



Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

The Forge is a discipleship and equipping ministry for the men of ABEFC. *The Forge* seeks to train men in personal Bible study, sound doctrine, practical living, and effective ministry so that the men of ABEFC can be the leaders God has called them to be; leaders at home, leaders at church, leaders at work, and leaders in the community. Meeting during the school year with Pastor Lance and Pastor Rob for two hours twice a month, the men of *The Forge* will study and discuss the following subjects over the course of two years:

Bible Study Basics – How to study, correctly interpret, and consistently apply the Bible for yourself.

Bible Survey – A brief survey of the Old and New Testaments so that you can better understand the basic content and flow of the Bible’s message.

Spiritual Life – A study of how to grow in Christ and become more like Christ. This study will focus on various subjects such as spiritual disciplines, temptation, purity, knowing God’s will, stewardship, anger, anxiety, etc.

Sound Doctrine – A summary examination of the major doctrines of the Bible.

The Christian Home – A study of God’s plan for the home and the man’s role in it.

Men At Work – A study of what the Bible teaches us about your work and career.

Ministry – Developing a biblical philosophy of ministry and becoming more effective in whatever ministry God entrusts to you.

“The Forge” Schedule – usually 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm

Feb 22

March 8

March 29 *

April 5 *

April 26

May 10

May 24

*not a 2nd or 4th Tuesday

Why Christian Men Need Something Like “The Forge”

We need others to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves:

Proverbs 27:17¹⁷ Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

See the “one anothers” (e.g. Col. 3:16; 1 Thes. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 4:10)

We are not as good on our own as we are when teamed up with someone else:

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12⁹ Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. ¹⁰ For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. ¹¹ Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm *alone*? ¹² And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three *strands* is not quickly torn apart.

Why do geese fly together in a “V” formation?

- As each goose flaps its wings it creates an “uplift” for the birds that follow. By flying in a “V” formation, the flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone
- When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of him
- When the lead bird tires, it rotates back into the formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it
- The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those upfront to keep up their speed
- When a bird gets sick or wounded, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.¹

We need others to help protect us from unbelief and to stimulate us to good deeds:

Hebrews 3:12–13¹² Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one

¹ Gene A. Getz, *Elders and Leaders: God’s Plan for Leading the Church*, (Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2003), 23-24.

another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

Romans 12:9–13⁹ *Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.
¹⁰ *Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
¹¹ not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹² rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³ contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

What do men typically like to talk about when they get together? Why?

What are some of the reasons that most men don't talk about deep, personal things together?

Why is it important for men to talk about spiritual things together?

What are the risks involved in talking with others about spiritual things ?

What are the benefits of having deep relationships with men?

What Does a Godly Man Look Like?

What are some typical cultural ideas of what it means to be a man?

Luke 2:52⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

-Intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social growth

1 Timothy 3:1–7¹ It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. ² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴ *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶ *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5–9⁵ For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, ⁶ *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. ⁷ For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸ but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹ holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

- A. Blameless as a steward of God, above reproach, a model of Christian maturity (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- B. If he is married he is the husband of one wife, a one-woman kind of man, totally devoted and faithful to his own wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- C. Temperate, clearheaded, Spirit-controlled and disciplined, well-balanced, calm and steady rather than self-indulgent (1 Timothy 3:2)
- D. Sober-minded, prudent, biblically minded to the extent that he walks wisely according to the wisdom of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- E. Well behaved, orderly, virtuous, he is respected by others because his life adorns the Word of God (1 Timothy 3:2)
- F. Given to hospitality, as he is able, he shares his home with others in order to minister to their needs (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- G. Able to teach; he must be able to exhort believers in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- H. Not addicted to wine, free from any form of substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, etc.) or any kind of addiction which might take control of his life (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- I. Not argumentative or contentious, not a quarrelsome man but a peace maker. He is not to be offensively aggressive nor to insist on his rights. He is to keep his temper under control (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)

- J. Kind, gracious, and gentle, handling others in a gentle, patient, and gracious way (1 Timothy 3:3)
- K. Not inclined to anger, not contentious, but peaceable, emotionally stable and in control of his feelings (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- L. Not a lover of money, or greedy, but content with what he has (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- M. One who rules his own house well, i.e., his wife loves, respects, and follows his leadership his children are submissive to parental authority, not accused of rebellion (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:7)
- N. Not a novice or a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- O. One who has a good report and reputation with nonbelievers (1 Timothy 3:7)
- P. Not self-willed or arrogant, able to set aside his own preferences in order to promote unity and care for the needs of others (Titus 1:7)
- Q. A lover of good, devoted to that which is good or beneficial either in things, deeds, or people (Titus 1:8)
- R. Just and righteous living, able to make just decisions, those that are wise, fair, impartial, objective, and honest according to the principles of Scripture (Titus 1:8)
- S. Holy, devout and pleasing to God, commitment to know, love, and walk with God (Titus 1:8)
- T. Self-controlled and disciplined (Titus 1:8)

What Is Involved in Being a Godly Man? *Some Answers by Dr. Bruce Ware*

1. Love. 1) Loving God increasingly with all my heart, soul, mind and strength; loving Christ and the cross; loving the gospel — these are the foundation for all else. Drawing from God all I need to be the man and husband God has called me to be is my strength and hope. 2) Loving my wife as Christ loves the Church — this is the umbrella principle for marriage; everything else flows from this responsibility and privilege (Eph 5:25ff).

2. Leadership. Biblical manhood involves cultivating, embracing, and exercising leadership initiative, especially spiritual leadership initiative. This is a principle that applies to young men and adult single men just as well as to married men. Cultivate, embrace, and exercise spiritual leadership initiative. In marriage, my love for my wife involves and requires that I exert leadership in our relationship. My headship of my wife means I'm responsible for her spiritual growth and well-being. And as a father, I'm responsible in ways that my wife is not for the spiritual development of our children (Eph 6:1-4). And again, to do this, I must be seeking God and growing personally. Only out of the storehouse of my own soul's growth in God can I assist my wife to grow spiritually.

3. Example. Lead by example as much as by admonition and instruction. Set the example in: consistent times in the Word and prayer; in sacrificial service for your wife,

children, church family members, and community needs; in giving faithfully, generously, and regularly of your finances; in humble admission of wrong-doing along with confession, asking forgiveness, and repentance. Fight pride, fight defensiveness, fight carnality before others.

4. **Authority.** All three points above imply and invoke the concept of male-headship. Yes, God has given special authority to husbands and fathers. Learn, though, the correct expression of healthy, constructive, upbuilding, God-honoring, Christ-following authority. Resist and reject the sinful extremes of 1) harshness, bossiness, mean-spirited authoritarianism, and of 2) laziness, apathy, lethargy, negligence, and abdication of authority to the women in our lives. Learn to blend firmness with gentleness, truth with grace, a firm hand with a warm smile.

5. **Acceptance.** Each of us is unique as God has made us. We should accept others' differences without thinking ourselves to be either superior or inferior to others. In marriage, my wife is unique, and so in many ways, she is not like me. I need to accept who she is, prayerfully and sensitively seeking to assist her in changing what is sinful and needs to be changed, and accepting what is "just different."

6. **Listening.** One of my wife's biggest and most real needs is my attentive and respectful listening ear. She loves to share her experiences, thoughts, ideas, feelings, concerns, hurts, joys, etc. I can minister to my wife more than one might think by offering her caring, responsive, and respectful listening and interaction. Learn to listen sympathetically without rushing to "fix it" solutions. Connect first heart to heart, then later heart to head. Establish regular times of mutual sharing (yes, mutual), keep short accounts, and act on what you hear and learn.

7. **Understanding.** I need to live with my wife in an understanding way (1 Pet 3:7), to learn her needs, her sensitivities. I should seek to know the desires and felt needs of my wife and, when appropriate and possible, fulfill these. I need to discover her "language of love" and make every effort to love her in ways she feels loved.

8. **Work.** A man's main sense of identity, responsibility, and purpose is found in his work. Wives want to take pride in their husbands, and taking pride in their work is an important part of this. Women are not meant to bear the financial weight of a marriage or family, so husbands must work hard and responsibly. As important as work is to a man's identity and fulfillment, we must not allow work to overshadow our commitment to and time with our wives first, and also to our children. Work hard, work well, work to the honor of Christ, and then put work to rest.

9. **Sexuality.** My wife is my only legitimate sexual experience, and I am hers. So, learning to love sexually with increasing skill and pleasure is vitally important to the satisfaction and intimacy of our marriage. See human sexuality for what it is — the good gift of God to be experienced in marriage, as God has designed.

10. **Home.** She cares much about our home. The “honey-do” list is far more important to her than she is likely to let on. In love for her, I must pay attention to her requests and treat them as important. But more important even than this is cultivating the “culture” and “ethos” of our home. Develop an atmosphere of appreciation, respect, kindness, service, holiness, happiness, gratefulness, contentment, forgiveness — all as expressions of our love for God and one another.

The Tragic Reality of a Shortage of Godly Men

Genesis 18:20–24²⁰ And the LORD said, “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. ²¹ “I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.” ²² Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD. ²³ Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ “Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep *it* away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?

Genesis 18:32³² Then he said, “Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?” And He said, “I will not destroy *it* on account of the ten.”

Ezekiel 22:29–30²⁹ “The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice. ³⁰ “I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

Jeremiah 5:1–3¹ “Roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, And look now and take note. And seek in her open squares, If you can find a man, If there is one who does justice, who seeks truth, Then I will pardon her. ² “And although they say, ‘As the LORD lives,’ Surely they swear falsely.” ³ O LORD, do not Your eyes *look* for truth? You have smitten them, *But* they did not weaken; You have consumed them, *But* they refused to

take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to repent.

1 Corinthians 3:1–3¹ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

The Great Difference a Godly Man Can Make

Noah

Genesis 6:7–9⁷ The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹ These are *the records of* the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.

Joseph

Genesis 50:19–21¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? ²⁰ “As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. ²¹ “So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Moses

Hebrews 11:23–27²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

Phinehas, Son of Eleazar

Numbers 25:1–13¹ While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. ² For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel. ⁴ The LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.” ⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor.” ⁶ Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ⁷ When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, ⁸ and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. ⁹ Those who died by the plague were 24,000. ¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹ “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy. ¹² “Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give him My covenant of peace; ¹³ and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the sons of Israel.’ ”

Psalms 106:30–31³⁰ Then Phinehas stood up and interposed, And so the plague was stayed. ³¹ And it was reckoned to him for righteousness, To all generations forever.

Samuel

1 Samuel 3:19–20¹⁹ Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail. ²⁰ All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

David

1 Samuel 17:45–47⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. ⁴⁶ “This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD’s and He will give you into our hands.”

John the Baptist

Matthew 11:11¹¹ “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Peter, James, John, Paul, Polycarp, Augustine, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Huss, Knox, Owen, Edwards, Newton, Watts, Carey, Taylor, Judson, Spurgeon....and the person who shared the gospel with you!

The Biblical Mandate to Multiply Godly Men

Matthew 28:18–20¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

2 Timothy 2:1–2¹ You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

1 Timothy 4:15–16¹⁵ Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. ¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Colossians 1:28–29²⁸ We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹ For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

For Further Study:

Farrar, Steve. *Point Man*. Multnomah Pub, 1990.

