical text in order to understand it better.” [Baigent 124]

He went on to say, “Christian Bible study should never be purely academic. The final aim is not Bible knowledge but the knowledge of God: not only to know about God intellectually but to know him as a person, experientially, and to discover His will for one’s life. That is why Bible Study must be preceded by prayer (‘Lord, speak to me’), followed by prayer (‘Thank you, Lord, for teaching me... Help me to put it into practice’), and all the time carried out in the consciousness that the Bible is God’s Word.” [Baigent 131]

## **Bible Study changes our lives**

- Remember how I explained that God’s word is Spirit and that the Bible is our best effort to preserve God’s word and make it accessible to everyone.
- We say it all the time, that this is the Living Word of God.
- The truth is that so long as this book stays closed, it is just a book and God’s word is as dead as the paper it is written on as far as our life is concerned.
- Through our study of God’s word we allow the HS to resurrect to life the static words contained on paper so that **we may** breathe in the breath of God.
- Studying God’s word is listening intently to God speaking to us.
- In doing so we get to know and experience God and the abundant life we have been promised by Jesus will come alive in us.

## **We study the Bible because:**

1. **It’s God’s word** – The most obvious reason is that it is the word of our God and if we desire to know Him then we need to know what He wants us to know and that is only found in the Bible.
2. **It gives life to our faith** – Our faith must be fed and we feed it on God’s word. If we do not study God’s word we starve our faith.
3. **It has a unique message for each of us** – Contained in God’s word is a message exclusively and uniquely for each one of us and we can receive it only by studying His word.
  - a. No one can tell you what God’s message is for you. Even as people share with you what God has revealed to them, that is God’s message to them. And even though what God has revealed to them will certainly be edifying

and useful to you, the message God has for you still remains for you to find.

- b. The Bible continues to prove itself to be the Living Word of God because no book has been more studied and written about than the Bible and still new insights come from it daily. Any of us could study a passage that has been studied and written about numerous times and still discover within those same verses a unique revelation just for us.
- c. God wants to talk to us - He's just waiting for us to listen. The **messages** from our Lord endlessly pour out of His word. We need only listen - we listen by studying His word.

Study God's word, listen to His voice and become inspired.

- 4. **It helps to change our nature** - The very foundation of the theory of evolution is that a plant or animal experiences a change **to its** nature that causes the plant or animal to become an entirely different plant or animal. Scientists all agree that this change must happen at the cellular level within the nucleus with a change in the DNA of one chromosome. If the nature of anything is to be changed it must come from the inside out. Only God is capable of changing anything's nature and He does this in us as we bring His word inside [1 Peter 1:23 NLT] tells us "For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God." - 1 Peter 1:23 NLT

We are reborn through the word of God.

[2 Peter 1:4 NASB] says "4 ... He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of [the] divine nature ..."

This partaking of the divine nature is not automatic. Rather we must intentionally pursue it.

This is accomplished as [Romans 12:2 NASB] states by "2 ... [being] transformed by the renewing of your mind ...."

"13 When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. 14 But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means." - 1 Corinthians 2:13-14 NLT

- The Greek word for "renewing" means the adjustment of the moral and spiritual vision and thinking to the mind of God, which is designed to have a

transforming effect upon our life. (“Strong’s Number: g342”) Biblical worldview.

- We will not be transformed and our minds are not renewed if we continue to fill it with the thoughts and sounds and visions and things of this world.
- For our minds to be renewed and for us to be transformed we must feed our minds on the things of God and the heart of all that is God’s word.
- It is only by His word that we have the means by which we can tell what is of the world from what is of God.

[Colossians 3:9-10 NLT] says “9 ... stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. 10 Put on your **new nature**, and be **renewed** as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.”

There really is no other way to “know our Creator and become like him” except by the absorption of His word. As we study and absorb God’s word, as it becomes part of who we are, God is changing our spiritual DNA. We are undergoing a Christ-likeness evolution as we put off the old nature and put on the new nature “as we learn to know our Creator and become like him.”

#### **5. So that we can teach, evangelize & challenge**

[1 Peter 3:15 NIV] tells us “15 ... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have....”

- If we have not studied God’s word and know it in our hearts, how can we possibly fulfill our role to teach, evangelize and to challenge those that speak lies about our God.
- Many Christians don’t speak up to answer questions or to speak about our God to others and to confront those who lie because they don’t know what to say. They don’t know what to say because they have not been studying God’s word and listen to His voice.

**Why don’t Christians study the Bible?** Given the potential to have God perform a miracle in our life by changing our nature, it is unbelievable that the vast majority of Christian never study the Bible.

Some reasons given by Christians for not studying the Bible are:

1. **The Bible is too difficult to read** – In this day and age there are dozens of very readable Bibles: the New International Version, New Living Translation, Good News Bible, The Message and many others. If you have a smartphone or computer, you can access many of them online for free.
2. **The Bible is boring** – Undoubtedly there are some parts of the Bible that may seem boring – so don’t start with those parts. Let us remember, we are not

reading a novel, we are studying Scripture. Believe me there is nothing more exciting than as you study the Bible and lights begin to come on and understanding flows in and insights are revealed to you and then there is that moment when the HS speaks to you.

3. **I already know all the important stuff** – really
4. **I am too busy:** All this means is that we are making our worldly desires and concerns more important than God and the abundant life He has promised us.
5. **I don't know where to begin:** Luke for men [left brained – methodical/systematic.], John for women [right brained – creative, visual].  
Lectionaries. Any Scripture from Pastor sermon
6. **I don't know how**
  - a. If you don't know how, then shame on whoever it was that brought you to Christ. If **we** bring someone to Christ it is **our** responsibility to disciple them at least as far as making sure they know how to study the Bible.
  - b. In this day and age there is no excuse for not knowing how to study the Bible. I did a Google search on “How to study the Bible?” and got 259 million results. If you are not computer savvy then go to a bookstore, preferably a Christian book store, and you will find at least a dozen books on Bible study. Walmart carries at least 3 Bible study books. Most gas station convenience stores have a rack of Christian books that includes at least one book on how to study the Bible. And of course you can ask any of the half dozen pastors in this church and we will gladly teach you.

### Works Cited

- Baigent, John W. "Bible Study: Methods and Means." Christian Brethren Review, no. 31, 1982, pp. 123-136.  
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