

Bible Study Methods

Rightly Dividing
the Word of Truth



Hillcrest Chapel
Sunday School
Summer, 2016

Bible Study Methods

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

*And the brethren immediately sent away
Paul and Silas by night unto Berea:
who coming thither went into
the synagogue of the Jews.*

*These were more noble
than those in Thessalonica,
in that they received the word
with all readiness of mind,
and searched the scriptures daily,
whether those things were so.*

Acts 17:10-11

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Introduction

When Paul came to Berea in Acts 17:11, the Bereans displayed their love for the truth when responding to Paul's teaching by examining the Scriptures themselves. Their actions set an example for all of us to follow.

Our study for this summer will cover different Bible study skills. We desire not only to teach the Bible, but also to teach others how to study the Bible. Then we can be like the Bereans, studying for ourselves and exercising discernment.

Our summer study contains two sections. The first section includes lessons 1-6, teaching a basic approach to studying the Bible. This approach uses a simple, three step process of: observation, interpretation, and application. The second section includes lessons 7-13, covering the different genres of literature in the Bible. Since each genre has its own unique characteristics, it is essential that we identify what kind of literature we are studying in order to interpret it accurately.

Throughout the study we will use and teach a literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture. The meaning of the text is determined by the grammar of the text as one interprets the Bible literally, honoring its historical context. Additionally, there may be multiple applications of any passage of Scripture, but there is only one true interpretation. Consistently interpreting the Bible from a literal, grammatical, historical perspective, while relying on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, will enable us to interpret Scripture accurately.



Schedule

June 5	Lesson 1: Our Responsibility in Studying the Bible
June 12	Lesson 2: Observation
June 19	Lesson 3: Interpretation — Context
June 26	Lesson 4: Interpretation — Words and Word Study
July 3	Lesson 5: Application
July 10	Lesson 6: Application — Cultural Commands
July 17	Lesson 7: Introduction to Kinds of Scripture
July 24	Lesson 8: Narrative
July 31	Lesson 9: Parallelism
August 7	Lesson 10: Proverbs
August 14	Lesson 11: Typology
August 21	Lesson 12: Parables
August 28	Lesson 13: Predictive Prophecy

Scripture Memorization

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:
7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Ezra 7:10

10. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Psalms 1:1-2

1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
2. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Acts 17:11

11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

2 Timothy 2:15

15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord

Edwin Hodder, 1863

Gottfried W. Fink, 1842

1. Thy Word is like a gar - den, Lord, With flow - ers bright and fair;
2. Thy Word is like a star - ry host: A thou - sand rays of light
3. O may I love thy pre - cious Word, May I ex - plore the mine,

And ev - ery one who seeks may pluck A love - ly clus - ter there.
Are seen to guide the trav - el - er, And make his path - way bright.
May I its fra - grant flow - ers glean, May light up - on me shine.

Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine; And jew - els rich are rare
Thy Word is like an ar - mor - y, Where sol - diers may re - pair,
O may I find my ar - mor there, Thy Word my trust - y sword;

Are hid - den in its might - y depths For ev - ery search - er there.
And find, for life's long bat - tle day, All need - ful weap - ons there.
I'll learn to fight with ev - ery foe The bat - tle of the Lord. A - men.

Lesson 1: Our Responsibility in Studying the Bible

MEMORY: Deuteronomy 6:6

Hymn: "Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord"

Give a man a fish and he can eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he can eat for a lifetime. The Lord blesses the church with many gifted teachers. Yet, we also have the responsibility to study the Bible for ourselves.

1. What must we do before we study the Bible?
 - 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

 - 2 Corinthians 3:15-16

 - 1 Peter 2:1-2

 - James 1:21

2. What do the following verses teach about our own personal responsibility in studying the Bible?
 - Acts 17:11

 - Ezra 7:10

 - Psalm 119:97

 - Colossians 3:16

 - 2 Timothy 2:15

3. Why did Jesus rebuke the Sadducees?
 - Matthew 22:23-33

Lesson 2: Observation

MEMORY: Deuteronomy 6:7 and Review

Hymn: "Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord"

The first step in Bible study is observation. Observing the text is answering the question "what does the text say?" Observation is carried out by slowly recognizing all the various details in the passage. This step is required because you cannot interpret or apply what you do not see. Be meticulous in trying to see everything in God's Word!

