

How to Study the Bible



CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES

How to Study the Bible

third edition

by Thomas Maphori



Address of the Global University office in your area:

Developed in cooperation with Global University staff

School for Evangelism and Discipleship
Global University
1211 South Glenstone
Springfield, MO 65804
USA

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Third edition 2010

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PN 03.11

ISBN 978-0-7617-1512-2

www.globaluniversity.edu
www.globalreach.org

Printed in the United States of America

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Christian Life Series

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When You Pray

How to Study the Bible

Your Helpful Friend

Christian Worship

Christian Workers

Marriage and the Home

God's Design—Your Choice

John's Gospel

We Believe

What Churches Do

The Teaching Ministry

The Christian in His Community

PREFACE

The Bible, which is the Word of God, reveals God's plan for every person. The plan is for our redemption or salvation by accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. As soon as we do this, we are saved.

Once we have chosen to follow God's plan for our lives, we are responsible not only to conform our own lives and characters to Christ's image, but to share Christ's love with others so their lives can be transformed. We can fulfill our responsibilities as we respond to the Holy Spirit, who reveals God to us when we study the Bible.

The study of God's Word demands our best attention. The Holy Spirit teaches us, but we must apply ourselves as well. It takes careful study of the Bible to understand its deep meanings.

This course will present basic facts about the Bible and give you a few methods by which to organize your study. Without a plan of action, it would be very difficult to build a house, sew a dress, or graduate from school. But a plan of action makes any task more enjoyable and profitable. A modern method of teaching yourself helps you to learn the principles easily and put them into practice immediately.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES

How to Study the Bible is one of 18 courses in this practical discipleship program for new believers. The Christian Life Series is a study to help students grow in their relationship with Christ, interact with the Word of God, and better understand God's purposes for their life.

Students will study basic Christian topics under six reoccurring themes. The courses are conversational in style and easy to read. The following chart illustrates how the units of study are organized for the Christian Life Series.

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Spiritual Life	Your New Life	When You Pray	God's Design, Your Choice
The Bible	Your Bible	How to Study the Bible	John's Gospel
Theology	Who Jesus Is	Your Helpful Friend	We Believe
The Church	The Church	Christian Worship	What Churches Do
Service	Personal Evangelism	Christian Workers	The Teaching Ministry
Christian Ethics	Bible Ethics	Marriage and the Home	The Christian in His Community

Before You Begin

How to Use this Book

This book is divided into lessons instead of chapters. Each lesson begins with two important pages. After the lesson number are the title and a short introduction to the lesson. On the next page is **Lesson Outline**. This is the outline or plan for the lesson. It is a list of what you can expect to study in the lesson.

Next are **Lesson Objectives**. The lesson objectives are guidelines for what you should be able to do after studying the lesson. Read them carefully; they will help you focus on the most important points in the lesson.

To help you achieve your objectives, each lesson has questions and activities. The subheading **Application** signals you to answer questions on the material learned. Do not skip over this part. Writing out the answers will help you apply what you have learned. Most of the questions can be answered right in your book. If there is not enough room to write your answers in the book, write them in a notebook or journal that you can use to review the lessons later.

After answering a question, check the answer at the end of the lesson in the section marked **Answers to Study Questions**. Do not look ahead at the answers until you have written your own answer. This will help you remember what you study much better. Compare your answers to those given at the end of the lesson; then correct those you did not answer correctly. The answers are in a jumbled order so that you will not easily see the answer to the next question. At the end of each lesson, complete the **Self-Test**. Answers to the self-test are at the end of the study guide.

How to Answer Study Questions

This course uses many different kinds of questions. Below are samples of the three most common types and how to answer them.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

A multiple-choice question asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

Example

- 1** The Bible has a total of
- a)** 100 books.
 - b)** 66 books.
 - c)** 27 books.

The correct answer is b) 66 books.

In your study guide, make a circle around b) as shown here:

- 1** The Bible has a total of
- a)** 100 books.
 - (b)** 66 books.
 - c)** 27 books.
 - d)** 2 books.

TRUE-FALSE

A true-false question or item asks you to choose which of several statements are TRUE.