This bestselling classic encourages and equips Christian men to lead their families successfully through hazards and ambushes like divorce, promiscuity, suicide, and drug addiction. Men will find practical insight on topics such as a father's influence, maintaining purity, and husband-and-wife teamwork. In this war, renowned men's author Steve Farrar emphasizes, Jesus Christ is looking for men who will not die, but live for their families.

Getz, Gene. *The Measure of a Man*. Regal, 1974.

Since 1974, men around the world have practiced the biblical teaching in this book to live by God's terms. Now you can follow in their footsteps to reach God's standards as a father, a husband, and a mentor to other men—and Gene Getz tells you how to make the grade. True masculinity isn't measured by strength but by these 20 biblical guidelines drawn from the apostle Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. With ideas for real-life applications and words of inspiration, here is Gene's greatest work— fully rewritten and updated to speak in the most practical terms to men from every generation.

Hughes, R. Kent. *Disciplines of a Godly Man*. Crossway, 1991.

This inspiring and best-selling book has long been speaking to the hearts of men, and its words continue to be highly relevant. Using biblical wisdom, engaging illustrations, practical suggestions for daily living, and personal study questions, Kent Hughes offers hard-hitting discussion on major areas of Christian manhood: marriage, fatherhood, friendship, purity, integrity, leadership, prayer, ministry, and more.

MacArthur, John. *Different by Design*. Chariot Victor Publishing, 1994.

Almost without notice, our homes and churches have become the newest laboratory for sex-role experimentation. Lured by the world's acceptance and a national obsession with fairness, we've replaced the once-clear biblical boundaries between men and women with a confusing, frighteningly secular hybrid. The harmony and effectiveness we were promised never came—only a treacherous rift that is ruining marriages, dividing families, and splitting churches top to bottom. *Different by Design* offers hope for bridging that gap and finding fulfillment and success in your family and church. In his thorough, no-nonsense style, John MacArthur sets aside prevailing cultural standards and helps you understand and apply the biblical principles for men's and women's roles. Discover the beauty, balance, and benefits of God's unique role for you in this practical, well-researched tool—one you'll turn to again and again!

John Piper and Wayne Grudem. *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*. Crossway Books, 2006.

More than twenty contributors provide a thorough response to evangelical feminism, with relevance for family, society, and church life.

Biblical Change *“Becoming God’s Type of Man”*

Introduction

We are changed individuals in need of change

1 Corinthians 6:9-11; *“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”*

2 Corinthians 5:17; *“the old things passed away; behold new things have come”*

1 John 1:8; *“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*

I. The Importance of Change

3 reasons why change is important:

1) Because it is _____.

Ephesians 4:17-24; *“So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”*

Colossians 3:8-10; 12-13, *“But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him...(verse 12) So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”*

2) Because it is Required for _____

Isaiah 43:6-7; *“Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”*

Romans 12:1-2; *“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 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.”*

Isaiah 1:10-17; *“Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me? Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen Your hands are covered with blood. (verse 16-17)Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.”*

3) _____ for ministry.

Philippians 2:12-16; *“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.”*

1 Timothy 4:16; *“Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”*

II. The Description of Change

Change is not:

- 1) Simply _____ a particular behavior
- 2) Simply _____ righteous behavior
- 3) _____ to change
- 4) Simply _____
- 5) Simply _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

Change is:

The life-long partnership with God in the process of becoming more like Christ for God's glory.

- 1) Change is a Life-long process

1 John 1:8; *"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us."*

Romans 7:21-24; *"I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?"*

2 Peter 1:5-8; *"Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are **increasing**, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

2 Peter 3:18; *"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."*

2) Change is a Partnership with God

Romans 8:28-29; And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Philippians 2:12-13; "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

1 Timothy 4:7; But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;

3) Change is the process of becoming more like Christ

4) Change is for God's Glory

2 Corinthians 5:9; "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him"

Matthew 15 & Mark 7; "THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME."

Isaiah 64:6; "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."

III. Taking Steps to Change

1) Admit Spiritual _____

Hebrews 3:12-13; "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Galatians 6:1; "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted."

Matthew 7:1-5; "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

The Right response to that Realization

- a. _____
Psalm 139:23-24; *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”*
 - b. Look into the mirror of _____
James 1:22-24; *“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.”*
2 Timothy 3:16-17; *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*
 - c. Surround yourself with _____
Hebrews 3:12-13; *“Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”*
Hebrews 10:24-25; *“and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*
2. _____
1 John 1:8-10; *“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”*
Psalm 51:1-4; *“Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.”*

3. Recognize, Depend on & Utilize the _____ in the Change Process

Recognize the Work of God in the change process

Philippians 1:6; *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Philippians 2:13; *“for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”*

Depend on the Work of God in the Change Process

Galatians 3:3; *“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”*

Romans 6:8-14; *“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”*

Ephesians 1:18-20; *“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”*

2 Peter 1:3; *“seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”*

Utilize the Work of God in the Change Process

- a) The _____
- b) The _____
- c) _____ To God

4. _____ Preparation

Proverbs 4:23; *“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it, flow the springs of life.”*

Mark 7:20-23; *“And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”*

Where do actions come from?

Genesis 3:1-6; *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”*

James 4:1-2; *“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.”*

5. _____

Ephesians 4:22-24; *“that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”*

Ephesians 4:25-29; *“Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”*

Matthew 5:21-22; *“You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell”*

Matthew 5:27-28; *“You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”*

For Further Study:

Lane, Tim S. & Tripp, Paul David. *How People Change*. New Growth Press, 2006.

What does it take for lasting change to take root in your life? If you've ever tried, fail, and wondered why, you need *How People Change*. This book explains the biblical pattern for change in a clear, practical way you can apply to the challenges of daily life. But Change involves more than a biblical formula: you will see how God is at work to make you the person you were created to be. That powerful, loving, redemptive relationship is at the heart of all positive change you experience.

Adams, Jay. *How to Help People Change*. Zondervan, 1986.

Change is the essential goal of the counseling process. And Christian counselors recognize, as the author is so concerned to remind us, "Substantial change requires the alteration of the heart." How does a Christian counselor work in order to bring about this type of change? The answer is found, of course, in Scripture – in 2 Timothy 3:14-17, to be specific.

Becoming a Man of the Word
Keys to Accurate and Transformational Bible Study

Why Do We Need to Study the Bible?

The Bible is the only completely trustworthy source for hearing from God.

2 Timothy 3:16–17¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

1 Corinthians 2:11–14¹¹ For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. ¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

The Morning I Heard the Voice of God – John Piper

Let me tell you about a most wonderful experience I had early Monday morning, March 19, 2007, a little after six o'clock. God actually spoke to me. There is no doubt that it was God. I heard the words in my head just as clearly as when a memory of a conversation passes across your consciousness. The words were in English, but they had about them an absolutely self-authenticating ring of truth. I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that God still speaks today.

I couldn't sleep for some reason. I was at Shalom House in northern Minnesota on a staff couples' retreat. It was about five thirty in the morning. I lay there wondering if I should get up or wait till I got sleepy again. In his mercy, God moved me out of bed. It was mostly dark, but I managed to find my clothing, got dressed, grabbed my briefcase, and slipped out of the room without waking up Noël. In the main room below, it was totally quiet. No one else seemed to be up. So I sat down on a couch in the corner to pray.

As I prayed and mused, suddenly it happened. God said, "*Come and see what I have done.*" There was not the slightest doubt in my mind that these were the very words of God. In this very moment. At this very place in the twenty-first century, 2007, God was speaking to me with absolute authority and self-evidencing reality. I paused to let this sink in. There was a sweetness about it. Time seemed to matter little. God was near. He had me in his sights. He had something to say to me. When God draws near, hurry ceases. Time slows down.

I wondered what he meant by "come and see." Would he take me somewhere, like he did Paul into heaven to see what can't be spoken? Did "see" mean that I would have a vision of some great deed of God that no one has seen? I am not sure how much time elapsed between God's initial word, "Come and see what I have done," and his next words. It doesn't matter. I was being enveloped in the love of his personal communication. The God of the universe was speaking to me.

Then he said, as clearly as any words have ever come into my mind, "*I am awesome in my deeds toward the children of man.*" My heart leaped up, "Yes, Lord! You are awesome in your deeds. Yes, to all men whether they see it or not. Yes! Now what will you show me?"

The words came again. Just as clear as before, but increasingly specific: "*I turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There they rejoiced in me—who rules by my might forever.*" Suddenly I realized God was taking me back several thousand years to the time when he dried up the Red Sea and the Jordan River. I was being transported by his word back into history to those great deeds. This is what he meant by "come and see." He was transporting me back by his words to those two glorious deeds before the children of men. These were the "awesome deeds" he referred to. God himself was narrating the mighty works of God. He was doing it for me. He was doing it with words that were resounding in my own mind.

There settled over me a wonderful reverence. A palpable peace came down. This was a holy moment and a holy corner of the world in northern Minnesota. God Almighty had come down and was giving me the stillness and the openness and the willingness to hear his very voice. As I marveled at his power to dry the sea and the river, he spoke again. "*I keep watch over the nations—let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*"

This was breathtaking. It was very serious. It was almost a rebuke. At least a warning. He may as well have taken me by the collar of my shirt, lifted me off the ground with one hand, and said, with an incomparable mixture of fierceness and love, "Never, never, never exalt yourself. Never rebel against me."

I sat staring at nothing. My mind was full of the global glory of God. “*I keep watch over the nations.*” He had said this to me. It was not just that he had said it. Yes, that is glorious. But he had said this to me. The very words of God were in my head. They were there in my head just as much as the words that I am writing at this moment are in my head. They were heard as clearly as if at this moment I recalled that my wife said, “Come down for supper whenever you are ready.” I know those are the words of my wife. And I know these are the words of God. Think of it. Marvel at this. Stand in awe of this. The God who keeps watch over the nations, like some people keep watch over cattle or stock markets or construction sites—this God still speaks in the twenty-first century. I heard his very words. He spoke personally to me.

What effect did this have on me? It filled me with a fresh sense of God’s reality. It assured me more deeply that he acts in history and in our time. It strengthened my faith that he is for me and cares about me and will use his global power to watch over me. Why else would he come and tell me these things?

It has increased my love for the Bible as God’s very word, because it was through the Bible that I heard these divine words, and through the Bible I have experiences like this almost every day. The very God of the universe speaks on every page into my mind—and your mind. We hear his very words. God himself has multiplied his wondrous deeds and thoughts toward us; none can compare with him! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told ([Psalm 40:5](#)).

And best of all, they are available to all. If you would like to hear the very same words I heard on the couch in northern Minnesota, read [Psalm 66:5-7](#). That is where I heard them. O how precious is the Bible. It is the very word of God. In it God speaks in the twenty-first century. This is the very voice of God. By this voice, he speaks with absolute truth and personal force. By this voice, he reveals his all-surpassing beauty. By this voice, he reveals the deepest secrets of our hearts. No voice anywhere anytime can reach as deep or lift as high or carry as far as the voice of God that we hear in the Bible. It is a great wonder that God still speaks today through the Bible with greater force and greater glory and greater assurance and greater sweetness and greater hope and greater guidance and greater transforming power and greater Christ-exalting truth than can be heard through any voice in any human soul on the planet from outside the Bible.