Ephesians 5:15-21

1. What word or words connect verse 15 to the preceding passage?
2. What command is given in verse 15?
3. Paul contrasts two kinds of walks. What are they?
4. How are we to walk wisely in verse 16?
5. What reason does Paul give for why we should walk this way?
6. What word or words connect verses 15 and 16 with verse 17?
7. What action are we to avoid in verse 17?
8. What action are we to obey in verse 17?
9. What word connects verse 17 with verse 18?
10. What does Paul command in regards to wine?
11. What are we to do in verse 18 instead of getting drunk with wine?
12. How are we to speak to one another?
13. When are we to give thanks?
14. What are we to give thanks for?
15. Whom are we to thank?

Lesson 3: Interpretation — Context

MEMORY: Ezra 7:10 and Review

Hymn: “Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord”

After observation, the second step in Bible study is asking “what does the text mean?” One feature that influences the meaning of the passage is the context. Honoring the context is one of the most important aspects of studying the Bible. The context involves looking at the relationships between verses in the immediate paragraphs with a given verse. One verse should never be interpreted without also understanding the relationship to its surrounding verses.

Matthew 18:19-20

1. What are the “two or three” doing in this passage?
2. How do the verses before and after this passage help you understand what the “two or three” are doing?

James 2:24

3. How is a man justified?
4. How do the verses before and after this verse help you understand the meaning of verse 24?

Luke 10:23-29

5. What did Jesus say to His disciples?
6. What does the lawyer ask Jesus?
7. What does Jesus command the lawyer to do?
8. How does the parable of the Good Samaritan help you to understand what Jesus said to the lawyer?

Philippians 4:13

9. What is Paul able to do?
10. Do the verses in the surrounding context place any limitations on the “all things” Paul can do?

Lesson 4: Interpretation — Words and Word Study

MEMORY: Psalm 1:1 and Review

Hymn: “Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord”

One word may have different meanings depending on its context. It is important to recognize the range of meaning a word may contain in order to interpret a passage accurately.

1. How is “firstborn” used in the following verses?
 - Exodus 4:21-23

 - Exodus 11:4-8

 - Jeremiah 31:9

 - Luke 2:1-7

 - Colossians 1:15-20

2. What does the word “world” refer to in the following verses?
 - John 3:16

 - John 17:9

 - Hebrews 1:1-2

 - 1 John 2:2

 - 1 John 2:15

3. Are there good people?
 - Luke 18:19

 - Luke 23:50

4. What does “flesh” refer to in the following verses?
 - Luke 24:36-43

 - Galatians 5:16-21

Lesson 5: Application

MEMORY: Psalm 1:2 and Review

Hymn: "Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord"

After observation and interpretation, the third and final step in studying the Bible is application. The purpose of studying the Bible is not merely to obtain knowledge. We must also apply it. Biblical application addresses more than actions. It includes the mind, heart, will, attitudes, and motives.

1. How are we supposed to apply the Word?

- Deuteronomy 4:2
- Luke 11:28
- John 8:31
- John 13:17
- James 1:22

2. What is the Bible capable of doing?

- Psalm 119:9, 11
- Psalm 119:105
- Psalm 119:130
- Romans 15:4
- 1 Corinthians 14:3
- Ephesians 5:26
- Colossians 1:28
- 1 Thessalonians 4:18
- 2 Timothy 3:15-17
- 2 Timothy 4:2
- Hebrews 4:12
- 1 John 5:13

Lesson 6: Application — Cultural Commands

MEMORY: Acts 17:11 and Review

Hymn: “Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord”

One of the more controversial issues in Biblical studies pertains to whether or not the Church is required to obey all the commands in the Bible. Are some passages limited by the cultural or historical setting of the time they were given? Are all commands in the Bible normative for today? How do we decide which are cultural or historical and which are normative? A command is cultural/temporary if it refers to something that varies from culture to culture or is not related to the creation order.