This is why I found the article in this month’s *Christianity Today*, “[My Conversation with God](#),” so sad. Written by an anonymous professor at a “well-known Christian University,” it tells of his experience of hearing God. What God said was that he must give all his royalties from a new book toward the tuition of a needy student. What makes me sad about the article is not that it isn’t true or didn’t happen. What’s sad is that it really does give the impression that extra-biblical communication with God is surpassingly wonderful and faith-deepening. All the while, the supremely-glorious communication of the living God which personally and powerfully and transformingly explodes in the receptive heart through the Bible everyday is passed over in silence.

I am sure this professor of theology did not mean it this way, but what he actually said was, “For years I’ve taught that God still speaks, *but I couldn’t testify to it personally*. I can only do so now anonymously, for reasons I hope will be clear” (emphasis added). Surely he does not mean what he seems to imply—that only when one hears an extra-biblical voice like, “The money is not yours,” can you testify *personally* that God still speaks. Surely he does not mean to belittle the voice of God in the Bible which speaks this very day with power and truth and wisdom and glory and joy and hope and wonder and helpfulness ten thousand times more decisively than *anything* we can hear outside the Bible.

I grieve at what is being communicated here. The great need of our time is for people to experience the living reality of God by hearing his word personally and transformingly in Scripture. Something is incredibly wrong when the words we hear outside Scripture are more powerful and more affecting to us than the inspired word of God. Let us cry with the psalmist, “Incline my heart to your word” ([Psalm 119:36](#)). “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” ([Psalm 119:18](#)). Grant that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened to know our hope and our inheritance and the love of Christ that passes knowledge and be filled with all the fullness of God ([Ephesians 1:18; 3:19](#)). O God, don’t let us be so deaf to your word and so unaffected with its ineffable, evidential excellency that we celebrate lesser things as more thrilling, and even consider this misplacement of amazement worthy of printing in a national magazine.

Still hearing his voice in the Bible,
Pastor John Piper

The Bible is our only source for rightly understanding our God, our world, ourselves, our need, and our place in God’s plan.

John 17:17¹⁷ “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

2 Peter 1:3³ seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

The Bible is THE tool that God uses to transform us into Christlikeness

Romans 12:2² 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.

The Bible is not like any other book and is able to do in us what nothing else can

Hebrews 4:12¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Psalms 19:7–11⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

What is the Message of the Bible?

“There is one God. The Bible has one Creator. It is one book. It has one plan of grace, recorded from initiation, through execution, to consummation. From predestination to glorification, the Bible is the story of God redeeming His chosen people for the praise of His glory.

As God’s redemptive purpose and plan unfolds in Scripture, five recurring motifs are constantly emphasized:

- (1) the nature of God
- (2) the curse for sin and disobedience
- (3) the blessing for faith and obedience
- (4) the Lord Savior and the sacrifice for sin
- (5) the coming kingdom and glory

Everything revealed on the pages of both the Old Testament and New Testament is associated with those five categories. Scripture is always teaching or illustrating: (1) the character and attributes of God; (2) the tragedy of sin and disobedience to God’s holy standard; (3) the blessedness of faith and obedience to God’s standard; (4) the need for a Savior by whose righteousness and substitution sinners can be forgiven, declared just, and transformed to obey God’s standard; and (5) the coming glorious end of redemptive history in the Lord Savior’s earthly kingdom and the subsequent eternal reign and glory of God and Christ. It is essential as

one studies Scripture to grasp these recurring categories like great hooks on which to hang the passages. While reading through the Bible, one should be able to relate each portion of Scripture to these dominant topics, recognizing that what is introduced in the Old Testament is also made more clear in the New Testament.”²

The Bible’s Storyline in One Sentence³:

Greg Beale:

The OT storyline appears best to be summarized as: the historical story of God who progressively reestablishes his new creational kingdom out of chaos over a sinful people by his word and Spirit through promise, covenant, and redemption, resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to extend that new creation rule and resulting in judgment for the unfaithful (defeat and exile), all of which issues into his glory; the NT storyline can be summarized as: Jesus’ life of covenantal obedience, trials, judgmental death for sinners, and especially resurrection by the Spirit has launched the fulfillment of the eschatological already-and-not-yet promised new creation reign, bestowed by grace through faith and resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to extend this new creation rule and resulting in judgment for the unfaithful, unto God’s glory.

Dan Block:

God was so covenantally committed to the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him may have eternal life!

Craig Blomberg:

God is in the process of recreating the universe which has been corrupted by sin and has made it possible for all those and only those who follow Jesus to be a part of the magnificent, eternal community that will result.

Darrell Bock:

The Bible tells how the loving Creator God restored a lost humanity and cosmos through reestablishing his rule through Jesus Christ and the provision of life to His honor.

Mark Dever:

God has made promises to bring His people to Himself and He is fulfilling them all through Christ.

Kevin DeYoung:

A holy God sends his righteous Son to die for unrighteous sinners so we can be holy and live happily with God forever.

John Frame:

God glorifies himself in the redemption of sinners.

Scott Hafemann:

The Triune God is the beginning, middle, and end of everything, 'for from him (as Creator) and through him (as Sustainer and Redeemer) and to him (as Judge) are all things' (Rom 11:36).

Paul House:

The movement in history from creation to new creation through the redemptive work of Father, Son, and Spirit who saves and changes corrupted people and places for his glory and their good.

Kent Hughes:

God is redeeming his creation by bringing it under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

² MacArthur, J. (2003). *Unleashing God's Word in Your Life* (86–87). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

³ Compiled by Dane Ortlund

<http://dogmadoxa.blogspot.com/2011/01/whats-message-of-bible-in-one-sentence.html>

Andreas Kostenberger:

'God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16).

Grant Osborne:

God created mankind in order to love them, but we all rejected his love, so God sent His Son to bear our sins on the cross in order that by believing in His sacrificial atonement, we might have life.

Leland Ryken:

The message of the Bible is twofold: to show how people can be saved from their sins through faith in Christ's atonement AND how to live all of life as a follower of God.

Tom Schreiner:

God reigns over all things for his glory, but we will only enjoy his saving reign in the new heavens and the new earth if we repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the crucified and risen Lord and who gave himself on the cross for our salvation.

Jay Sklar:

The first sentence that comes to mind is that of my colleague Michael D. Williams, who describes the Bible's story about the world as follows: God made it, we broke it, Jesus fixes it!

Doug Wilson:

Scripture tells us the story of how a Garden is transformed into a Garden City, but only after a dragon had turned that Garden into a howling wilderness, a haunt of owls and jackals, which lasted until an appointed warrior came to slay the dragon, giving up his life in the process, but with his blood effecting the transformation of the wilderness into the Garden City.

What is the Structure of the Bible?

A. Old Testament Introduction:

1. The main flow of the Old Testament can be seen in the following way:
 - a. Creation
 - b. Fall (Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Seth)
 - c. Flood (Noah and family)
 - d. Nations (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)
 - e. Exile (Egypt) – 430 years
 - f. Exodus (Wilderness) – 40 years
 - g. Conquest (Canaan) – 7 years
 - h. Judges – 350 years
 - i. United Kingdom (Saul, David, Solomon) – 110 years
 - j. Divided Kingdom (Judah/Israel) – 350 years
 - k. Exile (Babylon) – 70 years
 - l. Return (Rebuilding) – 140 years
2. The books of the Old Testament are divided into the following categories:
 - a. The Law (Genesis – Deuteronomy)
 - b. History (Joshua – Esther)
 - c. Wisdom (Job – Song of Solomon)
 - d. Major Prophets (Isaiah – Daniel)
 - e. Minor Prophets (Hosea – Malachi)

B. New Testament Introduction

1. The gospel accounts of Christ present the manifestation of the incarnate Son of God.
 - a. The gospel proclaimed in Jerusalem to the Jews.
 - b. The gospel proclaimed in Judea and Samaria.
 - c. The gospel proclaimed to the Gentiles.
 - d. The gospel proclaimed to the center of the then known world (Rome).
2. Acts of the Apostles presents the expansion of the gospel message, and was written to strengthen and correct the doctrine in the churches.
3. The Epistles
4. Revelation presents the culmination of God's redemptive plan for both Israel and the church in the eternal state.
 - a. Christ is victorious over Satan.
 - b. Christ is crowned as King.

Why does it matter HOW we study the Bible?

2 Timothy 2:15–18¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. ¹⁶ But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, ¹⁷ and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

1 Corinthians 4:1–2¹ Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

What is the Process for Transformational Bible Study?

Prayerfully Prepare Your Heart

I am about to hear from God so I had better be ready to listen and obey!

Psalm 119:5⁵ Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!

Psalm 119:8⁸ I shall keep Your statutes; Do not forsake me utterly!

Psalm 119:18¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.

Psalm 119:26–27²⁶ I have told of my ways, and You have answered me; Teach me Your statutes. ²⁷ Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will meditate on Your wonders.

Psalm 119:29²⁹ Remove the false way from me, And graciously grant me Your law.

Psalm 119:33–40³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, And I shall observe it to the end. ³⁴ Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law And keep it with all *my* heart. ³⁵ Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it. ³⁶ Incline my heart to Your testimonies And not to *dishonest* gain. ³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways. ³⁸ Establish Your word to Your servant, As that which produces reverence for You. ³⁹ Turn away my reproach which I dread, For Your ordinances are good. ⁴⁰ Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me through Your righteousness.

Repent of sin and humbly prepare yourself to receive the Word

James 1:21²¹ Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

Read the Bible as a book that presents God as the main character and Jesus as the ultimate focus

Genesis 1:1¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

John 5:39³⁹ “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

Luke 24:25–27²⁵ And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Read the text carefully and repeatedly

Read quickly, then more slowly - begin with survey reading and then read sentence by sentence, phrase by phrase more carefully.

Read multiple times – e.g. once a day for thirty days

Always remember that you are trying to FIRST understand what the author meant when he wrote what he wrote! This is called understanding the *authorial intent*! At this stage, we are simply trying to find out what it meant to the original readers, not “what it means to me.”

As you read, jot down general major themes, truths that stand out, questions to research.

Observation

Observe the Context: where does this passage fit within the flow of the Bible, where does it fit in the Old/New Testament, where does it fit within the book, etc.

Observe the Setting:

Who – author, recipients, other people mentioned in the text

When – when was the book written, when did the events in the book take place, what was the historical situation and cultural setting

Where – where was the author when he wrote, where were the recipients, where did the events take place, etc.

Why – what occasioned the letter, why were these events recorded, etc.

What – what is the theme of the passage, what are the main points being made

Observe the Words

Key words – “joy” in Philippians

Synonyms and Antonyms

Repeated terms

Key phrases

Observe the Structure

Break down the paragraphs and sentences to understand what is going on in the text. Identify the parts of speech being used. This will help you grasp the argument of the text.

Interpretation

- God is knowable and has given us His Word so that we might know Him
- The Bible is written in a way that can be understood. The Bible is intelligible and propositional and not “magic words” or a collection of “mumbo-jumbo gobbledygook”
- Only the Historical-grammatical method of interpretation should be used
 - Historical interpretation means that we take into account the historical background of the author and the recipients. The Bible was written to common people, and is understandable to anyone. However, it was written thousands of years ago to a different culture. Therefore, as modern readers, we have to try to recover a general sense of the meaning of words, phrases and concepts in the ancient cultures.
 - Grammatical interpretation means that we study the words chosen and the sentence structure used to understand what the author intended to communicate.
 - Remember, we are after *authorial intent*! We are seeking to do *exegesis* (letting the authors meaning come out of the text) and not *eisegesis* (reading into the text our own ideas).
 - Most of the Bible can be easily interpreted by simply taking the language in the usual way (making allowances for obvious figures of speech). In other words, *if the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense.*
- There is only one correct interpretation of any particular text, though there will be *many* applications of that singular correct interpretation
- Interpret in light of the context of the passage
- Interpret in light of progressive revelation
- Interpret Scripture in harmony with other Scripture
- Interpret the unclear in light of the clear
- No Scripture properly interpreted will contradict any other Scripture properly interpreted

Application

Our goal in Bible study is not to simply understand the text. Our goal is to take what we have rightly understood and then apply it to our life.

In application, we take the truth that has been discovered and we seek to apply it to our own real-life situations.

James 1:22–24²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

“The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity; it was written to transform your life. The ultimate goal of Bible study, then, is not to do something to the Bible, but to allow the Bible to do something to you, so truth becomes tangent to life.” – Howard Hendricks

Get your SPECKs on to help you make good application of the text:

S - Is there a sin to confess, forsake, avoid?

P – Is there a principle to live by or a promise to claim? (make sure the promise was intended for you!)

E - Is there an example to follow or avoid?

C - Is there a command to obey?

K - Is there some knowledge about God to be gained?

Remember, not everything in the Bible has the same level of direct applicability to us but there is almost always a secondary level of applicability.

For Further Study

Carson, D. A.. *Exegetical fallacies*. Baker Academic, 1996.

This book identifies the common grammatical, lexical, cultural, theological, and historical mistakes Bible exegetes can make. In *Fundamentalist Journal*, Robert Yarborough reviewed *Exegetical Fallacies* this way: "Carson has furnished a pithy and practical manual of many of those mistakes to which all of us who deal with the text in earnest fall prey."

*Estes, Daniel. *Learning and Living God's Word: How To Study the Bible*. Regular Baptist Press, 1993.

This book is a special kind of book. it is not a novel with a gripping story to read. Neither is it a textbook with facts to memorize. It is a manual...a workbook designed to teach you how to study the Bible on your own. This book will guide you into the skills you need to learn and live God's word. It was born out of a small group study in the author's church, after five young couples asked him to teach them the skills of personal Bible study. Whether you are a teen, a college student or an older adult, this manual can help you.

*Mayhue, Richard. *How to Interpret the Bible For Yourself*. BMH Books, 1986.

*Plummer, Robert L. *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible*. Kregel, 2010.

In *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*, New Testament Professor Dr. Robert L. Plummer tackles the major questions that persons ask about reading and understanding the Bible.

Questions include: Does the Bible contain error? Were the ancient manuscripts of the Bible transmitted accurately? What is the best English Bible translation? Is the Bible really all about Jesus? Do all the commands of the Bible apply today? Why can't people agree on what the Bible means? How do we interpret historical narrative? How do we interpret the Psalms? What does the Bible tell us about the future? What is the "Theological Interpretation of Scripture"?

Ramm, Bernard. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Baker, 1980.

Since its publication in 1950, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* has been a standard introduction to hermeneutics in evangelical colleges and seminaries. Twice revised, this textbook has sold well over 100,000 copies. Now this venerable resource appears for the first time in a paperback edition.

Hermeneutics, writes the author, is the science and art of Biblical interpretation. ... As such it forms one of the most important members of the theological sciences. This is especially true for conservative Protestantism, which looks on the Bible as ... the only authoritative voice of God to man.

After surveying the history of biblical interpretation, the author devotes seventy pages to explicating the Protestant system of hermeneutics. He then discusses the doctrinal, devotional, and practical uses of the Bible. Following a chapter on the hermeneutical dimension of the problem of biblical inerrancy and secular science, he concludes with chapters on the interpretation of types, prophecy, and parables.

Zuck, Roy B.. *Basic Bible interpretation*. David C. Cook, 1991.

Can the Bible really be understood? Are Old Testament prophecies relevant for today? How can I understand the symbolism of the Book of Revelation? What is the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament? Why study Bible interpretation? Dr. Roy Zuck points out that it is essential for understanding and teaching the Bible properly, essential as a step beyond observation, and essential for applying the Bible correctly. He discusses the challenges of Bible interpretation, considers the problems of Bible interpretation, explores the history of Bible interpretation, and defines key terms--all in a practical, down-to-earth way. Though Dr. Zuck's many years of teaching and scholarship are evident in this book, he has written in language understandable to all who are serious about bible study and who want to know better what Scripture means.

The Techniques of Bible Study ***Keys to Accurate and Transformational Bible Study***

Hope for the Student

1 Peter 2:4-9, *“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.” This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone,” and, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”*

Ephesians 1:17-18; *“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,”*

1 Corinthians 2:10-13, *“For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”*

As we come to our study of **Bible Study Methods**, we must remind ourselves that God gave us this Word to lead us to salvation, to teach, to rebuke, to correct, and to train us in righteousness so that we would be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-7) and if he gave us his Word, He also will give us the ability to understand it so that we can be saved, be taught, be rebuked, be corrected, be trained in righteousness so that we would be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Bible Study is a two-sided coin

2 Timothy 2:15; *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”*

1 Corinthians 2:10-13, *“For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”*

Observation

Observation is the component of Bible Study where we discover what the passage is **saying**

Observing the text means to carefully perceive, to look intently, to pay full attention to the material.

Several times in Jesus ministry, Jesus reprimanded His disciples with the words:

Mark 8:18; *“Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?”*

The purpose of observation is to scrutinize the material so one can discover everything that is there. A reader needs to saturate his mind with a passage and note what is before him. Observation is the art of awareness. Here the Christian must learn to relate to the Scripture and respond to the question, **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

McDowell stated that:

“Besides not knowing what to look for, most people do not see much more because they do not know how to look. It is like witnessing. If you do not know how to witness, you usually do not witness. If you do not know how to study the Bible, or how to look, you do not take the trouble to look. This is true of any subject. Take art or music, for example. Some people will pass by a great painting and make a glib comment, while another group of people will come by and rave about it. What is the difference? The latter know how to look and what to look for. They know what makes a painting exciting, such as movement, form, gesture – important things about it. This is why it is often said of those that criticize great works of art that the painting is really judging them, rather than they the painting. The same is true of those who comment what they study the Bible but cannot find that much to get out of it. Their comment actually says more about them than about the Bible.”

Observation begins with a Survey of the Book (Telescopic Approach)

We begin our study of Scripture with a sweeping overview of the book we are going to study

1. Read the Entire Book

Read it quickly through once.

In this initial reading, we are looking for things like:

Who wrote the book? (His identity, his characteristics, his location, his relationship with the readers)

Who was it written to? (Their identity, their location, their spiritual condition, their questions and needs)

What was going on? (situation or events occurring at that time, time of prosperity or persecution)

Why was it written? (purpose of the book)

Theme? (general subject or what are the major events or ideas of the book)

Major characters? (Who are the major characters in the story?)

Tone? (what tone of voice the writer used)

Type of literature? (Narrative, Poetry & Epistle/letter?)

Let's practice.

Read through the Book of Philippians and answer these few questions:

- 1) Writer?
- 2) Recipients?
- 3) Situation?
- 4) Purpose?
- 5) Theme?
- 6) Tone?
- 7) Type of Literature

Read it repeatedly

Benefits:

- A. Retention of the material
- B. A Sense of the Flow of the book, the Topics of the book, the Purpose of the book
- C. It will allow us to know what we don't know about a book

It will allow us to come to our microscopic study with a list of questions for the text

It will also allow us to come to outside Bible study tools with good questions to ask,

For Example, there may not be an obvious purpose statement in a particular book as there is in John's Gospel or 1 Corinthians

John 20:31; *“but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”*

1 Corinthians 7:1; *“Now concerning the things about which you wrote”*

Two very helpful resources are

Bruce Wilkerson & Kenneth Boa. *Talk Thru the Bible*. Thomas Nelson Publishers. Nashville Tennessee.

D. Edmond Hiebert. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Volumes I, II & III*. BMH Books. Winona Lake, Indiana.

Read it with the understanding of where it fits in redemptive History

As you read the particular book you are studying, you must seek to find out where it fits in the overall structure of the Bible

As we say last week the bible has a structure, there is a history, there is a flow and it helps us understand the specific passage if we can understand where it fits in the story of the Bible

Our ability to understand the message of God in a particular passage is determined by our ability to observe the overall flow of the book that the passage is located in

Special Note: Before we move forward in the microscopic study, I want to encourage you to record your findings in both this step and the following steps

Writing often times:

Takes our minds out of “Neutral”

Promotes concentration
Disentangles information
Organizes facts
Increases memory
Initiates questions

Observation continues by breaking down the text into smaller passages (Microscopic Approach)

Begin with a paragraph or two, a chapter or even a particular story

Questions to ask the text:

1. What **Thought Structure** is used?

We do so by looking for the following:

- a. What is the grammatical outline of the passage?

There are steps to outline the grammatical outline:

- 1) Place independent clauses on the left-hand margin. Include the subject, verb and direct object on this line.
- 2) Place dependent clauses and modifiers under the words they describe.
- 3) Connect conjunctions by lines to the words and phrases they link.

Example – Philippians 1:9-11

Let's practice.

Philippians 1:27-30

b. Are there any **words, phrases or concepts** repeated?

Matthew 5 – Blessed

Matthew 23 – Woe

1 Peter 5:1-14

c. Are there any important **questions** asked?

Matthew 11:7; *“As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?”*

Romans 3:1; *“Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?”*

Romans 6:1-2; *“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?”*

James 2:1-4; *“My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,”*

have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?"

- d. Are there any **cause and effect** relationships mentioned?

Matthew 10:32; *"Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven."*

Matthew 12:34; *"You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."*

- e. Are there any **contrasts** made?

Often connecting words such as "but," "yet," and "nevertheless" might indicate a contrast.

Proverbs 10

Philippians 2:3; *"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;"*

- f. Are there any **comparisons** made?

The following connecting words frequently indicate a comparison: "as," "like," "so also," "likewise," and "even so"

James 3

Matthew 11:16; *"But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children,"*

Matthew 25:32; *"All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;"*

g. Are there any **reasons** given?

Often the words “for,” “since,” and “because” signify this structure

1 Corinthians 1:3-5; *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus,”*

James 1:2-3; *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”*

h. Are there any **results** expected?