Read the following passages and identify each command as permanent or temporary:

- Genesis 9:6
- Leviticus 19:28
- Leviticus 20:13
- Mark 16:15-18
- John 13:14
- Romans 16:16
- 1 Corinthians 11:2-16
- 1 Corinthians 14:5
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35
- Ephesians 5:22-24
- 1 Timothy 2:12
- James 5:14

Lesson 7: Introduction to Kinds of Scripture

MEMORY: 2 Timothy 2:15 and Review

Hymn: “Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord”

The most basic division of the kinds of Scripture in the Bible is between prose and poetry. Prose is writing that follows the patterns of ordinary speech. The prose of Scripture conveys information in a straightforward way, relating events usually in order of their sequence of occurrence in time, and likewise relating teaching according to a logical order. Poetic writing, on the other hand, follows its own characteristic patterns. These include the use of measured lines, terseness, imagery, rare words, rhythm, and occasionally acrostic. The poetry of the Bible conveys information truthfully while also engaging the imagination, emotions, and senses.

Judges 4:17-22; 5:24-31

1. Each of these chapters presents an account of the same event — the death of Sisera. Which one of the two accounts explains the circumstances of Sisera’s death more clearly? Which one of the two accounts evokes more emotion about Sisera’s death? Why is this so?

Exodus 14:21-31

2. What happened after Moses stretched out his hand over the sea?
3. What happened at the time of the morning watch?
4. What happened when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea for the second time?

Exodus 15:1-18

5. What images describe the Egyptians’ defeat?
6. What images describe the effect of the news of the Egyptians’ defeat on those who heard it?

Genesis 1

7. In what order did God create the various elements of His creation?

Psalms 104

8. What images describe God’s acts of creation?

Lesson 8: Narrative

MEMORY: Review

Hymn: "Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord"

Narrative, which is one kind of prose, is the most prevalent kind of Scripture in the Bible. The purpose of narrative is not merely to multiply good and bad moral examples. Instead, the purpose of narrative is to reveal God who is shown to be at work in the real world, fulfilling His good purposes and faithfully keeping His promises despite all obstacles and enemies. Narratives are true, but selective. Therefore, while narratives are not complete for determining everything that happened (see John 20:30-31; 21:24-25), narratives are complete for accomplishing their purpose. To help determine the purpose of a narrative, pay attention to the ways that narratives show emphasis. These include repetition and the slowing of the pace of narration. One way a writer may slow the pace of narration is by providing direct quotation of the words which are said or thought rather than summarizing them. To help determine the purpose of a narrative, also pay special attention to the way a narrative ends.

Genesis 9:20-27

1. At what point or points does the narrative seem to slow down in its pace?

2. Are there any repeated words or phrases in this narrative?

3. How does the narrative end?

4. What is the purpose of this narrative?

1 Kings 13:1-32

5. Are there any repeated words or phrases in this narrative?

6. How does the narrative end?

7. What is the purpose of this narrative?

Acts 12:20-24

8. At what point or points does the narrative seem to slow down in its pace?

9. How does the narrative end?

10. What is the purpose of this narrative?

Lesson 9: Parallelism

MEMORY: Review

Hymn: “Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord”

The most important characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. Parallelism is the arrangement of lines according to corresponding thoughts. In Hebrew poetry, a thought which is first set forth in a line of poetry is completed by a thought set forth in the next adjacent line. Adjacent lines correspond in one of three possible ways. These three ways are called synonymous parallelism (which is the most prevalent), antithetical parallelism, and synthetic parallelism. Pondering the way that the thoughts of corresponding lines relate to each other is integral to grasping their meaning (see Psalm 1:2).

Synonymous parallelism: the thought of the second line reinforces the thought of the first line by presenting a similar thought.

Antithetical parallelism: the thought of the second line contrasts with the thought of the first line by presenting its opposite corollary.

Synthetic parallelism: the thought of the second line develops, complements, supplements, supports, illustrates, or otherwise advances the thought of the first line by presenting a thought which is somehow related.

1. Why is Proverbs 1:8 considered an example of synonymous parallelism?
2. Why is Psalm 1:6 considered an example of antithetical parallelism?
3. Why is Psalm 3:4 considered an example of synthetic parallelism?
4. Mark each of the following verses as synonymous, antithetical, or synthetic in its parallel lines. (Hint: There should be two of each kind below.)
 - Psalm 34:1
 - Psalm 34:2
 - Psalm 34:9
 - Psalm 34:10
 - Psalm 34:15
 - Psalm 34:19
5. Which lines are parallel with each other in Isaiah 43:1-7? (Hint: Each verse contains at least two sets of two parallel lines.)