Many times the words “therefore” or “so then” note the consequences the preceding teaching should have on the reader.

Colossians 2:6; *“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,”*

Colossians 3:1-5; *“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”*

i. Are there any **lists** provided?

Some lists are simply a catalogue of examples while others are logically arranged points that progress from one to another

1 Timothy 3:1-7; *“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”*

Romans 5:3-5; *“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”*

j. Are there any **lesser to greater** arguments?

Matthew 6:25-33; *“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? “And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? “And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ “For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. “But*

seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

2. What important **Connecting Words** should be noted?

Examples

<u>Connecting Words</u>	<u>Function</u>
Although, but, never, yet, though however	Contrast/Disregard/(in spite of)
Just as, as, likewise, also, even so	Comparison
So then, so, then, thus, therefore	Result
Because, for, since	Explanation (to clarify/reason/justify)
In order that, that, so that	Purpose (aim/goal)
After, before, now, until, while, then, when,	Time
If, unless	Condition
Finally	Conclusion

3. What are the **5 W's and H**?

A. **Who?**

Who is the author?

Who is the material written to?

Who are the major characters in the story?

Who said this or did that?

B. **What?**

What are the major events or ideas in the passage?

What is said about the characters in the story?

What literary form is used?

C. **Where?**

Where is this taking place?

Where the locations mentioned in the passage?

Where did they go?

Where was this said?

D. **Why?** -

- Why did this happen?
- Why was this said?
- Why did they go there?
- Why is this passage mentioned?

E. **When?**

- When did this event happen?
- When will it happen?
- When did the main characters do something?
- Look for words like “before,” “after,” “then,” “until”
- Determines order of events

F. **How?**

- How was this to be done?
- How did people know this had happened?

As you study any passage, train yourself to constantly ask Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why? & How?

These questions are the building blocks of precise observation, which is essential for accurate interpretation

4. What **“SPECTS”** are mentioned?

S - Is there a sin to confess, forsake, avoid?

P - Is there a principle to live by or a promise to claim? (make sure the promise was intended for you!)

E - Is there an example to follow or avoid?

C - Is there a command to obey?

K - Is there some knowledge about God to be gained?

Or

T- There something to be thankful for?

5. What **Key Words** are mentioned?

Identify Key **words** and **phrases**

1 John 4 – “love” (28)
Ephesians 4-5 – “walk” (6)

After you identify the key words, take advantage of Bible dictionaries and language tools to help with the understanding of a particular word.

Helpful resources:

James Strong. *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Iowa Falls, Iowa. Riverside Book and Bible House

W.E. Vine. *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*. Nashville. Thomas Nelson, 1984

Larry Richards. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984

Logos Bible Software

www.biblestudytools.com

6. What **Preparatory Statements** are made?

The author often provides background information, that is, an introduction, that will help explain the problem or situation that exists.

It also reveals the reason for a certain teaching.

Galatians 1:1-2; *“Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:”*

Revelation 1:1-4; *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near. John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from*

Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,”

7. What **figures of speech** are employed?

We must remember that God uses figurative language to communicate a truth, a story, an idea and we need to identify them as they come

Types to look for:

- A. Simile – A comparison between two dissimilar things. It formally states a resemblance or likeness by using the words “like” and “as”

Isaiah 1:30; *“For you will be like an oak whose leaf fades away Or as a garden that has no water.”*

Job 41:24; *“His heart is as hard as a stone, Even as hard as a lower millstone.”*

- B. Metaphor – An implied comparison between two dissimilar things. One thing is likened to another by being spoken of as if it were the other

Psalms 100:3; *“Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.”*

John 8:12; *“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”*

Matthew 3:7; *“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”*

- C. Hyperbole – An overstatement that conveys a vivid and powerful thought.

1 Kings 1:40; *“All the people went up after him, and the people were playing on flutes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth shook at their noise.”*

Matthew 7:3-4; *“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? “Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye?”*

- D. Euphemism – A substitution for a brutal, harsh or offensive thought with a gentle, soft expression.

Genesis 4:1; *“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.”*

1 Samuel 24:3; *“And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.”*

- E. Rhetorical Questions – A question that does not need an answer (even though there are times when they are) but is used to focus the thought on a central idea

Isaiah 40:25; *“To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.”*

Jeremiah 32:27; *“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?”*

Let’s practice.

1 Peter 5:1-14

¹Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

²shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

³nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

⁵You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

⁹But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

¹⁰After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

¹¹To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

¹²Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God Stand firm in it!

¹³She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark.

¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

Interpretation

Interpretation is the component of Bible Study where we discover what the passage Means

Interpreting seeks to discover what the author intended to say.

Techniques of Interpretation:

1. Study the Background

a) Historical background

Ask:

- 1) What and with whom is this passage concerned, and what is the setting?
- 2) What empire reigns?
- 3) Who is the enemy?
- 4) What state of affairs are the people in?
- 5) Where does this event, narrative, or book chronologically fit into the early history of man, the life of Israel, the earthly life of Christ or the expansion of Christianity?
- 6) What historical events preceded, occasioned, and/or influenced a New Testament epistle or Old Testament prophetic book?
- 7) What happened in the life or development of a people, country or church that is relevant to the events or teaching being studied?
- 8) What political institutions are mentioned that are important to the story or message?

Helpful Resources: Bible dictionaries and Bible handbooks will help a person answer these questions

b) Geographical background

Ask:

- 1) Where does the event take place and is this important to the material?
- 2) What hills, mountains, plains, plateaus, valleys, deserts, lakes, seas, rivers, springs, and wells are mentioned in the text, and how did they influence the people?
- 3) How does the distribution of rain and patterns of wind play in the narrative?
- 4) What flora or fauna are noted and why (that is, what characteristics make them important)?
- 5) What cities are named? Why are they important? Where are they situated in relationship to Jerusalem? Are they in a strategic location?
- 6) What empires, nations and provinces are involved in the passage? What are their boundaries and locations?
- 7) What is the nature, that is, vegetation, climate, and elevation of the land being studied?

- 8) What local or international routes are part of the text?
- 9) What crops or domestic animals play a part in the story? Are they significant to the narrative?

Helpful Resources: Bible Atlases, Bible dictionaries and handbooks are beneficial.

c) Cultural background

Ask:

- 1) What traditions are noted in the text regarding the occupational, industrial, agricultural and civil life of the people? Why are they significant to understand?
- 2) What aspects of the home life, such as, the dwelling, meals, clothing, food, roles, education, diseases, treatments, hygiene, music, art, athletics, styles and manners, and what unique customs regarding marriage, birth, death, slavery, property, travel, tools, trade, warfare, laws, architecture, and furnishings need to be studied in order to better grasp the passages?

Helpful Resources: Topical books on customs and manners of the Bible. Bible dictionaries and handbooks are helpful as well

2. Study the Context

Context refers to the portions surrounding the word, verse, phrase or paragraph on is studying.

Ask: "What is the topic being discussed and how does this verse or passage relate to or fit into the chapter and book?"

3. Study the Words

a) There are **four rules** to remember when studying a word:

- 1) The same word may have different meanings

Col. 2:12-13; *"having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the*

uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions;”

Ezek. 44:6-7; *“You shall say to the rebellious ones, to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel, when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, even My house, when you offered My food, the fat and the blood; for they made My covenant void—this in addition to all your abominations.”*

- 2) Different words may have the same or similar meaning in a particular context

Matt. 20:21; *“And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She said to Him, “Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.”*

Mark 10:37; *“They said to Him, “Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory.”*

- 3) Different words in the original language may be translated by the same English word

John 21:15-17; *“So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My lambs.” He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.”*

- 4) A Word in the original language may be translated by different English words

Matthew 4:21; *“Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.”*

Luke 6:40; *“A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.”*

2 Corinthians 13:11; *“Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”*

Galatians 6:1; *“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.”*

b) There are three ways to study a word:

1) Study its original meaning

Titus 1:7; *For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,*

2) Study its meaning throughout Scripture

Titus 1:7; *For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,”*

Luke 12:42; *“And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?”*

Luke 16:1; *“Now He was also saying to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions.”*

Romans 16:23; *“Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.”*

Gal. 4:1-2; *“Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.”*

1 Peter 4:10; *“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*

3) Study its contextual meaning

Example # 1

2 Kings 9:10; *“The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her.’ ” Then he opened the door and fled.”*

Philippians 3:2; *“Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;”*

Example # 2

Acts 27:31; *“Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, “Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved.”*

Titus 3:5; *“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,”*

Example # 3

John 2:23-24; *“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,”*

John 3:36; *“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

4. Study the Cross References

When one portion of Scripture sheds light on another portion of Scripture.

a) Verbal cross-references

A specific word or expression being analyzed may also be used in other passages and books.

Colossians 4:12; *“Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.”*

The Study Concordance:

Luke 13:24; *“Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”*

John 18:36; *“Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”*

Colossians 4:12; *“always laboring earnestly for you”*

1 Timothy 6:12; *“Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”*

b) Parallel cross-references

Often times the same event or teaching is located in two different places in Scripture.

Examples:

- 1) Manasseh’s idolatry in 2 Kings 21:1-18 & 2 Chronicles 33:1-20
- 2) Feeding the 5000 in Matthew 14:13-21 & John 6:1-15
- 3) “Filled with the Spirit” in Ephesians 5:18-19 & Colossians 3:16

c) Conceptual cross-references

The same words or expressions may not be exact but the general substance is similar

Examples:

- 1) Second Coming – Zechariah 14:1-4; Matthew 24:29-31 & Revelation 19:11-16
- 2) Vengeance

Lev. 19:18; *““You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”*

Proverbs 24:29; *“Do not say, “Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.”*

Matthew 5:38-39 & 43-44; *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ “But I say to you, do not resist an evil person;*

but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also... “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,”

Romans 12:17-21; *“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

d) Contrasting cross-references

Contrasts add clarity and understanding to a passage

Example

Temptation of Adam & Eve, David, Joseph & Jesus

5. Study a different Translation

6. Study Good Commentaries

Keys to Rightly Interpreting Different Literary Genres

Narrative – an account of historical events

- Every narrative is part of the larger story of Scripture...understand where each historical account fits in the Bible's larger storyline.

- Understand the setting in which the narrative takes place. Time, geography, political situation, etc.
- Remember God is the main character (in the ultimate sense). We should always ask ourselves what a particular text is teaching us about God's character, what He desires, etc.
- Narrative is not to be allegorized. Don't seek to assign hidden meanings to each part of the story.
- Narrative does not normally teach doctrine
- Remember the difference between *description* and *prescription*
- The Scriptures often do not offer any immediate moral commentary on the events taking place.

Poetry

- Biblical Poetry often employs very figurative language (Psalm 1)
- Biblical poetry uses many metaphor and similes (Psalm 103:15-16)
- Poetry takes abstract concepts and explains them using concrete pictures
- Hebrew poetry frequently uses parallelism. Parallelism is the poetic verse form that consists of two or more lines that use different words to express the same idea in similar grammatical form.
- This can take the form of Synonymous Parallelism (Psalm 103:10) or Antithetic Parallelism (Proverbs 15:1)
- This parallelism can be helpful to if one of the lines is difficult to understand, it can be understood more clearly in light of the parallel line.
- Lines that are in parallel must be understood in light of each other so that we never determine their meaning without reference to its parallel.

Parables

- Parables employ everyday concepts and concrete realism to help convey spiritual truth

- Parables are often fictional stories carefully designed to communicate non-fictional spiritual principles (Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son)
- Parables can also be comparisons from nature (Mustard Seed, Leaven)
- Parables are vivid and memorable
- Parables are different from allegories. In a parable, not every detail is filled with significance or has a spiritual equivalent
- The Scriptures do contain a few allegories here and there, but that these are allegories and should be interpreted as such is usually made clear by the context.
 - Possible allegories include: Proverbs 5:15-19; Ecclesiastes 12:3-7; Ezekiel 17:1-21; John 10:1-16, 15:1-10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, Galatians 4:21-31, and Ephesians 6:10-17
- Usually a parable will have ONE main point...all the details of the story support this one main point.
- Parables are often used in the context of a teaching that the parable is illustrating
- You will often need to understand the manners and customs of the day to rightly understand the stories full significance

Prophecy

- Prophecy should be read in the normal, literal sense using the Historical-grammatical approach
- Much prophecy is also poetry and so the figures of speech and symbols used need to be identified and properly understood
- Some prophecies contain explanations within them (Daniel 7:1-17ff) or are explained elsewhere in Scripture (Zechariah 13:7->Matthew 26:31) or are further clarified elsewhere in Scripture (Daniel 9:27 -> Matthew 24:15)

For an excellent presentation on how to rightly interpret prophecy see Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*

How NOT to Interpret the Bible

A Summary of Crooked Cuts as explained by Richard Mayhue in *How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself*, pp. 73-157.

- **A Text Without A Context**
 - **Proof texting** - stringing together an inappropriate or inadequate series of Bible verses to prove our theology
 - **Isolationism** - failing to interpret a single Scripture text in light of its context
 - “A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text.” – D. A. Carson
- **Adding to Scripture**
 - **Spiritualizing** - reading a spiritual or historical truth into a text rather than extracting truth from it
 - **Nationalizing** – seeing one’s own country as the recipient of national promises made by God in the Bible to Israel
- **Editing God’s Mind**
 - **Embellishing** – reading current thinking into the Bible
 - **Methodologizing** – interpreting the Scripture by means of unproved theory about the Bible’s literary origin
- **Modernizing the Bible**
 - **Accommodation** – viewing Scripture through the lens of human reason
 - **Culturalizing** – limiting a text to a specific time in history or culture, when in reality the text demands a wider application in time OR extending a past practice into our time which in fact could have been cultural and maybe not intended by God to be practiced today
- **Twisting the Scripture**
 - **Redefining** – giving historically accepted biblical words new definitions to support our theology
 - **Anglicizing** – reaching inaccurate conclusion by drawing theology from the English text alone
 - **Mysticizing** – finding hidden meanings in Scripture that can be understood only the one who knows the “secret code”

- **Over-Literalizing**
 - **Letterism** – ignoring figures of speech and drawing woodenly literal conclusion
 - **Legalizing** – overemphasizing the letter of God’s Word at the expense of its spirit
- **Reverse Interpretation**
 - **Generalizing** – assuming that any specific historical experience reported in Scripture is a valid general experience for today
 - **Experientializing** – reasoning that if any experience has occurred in Scripture, and I have the same experience, then it must be from God (i.e. using experience to validate Scripture instead of vice versa)
- **Over-Systematizing**
 - **Dogmatizing** – starting with a conclusion, which is used to interpret the evidence, thereby assuring that the desired conclusion will be affirmed (i.e. circular reasoning)
 - **Dispensationalizing** – overemphasizing the variations in God’s stewardship of redemption throughout history while minimizing God’s never-changing dealings with mankind according to his never-changing character.

Stick with these basic hermeneutical principles and they will serve you well in your study:

- God is knowable and has given us His Word so that we might know Him. The Bible is written in a way that can be understood. The Bible is intelligible and propositional and not “magic words” or a collection of “mumbo-jumbo gobbledygook” or a mysterious code that needs to be deciphered in order to be understood
- Only the Historical-grammatical method of interpretation should be used
 - Historical interpretation means that we take into account the historical background of the author and the recipients. The Bible was written to common people, and is understandable to anyone. However, it was written thousands of years ago to a different culture. Therefore, as modern readers, we have to try to recover a general sense of the meaning of words, phrases and concepts in the ancient cultures.
 - Grammatical interpretation means that we study the words chosen and the sentence structure used to understand what the author intended to communicate.

- Remember, we are after authorial intent! We are seeking to do *exegesis* (letting the authors meaning come out of the text) and not *eisegesis* (reading into the text our own ideas).
- Most of the Bible can be easily interpreted by simply taking the language in the usual way (making allowances for obvious figures of speech). In other words:
 - *“If the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense.”*
- There is only one correct interpretation of any particular text, though there will be *many* applications of that singular correct interpretation
- Interpret in light of the context of the passage
- Interpret in light of progressive revelation
- Interpret Scripture in harmony with other Scripture
- Interpret the unclear in light of the clear
- No Scripture properly interpreted will contradict any other Scripture properly interpreted

For Further Study

Carson, D. A.. *Exegetical fallacies*. Baker Academic, 1996.

This book identifies the common grammatical, lexical, cultural, theological, and historical mistakes Bible exegetes can make. In *Fundamentalist Journal*, Robert Yarborough reviewed *Exegetical Fallacies* this way: "Carson has furnished a pithy and practical manual of many of those mistakes to which all of us who deal with the text in earnest fall prey."

*Estes, Daniel. *Learning and Living God's Word: How To Study the Bible*. Regular Baptist Press, 1993.

This book is a special kind of book. it is not a novel with a gripping story to read. Neither is it a textbook with facts to memorize. It is a manual...a workbook designed to teach you how to study the Bible on your own. This book will guide you into the skills you need to learn and live God's word. It was born out of a small group study in the author's church, after five young couples asked him to teach them the skills of personal Bible study. Whether you are a teen, a college student or an older adult, this manual can help you.

*Mayhue, Richard. *How to Interpret the Bible For Yourself*. BMH Books, 1986.

*Plummer, Robert L. *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible*. Kregel, 2010.

In *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*, New Testament Professor Dr. Robert L. Plummer tackles the major questions that persons ask about reading and understanding the Bible.

Questions include: Does the Bible contain error? Were the ancient manuscripts of the Bible transmitted accurately? What is the best English Bible translation? Is the Bible really all about Jesus? Do all the commands of the Bible apply today? Why can't people agree on what the Bible means? How do we

interpret historical narrative? How do we interpret the Psalms? What does the Bible tell us about the future? What is the "Theological Interpretation of Scripture"?

Ramm, Bernard. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Baker, 1980.

Since its publication in 1950, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* has been a standard introduction to hermeneutics in evangelical colleges and seminaries. Twice revised, this textbook has sold well over 100,000 copies. Now this venerable resource appears for the first time in a paperback edition.

Hermeneutics, writes the author, is the science and art of Biblical interpretation. ... As such it forms one of the most important members of the theological sciences. This is especially true for conservative Protestantism, which looks on the Bible as ... the only authoritative voice of God to man.

After surveying the history of biblical interpretation, the author devotes seventy pages to explicating the Protestant system of hermeneutics. He then discusses the doctrinal, devotional, and practical uses of the Bible. Following a chapter on the hermeneutical dimension of the problem of biblical inerrancy and secular science, he concludes with chapters on the interpretation of types, prophecy, and parables.

Zuck, Roy B.. *Basic Bible interpretation*. David C. Cook, 1991.

Can the Bible really be understood? Are Old Testament prophecies relevant for today? How can I understand the symbolism of the Book of Revelation? What is the relationship of the Old Testament to the New Testament? Why study Bible interpretation? Dr. Roy Zuck points out that it is essential for understanding and teaching the Bible properly, essential as a step beyond observation, and essential for applying the Bible correctly. He discusses the challenges of Bible interpretation, considers the problems of Bible interpretation, explores the history of Bible interpretation, and defines key terms--all in a practical, down-to-earth way. Though Dr. Zuck's many years of teaching and scholarship are evident in this book, he has written in language understandable to all who are serious about bible study and who want to know better what Scripture means.

Application

Application is the final step in Bible study. Application is putting into practice the truth you have discovered through Observation and Interpretation. Application results in transformation or life change. The goal of all Bible study is not merely to learn information but to increase transformation (Romans 12:1-2).

Application seeks to answer the final question of Bible study: How does this passage apply to my life?

It is critical that application always follow the steps of observation and interpretation. Some are so eager to apply God's Word that they rush past the other steps and jump right into application. The result is often *misapplication*, and *misapplication* can be deadly....

Matthew 27:5 ...and he [Judas] went away and hanged himself.

Luke 10:37 ...Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

John 13:27 ...Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

"Unfortunately many people go to the Bible for a 'blessing' or for guidance for the day, ignoring the interpretive process altogether. In their intense desire to find something devotional or practical, Christians sometimes distort the original meaning of some passages of Scripture. To bypass the purpose and original meaning of the passage, looking for a subjective impression, can lead to serious misuse of the Bible. Without proper interpretive controls, people can attempt to make the Bible mean almost anything they want it to mean...Sound interpretation is the only adequate basis for relevant application." (Roy Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, p. 282).

Others study hard and rightly observe and interpret the text but fail to take the next critical step and apply it. They grow in knowledge but do not allow their life to be transformed by the Word by putting what they have learned into practice.

James 1:22–25²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

1 Samuel 15:22²² Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.

Luke 11:28²⁸ ...[Jesus] said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

John 13:17¹⁷ "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

As Dr Roy Zuck points out in his book *Basic Bible Interpretation*,
“Heart appropriation, not merely head apprehension, is the true goal of Bible study. Only in this way can believers grow spiritually. Spiritual maturity, in which we become more like Christ, comes not just from knowing more about the Bible. It comes from knowing more about the Bible and applying it to our spiritual needs.”

Bible study without application is like buying a treadmill, reading the owner’s manual, participating in discussions on an online treadmill community, but never actually stepping foot on the treadmill! You have to *walk on it* for the treadmill to be effective. Likewise, you have to *walk in it* for the Truth to really change you.

The Bible is meant by God to be applied to our lives!

2 Timothy 3:16–17¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- *Teaching* shows us what is right.
- *Reproof* shows us where we are wrong.
- *Correction* shows us how to get right.
- *Training* in righteousness develops discipline to live right.
- *Righteousness* in simple terms is whatever God says is right on any subject.

“Apply yourself to the whole text, and apply the whole text to yourself.” - J. A. Bengel

“The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity; it was written to transform your life. The ultimate goal of Bible study, then, is not to do something to the Bible, but to allow the Bible to do something to you, so truth becomes tangent to life.” – Howard Hendricks

Remember that while a single text will only have one correct *interpretation*, it will likely have many, many *applications*.