Lesson 10: Proverbs

MEMORY: Review

Hymn: “Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord”

Are proverbs promises? Are proverbs only usually true? Are proverbs sometimes false? Proverbs are always true, not just usually true. However, proverbs are not promises which foretell final outcomes. Rather, proverbs isolate and speak reliably about one factor of life at a time. Outcomes of life are not determined by single factors, but by multiple factors working together. Proverbs are useful because they speak the truth about what actions always do in view of a specific single factor of life.

1. In Proverbs 10:4, what does diligent work do?
2. In Proverbs 27:1, what do events outside of a person’s control do?
3. In Proverbs 22:6, what does discipline do for a child?
4. In Proverbs 13:20, what does companionship with fools do for a child?
5. In Proverbs 26:4, what does answering a fool according to his folly do?
6. In Proverbs 26:5, what does answering a fool according to his folly do?
7. In Proverbs 17:8, what does a bribe do?
8. In Proverbs 15:27, what does a bribe do?
9. What is the same about the following proverbs, and what does each one mean?
 - Proverbs 15:17
 - Proverbs 16:19
 - Ecclesiastes 7:5
10. What is the same about the following proverbs, and what does each one mean?
 - Proverbs 15:11
 - Proverbs 17:7
 - Proverbs 21:27
11. What is the same about the following proverbs, and what does each one mean?
 - Proverbs 11:20
 - Proverbs 12:22
 - Proverbs 15:8
12. What is the same about the following proverbs, and what does each one mean?
 - Proverbs 25:12
 - Proverbs 26:9
 - Proverbs 26:11

Lesson 11: Typology

MEMORY: Review

Hymn: "Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord"

Typology is a branch of Biblical interpretation in which an element found in the Old Testament prefigures one found in the New Testament. The initial one is called the "type", and the fulfillment is designated the "antitype." Either type or antitype may be a person, thing, or event, but often the type is messianic and frequently refers to salvation.

1. Read the following passages and identify the "type" and the "antitype":

- Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:9-15
- Exodus 12:1-13 and 1 Corinthians 5:7
- Exodus 17:1-6 and 1 Corinthians 10:1-5
- Jonah 1:17 and Matthew 12:38-40
- Genesis 14:18-20 and Hebrews 7:1-3
- 1 Kings 6:1, 8:13 and John 2:18-22
- Exodus 16:1-7 and John 6:29-35
- Genesis 3:17-19 and Romans 5:14-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45

2. Can you identify other types in the Bible?

Lesson 12: Parables

MEMORY: Review

Hymn: "Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord"

A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. A parable compares a spiritual truth with a well-known truth in order to clarify the spiritual truth.

1. In Mark 4:10-12, why did Jesus teach in parables?
2. In Mark 4:13, what did Jesus say about the parable of the Sower?
3. What do the following parables teach us about the kingdom of heaven?
 - Matthew 13:47-50
 - Mark 4:26-29

Luke 15:11-32

4. What did the younger son do with his wealth?
5. How did the father react?
6. How did the older brother react?

Luke 18:9-14

7. What did the Pharisee pray?
8. What did the tax collector say?
9. What spiritual truth did Jesus teach with this parable?

Ezekiel 17:1-21

10. How is the first great eagle described, and what did it do?
11. How is the second great eagle described?
12. What did the vine do?
13. What did the king of Babylon do?
14. What did the Lord GOD say He would do?

Lesson 13: Predictive Prophecy

MEMORY: Review

Hymn: “Thy Word is Like a Garden, Lord”

The interpretation of prophecy requires much skill. Many neglect this important area of theology because of the unique challenges prophecy brings. When studying the prophetic genre, seek to consistently interpret prophecy literally.