It is important to determine the Degree of Transfer when seeking to make application of the text. Not all of God’s Word applies in the very same way or to the very same degree.

Degree of Transfer is determined by considering the similarities and differences between the *original audience* (the person or group to whom the text was originally written) and the *target audience* (the person or group to whom the passage is being applied).

“The degree of transfer is the measure of degree to which the target audience is similar to or different from the original audience. In order to determine the degree of transfer, we need to evaluate the information we have about the original audience (their identity, their situation, their spiritual level, etc.) and compare the information with what we know about the target audience. For this purpose it is helpful to construct a chart to plot the similarities and differences.”

Similarities	Differences

“After we have listed the major similarities and differences, we must evaluate them. We must not simply count what we have listed, but rather we must weigh the items to determine how similar or how different the audiences are. It usually helps to plot this evaluation on a number line from 1 to 10.”

“On this number line, 1 and 2 representing passage such as those that explain the Old Testament dietary and sacrificial laws. Those passages address an audience extremely different from today’s Christians.

A degree of transfer between 2 and 5 may well fit narrative passages that describe what a particular individual did in his unique situation. The character serves as a general pattern, but we should not expect to face the exact same challenges.

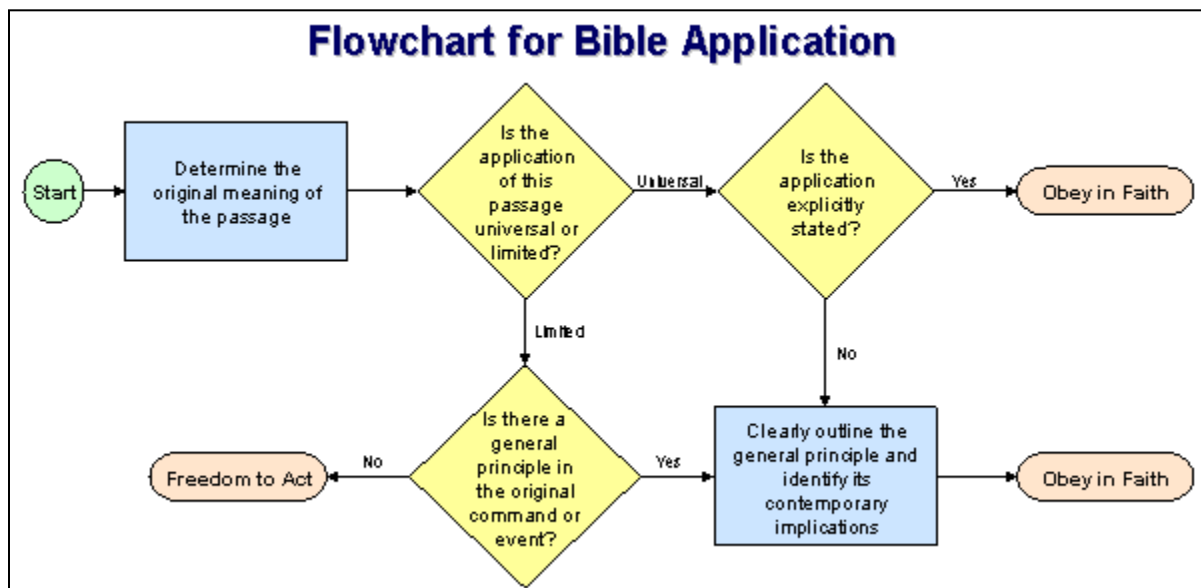
From 5 to 8 we have the kinds of principles found in many of the New Testament epistles. Even though the original readers lived 2,000 years ago and half a world away, they shared many similarities with Christians today.

From 8 to 10 are passages that speak in universal terms of God's unchanging attributes or program, or that address a universal human audience of all times."

Taken from *Learning and Living God's Word* by Daniel Estes, pp. 61-63.

Roy Zuck (*BBI*, pg. 282) adds the following principles for determining the level of applicability of a passage:

- Some situations, commands, or principles are repeatable, continuous, or not revoked, and/or pertain to moral and theological subjects, and/or are repeated elsewhere in Scripture, and therefore are permanent and transferable to us.
- Some situations, commands, or principles pertain to an individual's specific nonrepeatable circumstances, and/or nonmoral or nontheological subjects, and/or have been revoked, and are therefore not transferable to today.
- Some situations or commands pertain to cultural settings that are only partially similar to ours and in which only the principles are transferable.
- Some situations or commands pertain to cultural settings with no similarities but in which the principles are transferable.



Applications can be made in reference to our various relationships (God, Satan, Wife, Children, Friends, Unbelievers, Fellow-believers, etc.) and responsibilities (Man, Husband, Father, Leader, Follower, Employee, Employer, Citizen, Student, etc.)

We should also aim to make our application of God's Word SMART...

- S – Specific
- M – Measurable
- A – Attainable
- R – Realistic
- T – Time-determined

Get your SPECKs on to help you make good application of the text:

- S - Is there a sin to confess, forsake, avoid?
- P – Is there a principle to live by or a promise to claim? (make sure the promise was intended for you!)
- E - Is there an example to follow or avoid?
- C - Is there a command to obey?
- K - Is there some knowledge about God to be gained?

90 Action Verbs for Completing Application Sentences (*Basic Bible Interpretation*, Zuck, p. 291)

“By the grace of God, I will...”

Accept	Collect	Do
Admit	Commit	Eliminate
Analyze	Compliment	Encourage
Ask	Comply	Enjoy
Ask myself	Confess	Evaluate
Avoid	Control	Exemplify
Be sensitive	Count	Experiment
Be willing	Create	Find
Build	Decide	Follow
Buy	Develop	Give
Choose	Direct	Go
Claim	Discuss	Guard

Help
Invite
Isolate
Keep
List
Listen
Look for
Look up
Love
Meet with
Memorize
Organize
Plan Out
Pray
Pray about
Pray to
Pray with
Prefer

Pursue
Read
Realize
Record
Rejoice
Repair
Respond
Sacrifice
Save
Schedule
Select
Send
Share
Show
Sing
Spend time
Stay away
Stop

Study
Substitute
Take
Talk with
Teach
Telephone
Thank
Think about
Value
Visit
Wait
Wake Up
Walk
Watch
Witness
Work on
Write down
Write to

Personal Spiritual Life

How To Grow Strong in Jesus Christ

1. The Importance of Our Identity in Christ

Fundamentally, who are you? How do you view yourself?

Our view of ourselves should always result in God increasing and our decreasing!

“I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am”
— [John Newton](#)

“Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior.” — [John Newton](#)

Colossians 3:1–4¹ Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNvMrZSvPOM>

Because you are in Christ, every one of these statements is true of you:

- I am loved 1 John 3:3
- I am accepted Ephesians 1:6
- I am a child of God John 1:12
- I am Jesus' friend John 15:14
- I am a joint heir with Jesus, sharing His inheritance with Him Romans 8:17
- I am united with God and one spirit with Him 1 Corinthians 6:17
- I am a temple of God. His spirit and His life live in me 1 Corinthians 6:19
- I am a member of Christ's body. 1 Corinthians 12:27
- I am a Saint Ephesians 1:1
- I am redeemed and forgiven Colossians 1:14
- I am complete in Jesus Christ Colossians 2:10
- I am free from condemnation Romans 8:1
- I am a new creation because I am in Christ 2 Corinthians 5:17
- I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved Colossians 3:12
- I am established, anointed, and sealed by God 2 Corinthians 1:21
- I do not have a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind 2 Timothy 1:7
- I am God's co-worker 2 Corinthians 6:1
- I am seated in heavenly places with Christ Eph 2:6
- I have direct access to God Ephesians 2:18
- I am chosen to bear fruit John 15:16
- I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house 1 Peter 2:5
- I have been given exceedingly great and precious promises by God by which I share His nature 2 Peter 1:4
- I can always know the presence of God because He never leaves me Hebrews 13:5
- God works in me to help me do the things He wants me to do Philippians 2:13
- I can ask God for wisdom and He will give me what I need James 1:5

“The Christian life begins with a recognition of who we are in Christ. Speak the following confession out loud so that you can hear yourself declaring what God has said is true. You are not declaring these things to make them happen. God says that they have already happened! This is God’s answer to the human question “Who Am I?” This is who you are in Christ. Speak it with confidence.

The Christian’s Personal Identity

I believe that in Christ Jesus my sins have been fully forgiven, and I am a new creation. I have died with Christ to my old identity in Adam. I have been raised with Christ to a new life. I am seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. God has given to me the full righteousness of Christ. I am joined with angels, archangels, and all the saints in heaven. God is my Father, and if He is for me, who can be against me? Because of who I am in Christ, I am more than a conqueror. In fact, I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me. Christ Jesus is my life! Everything in my life here on this earth is working out for good according to the purposes of God. Christ Jesus Himself dwells within me. I have been called according to the purposes of God. These things I believe and confess, because God, my Father in heaven, says they are true. *Amen!*”⁴

The Scriptures consistently take us from the indicative (the truth of who we are in Christ) to the imperative (how we should live in light of this truth).

Eph 1-3 then 4-6; Rom 1-11 then 12-15; Gal 5:1, Gal 5:25, 1 Cor 5:7; Phil 2:12-13

2. God’s Tools for Spiritual Growth (Means of Grace)⁵

Illustration: The Navigators’ “Wheel”⁶

⁴ Matzat, Don. *Christ-esteem*. Harvest House Pub, 1990. p. 97.

⁵ In addition to many helpful Navigator tools, perhaps the most helpful resource on Spiritual Disciplines is Whitney, Donald S.. *Spiritual disciplines for the Christian life*. Navpress Pub Group, 1991.

⁶ http://www.navigators.org/us/resources/illustrations/items/the_wheel



This simple but effective illustration has been used by Navigators for more than fifty years. It helps Christians understand what they are called to do as disciples of Christ. Each part of this illustration represents a crucially important component of a vital Christian life.

Use this illustration to gain understanding about important spiritual disciplines in your own life. What areas encourage you? What areas challenge you?

Why not sketch out "The Wheel Illustration" on a napkin or scrap of paper with someone you are discipling. Help challenge them to think clearly about how to be an obedient follower of Christ.

The Volitional Dimension:

How You Relate to Yourself



The Hub: Christ the Center

See: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20

Making Christ central in your life is an act of your will. Surrendering totally to Christ's authority and lordship may be at conversion or after some months or even years. God creates within you the desire to do what He wants you to do in order to express His lordship in your life.

The Rim: Obedience to Christ

See: Romans 12:1; John 14:21

Some acts of obedience to God are internal. But even these internal acts of obedience, such as attitudes, habits, motives, sense of values, and day-to-day thoughts, eventually surface in relationships with other people. The proof of your love for God is your demonstrated obedience to Him.

The Vertical Dimension:

How You Relate to God



The Word Spoke

See: 2 Timothy 3:16; Joshua 1:8

As God speaks to you through the Scriptures, you can see His principles for life and ministry, learn how to obey, and become acquainted with the Christ who is worthy of your unqualified allegiance. A vital personal intake of God's Word is essential for health and growth.