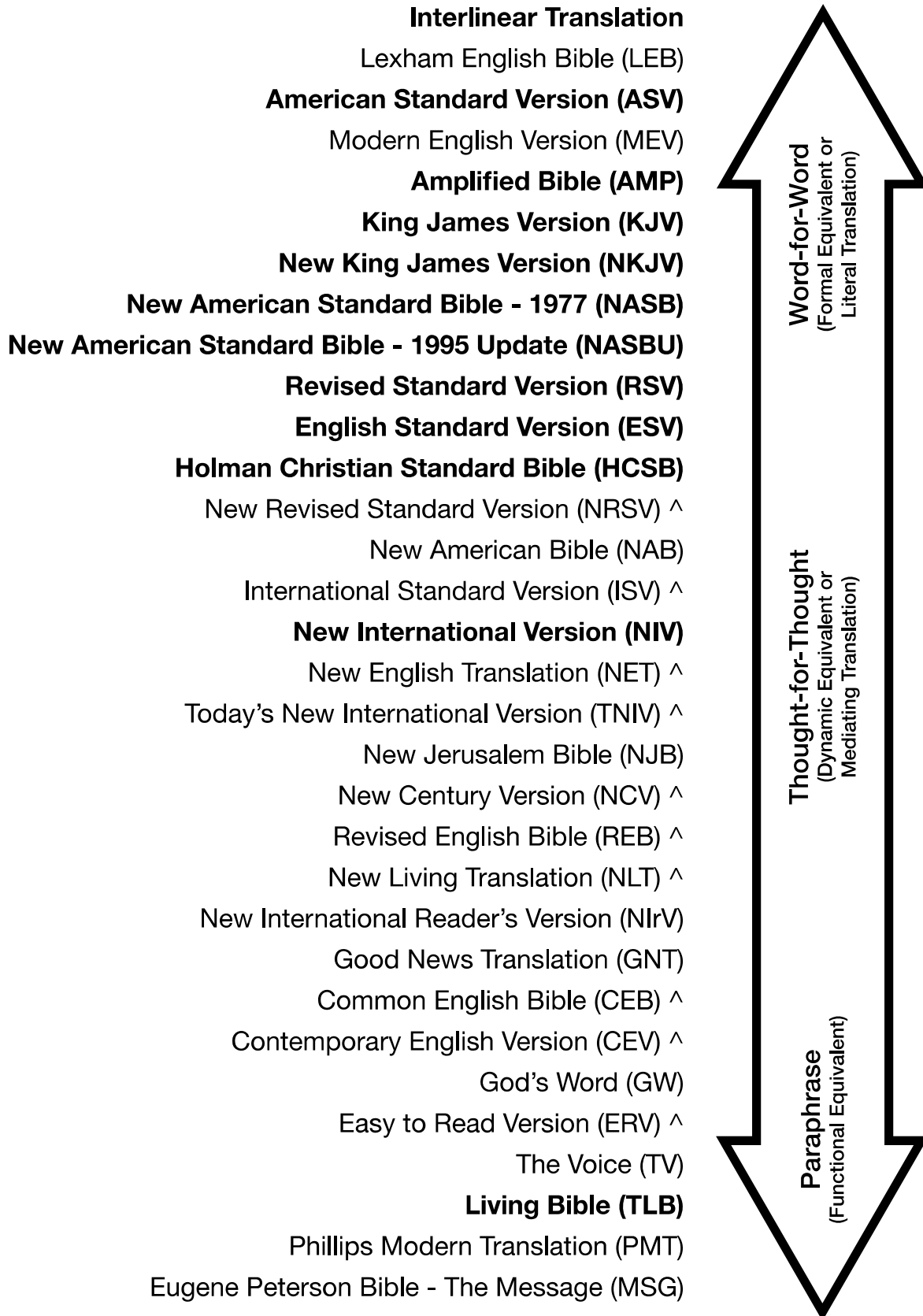
1. Why should we study prophecy?

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- 1 John 3:2-3
- 2 Peter 3:10-13
- Revelation 1:3

2. How are the following prophecies fulfilled?

- Genesis 15:12-16 and Exodus 11:1-10, 12:40-41
- Joshua 6:26 and 1 Kings 16:34
- Isaiah 44:28-45:7 and Ezra 1:1, 6:14-15
- Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-6
- Zechariah 12:10 and John 19:31-37, Revelation 1:7
- Zechariah 13:7, Matthew 26:31-35 and Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:50-52

Translation Continuum



^ Indicates varying degrees of gender neutral language
Most common translations in **bold**