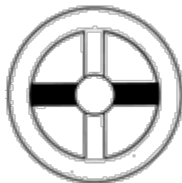
The Prayer Spoke

See: John 15:7; Philippians 4:6-7

Prayer is a natural response to God as you hear Him speak to you through His Word. It is sharing your heart with the One who longs for your companionship and who cares about your concerns. Prayer unleashes the power of God in your personal battles and in the lives of those for whom you pray.

The Horizontal Dimension:

How You Relate to Others



The Fellowship Spoke

See: Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24-25

Learning from and encouraging others creates a chemistry pleasing to God. God has directed Christians to build each other up through inter-dependence and loving relationships with each other.

The Witnessing Spoke

See: Matthew 4:19; Romans 1:16

The natural overflow of a rich vibrant life in Christ should be sharing with others how they too can have this life. God has given believers the privilege and responsibility of reaching the world with the Good News about Christ

A. God's Word

Hear – Listen to the Bible on tape, listen to sermons

Read – there is no substitute for regular Bible reading. It is helpful to have a plan:

For a helpful survey of Bible reading plans see Justin Taylor's helpful blog post

<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2010/12/31/bible-reading-plans-3/>

An especially helpful plan is Professor Grant Horner's Bible Reading System:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/12349985/Professor-Grant-Horners-Bible-Reading-System>

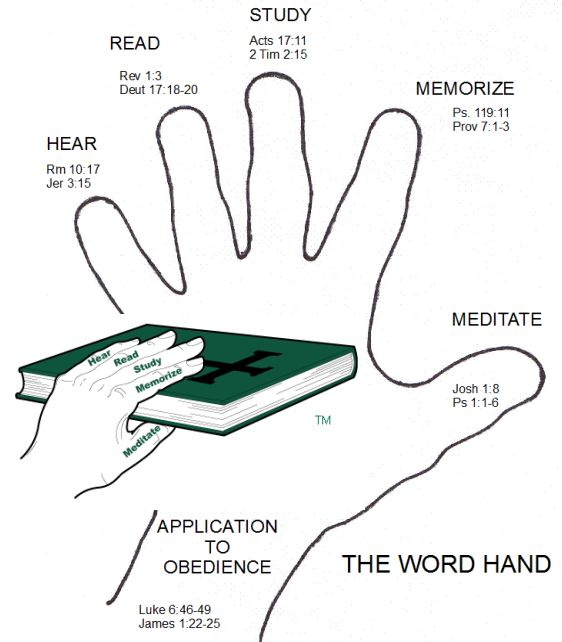
Another exceptionally helpful plan is the one by Dr. D. A. Carson and includes short but helpful commentaries on selected daily passages. It can also be subscribed to and sent to your email inbox daily:

<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/loveofgod/>

Study – digging in, digging deeper. Word studies, cross references, helpful commentaries.

Memorize – Hiding God's word in your heart...call it to mind in time of need. See "Navigator's Topical Memory System" below.

Meditate – thinking deeply about a verse's meaning and application. Leads very naturally to prayer⁷.



Navigator's Topical Memory System⁸

If you want to memorize Scripture, but aren't sure what to memorize or how, this system is exactly what you need to begin hiding God's word in your heart.

LIVE THE NEW LIFE

Christ the Center	2 Corinthians 5:17	Galatians 2:20
Obedience to Christ	Romans 12:1	John 14:21
The Word	2 Timothy 3:16	Joshua 1:8
Prayer	John 15:7	Philippians 4:6,7
Fellowship	Matthew 18:20	Hebrews 10:24,25
Witnessing	Matthew 4:19	Romans 1:16

PROCLAIM CHRIST

All Have Sinned	Romans 3:23	Isaiah 53:6
Sin's Penalty	Romans 6:23	Hebrews 9:27
Christ Paid the Penalty	Romans 5:8	1 Peter 3:18
Salvation is not by Works	Ephesians 2:8,9	Titus 3:5

⁷ See the very helpful discussion on meditation in Whitney, Donald S.. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Navpress Pub Group, 1991. pp. 67-72.

⁸ <http://www.navigators.org/us/resources/illustrations/items/Topical%20Memory%20System>

Must Receive Christ	John 1:12	Revelation 3:20
Assurance of Salvation	1 John 5:13	John 5:24

RELY ON GOD'S RESOURCES

His Spirit	1 Corinthians 3:16	1 Corinthians 2:12
His Strength	Isaiah 41:10	Philippians 4:13
His Faithfulness	Lamentations 3:22,23	Numbers 23:19
His Peace	Isaiah 26:3	1 Peter 5:7
His Provision	Romans 8:32	Philippians 4:19
His Help in Temptation	Hebrews 2:18	Psalms 119:9,11

BE CHRIST'S DISCIPLE

Put Christ First	Matthew 6:33	Luke 9:23
Separate From the World	1 John 2:15,16	Romans 12:2
Be Steadfast	1 Corinthians 15:58	Hebrews 12:3
Serve Others	Mark 10:45	2 Corinthians 4:5
Give Generously	Proverbs 3:9,10	2 Corinthians 9:6,7
Develop World Vision	Acts 1:8	Matthew 28:19,20

GROW IN CHRISTLIKENESS

Love	John 13:34,35	1 John 3:18
Humility	Philippians 2:3,4	1 Peter 5:5,6
Purity	Ephesians 5:3	1 Peter 2:11
Honesty	Leviticus 19:11	Acts 24:16
Faith	Hebrews 11:6	Romans 4:20,21
Good Works	Galatians 6:9,10	Matthew 5:16

B. Prayer

We learn to pray by praying:

- Praying Regularly
- Praying Specifically
- Praying Scripture
- Praying with Others
- Pray Expectantly

Helpful tools:

Study the great prayers of Scripture

http://www.bunyanministries.org/expositions/great_prayers.pdf

Let prayer flow out of your personal reading and study

Keep a prayer list

C. Fellowship

Hebrews 10:23–25²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Fellowship is like a “spiritual lab” where we work out and test much that we are learning in principle in the “spiritual classroom” of Bible reading/study and prayer.

Balanced fellowship⁹ should include:

- Corporate Worship and Small/Mid-sized Group
- Serving and Being Served
- Discipline and Being Disciplined

The 59 “One Others” of the New Testament¹⁰

⁹ A great resource about participating fully in the Body of Christ is Whitney, Donald S.. *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church*. Moody Pub, 1996.

¹⁰ From Carl F. George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future*. Revell, 1991, 129-131.

1. "...Be at peace with each other." (Mark 9:50)
2. "...Wash one another's feet." (John 13:14)
3. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34)
4. "...Love one another..." (John 13:34)
5. "...Love one another..." (John 13:35)
6. "...Love one another..." (John 15:12)
7. "...Love one another" (John 15:17)
8. "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love..." (Romans 12:10)
9. "...Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)
10. "Live in harmony with one another..." (Romans 12:16)
11. "...Love one another..." (Romans 13:8)
12. "...Stop passing judgment on one another." (Romans 14:13)
13. "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you..." (Romans 15:7)
14. "...Instruct one another." (Romans 15:14)
15. "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (Romans 16:16)
16. "...When you come together to eat, wait for each other." (I Cor. 11:33)
17. "...Have equal concern for each other." (I Corinthians 12:25)
18. "...Greet one another with a holy kiss." (I Corinthians 16:20)
19. "Greet one another with a holy kiss." (II Corinthians 13:12)
20. "...Serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)
21. "If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other." (Galatians 5:15)
22. "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." (Galatians 5:26)
23. "Carry each other's burdens..." (Galatians 6:2)
24. "...Be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)
25. "Be kind and compassionate to one another..." (Ephesians 4:32)
26. "...Forgiving each other..." (Ephesians 4:32)
27. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Ephesians 5:19)
28. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:21)
29. "...In humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)
30. "Do not lie to each other..." (Colossians 3:9)
31. "Bear with each other..." (Colossians 3:13)
32. "...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another." (Colossians 3:13)
33. "Teach...[one another]" (Colossians 3:16)
34. "...Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
35. "...Make your love increase and overflow for each other." (I Thessalonians 3:12)
36. "...Love each other." (I Thessalonians 4:9)
37. "...Encourage each other..." (I Thessalonians 4:18)
38. "...Encourage each other..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
39. "...Build each other up..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
40. "Encourage one another daily..." Hebrews 3:13)
41. "...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)
42. "...Encourage one another." (Hebrews 10:25)
43. "...Do not slander one another." (James 4:11)
44. "Don't grumble against each other..." (James 5:9)
45. "Confess your sins to each other..." (James 5:16)
46. "...Pray for each other." (James 5:16)
47. "...Love one another deeply, from the heart." (I Peter 3:8)
48. "...Live in harmony with one another..." (I Peter 3:8)
49. "...Love each other deeply..." (I Peter 4:8)
50. "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." (I Peter 4:9)
51. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." (I Peter 4:10)
52. "...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..." (I Peter 5:5)
53. "Greet one another with a kiss of love." (I Peter 5:14)
54. "...Love one another." (I John 3:11)
55. "...Love one another." (I John 3:23)
56. "...Love one another." (I John 4:7)
57. "...Love one another." (I John 4:11)
58. "...Love one another." (I John 4:12)
59. "...Love one another." (II John 5)

D. Evangelism/Disciplemaking

Matthew 28:18–20¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Evangelism is the common calling of all Christians

A transformed life is the most powerful proof of our profession!

Make a short list (3-5) of the names of unsaved people you are praying for and keep it with you. Ask God to prepare their hearts and to give you opportunities and boldness to share.

Know the gospel – your goal should be to be able to share the gospel accurately and clearly in a minute or less!

Helpful resources:

Two Ways to Live - <http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl/2wtlonline.html>

The Way of the Master - <http://www.wayofthemaster.com/>

Evangelism Explosion - http://www.eeinternational.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=36897

For Further Study:

The Christian's Identity

Christ-Esteem. Matzat, Don. Harvest House Pub, 1990.

Spiritual Disciplines/Growth

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life. Whitney, Donald S. Navpress Pub Group, 1991.

Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church. Whitney, Donald S. Moody Pub, 1996.

Disciplines of a Godly Man. R. Kent Hughes.

Keys to Spiritual Growth. MacArthur, John. Fleming H Revell Co, 1991.

Changed Into His Image. Berg, Jim. Bob Jones Univ Press, 1999.

The Bookends of the Christian Life. Jerry Bridges and Bob Bevington. Crossway Books, 2009.

Bible Intake

How to Study the Bible. MacArthur, John. Moody Press, 1985.

Prayer

A Call to Spiritual Reformation. Carson, D. A.. Baker Academic, 1992.

If God Already Knows Why Pray ? Douglas F. Kelly. Christian Focus, 2005.

The God Who Hears. Hunter, W. Bingham. Intervarsity Pr, 1986.

Fellowship

Stop Dating the Church!. Harris, Joshua. Multnomah Books, 2004.

What Is a Healthy Church Member? Anyabwile, Thabiti M. Crossway Books, 2008.

Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church. Whitney, Donald S. Moody Pub, 1996.

Evangelism/Discipleship

Metzger, Will. *Tell the Truth*. Intervarsity Pr, 2002.