Example

- 2** Which statements below are TRUE?
- a)** The Bible has a total of 120 books.
 - (b)** The Bible is a message for believers today.
 - c)** All of the Bible authors wrote in the Hebrew language.
 - (d)** The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible.

Statements **b)** and **d)** are true. You would make a circle around these two letters to show your choices, as you see above.

MATCHING

A Matching question or item asks you to match things that go together, such as names with descriptions, or Bible books with their authors.

Example

3 Write the number for the leader's name in front of each phrase that describes something he did.

...1.. **a)** Received the Law at Mt. Sinai

1. Moses

...2.. **b)** Led the Israelites across the Jordan

2. Joshua

...2.. **c)** Marched around Jericho

...1.. **d)** Lived in Pharaoh's court

Phrases **a)** and **d)** refer to Moses, and phrases **b)** and **c)** refer to Joshua. You would write 1 beside **a)** and **d)**, and 2 beside **b)** and **c)**, as you see above.

Suggestions for Studying

1. Set aside quiet and regular times for your study. It will be easier to concentrate if study is part of your daily habits.
2. Pray as you begin each study session. With an open Bible, the Holy Spirit, and this course, you are in the classroom of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Lord to help you understand the lesson and apply it to your life.
3. Carefully read the lesson introduction, the lesson plan, and the goals.
4. Begin to carefully read the lesson. Look up Bible references and take any notes that may be helpful. The Bible verses reinforce important points in the lesson.

5. Answer the study questions in the spaces provided. Use your notebook or journal when necessary.
6. Think about what you have learned and look for ways to apply it in discussion with family and friends, in a Bible study, etc.
7. Take your time. No bell will ring to force you to move on to new material.

Unit Evaluations

At the end of this course, you will find the Unit Evaluations. Questions and Answer Sheets are clearly marked for each unit. Carefully follow the directions given. You should complete and send your answer sheets to your instructor for corrections. If you are not studying with a Global University office you will still benefit by completing the Unit Evaluations.

Ways to Study this Course

This course has been written so that you can study it by yourself. We like to say that the teacher is in the book. However, you may also study this course in various group settings such as mid-week Bible studies, learning centers, home groups, and youth programs. This course can be used as a correspondence or resource tool for prison ministries as well as special ethnic or other community outreach programs. You will find both the content and study methods excellent for these purposes.

If you study this course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Be sure to use the address of your Global University office. If you are studying in a group or through a Discipleship Training Center, be sure to follow any additional instructions that your instructor may give.

In addition, your church may partner with Global University to open a Discipleship Training Center. Visit us online at www.globaluniversity.edu for more information and start up helps.

Certificate

Unit or individual certificates are available to students upon successful completion of our courses. For instance, if you are studying through a National Office or Discipleship Training Center, you may receive a certificate from your Global University instructor. If you are studying on your own, you may mail your completed Unit Evaluation Answer Sheets to your local office. National Offices and Discipleship Training Centers may order certificates through the International Office or through GPH in the USA.

Additional Helps

The School for Evangelism and Discipleship (SED) Catalog, Discipleship Training Center Manual, the Study Center Agreement Form, and the SED Order Form are available online for print downloads. Other materials available for this course include supplemental audiocassettes.

Visit us at www.globaluniversity.edu
and www.globalreach.org for additional resources.

About the Author

Thomas Maphori is an African pastor who chose to study and work in his own country. He attended African Bible College in Rustenburg, Republic of South Africa, for three years and continued his studies with Global University.

Besides teaching and pastoring, Mr. Maphori has shown active interest in his community, serving as school board secretary for two years. He and his wife, Matshediso, have two children.



Lessons

- 1 Reasons for Bible Study**
- 2 Basic Information About the Bible**
- 3 The Bible as Literature**
- 4 Preparation for Bible Study**

1 Reasons for Bible Study

Proverbs 2:1–5 advises, “If you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.”

You may have known times when there was no rain for your crops or water for your animals and yourselves. You perhaps dug deep into the ground looking for a hidden stream. When you need something as important as water you try very hard to get it.

When you study God’s Word to gain wisdom and knowledge of God, you will have to work hard, digging deep into the Scriptures, just as you would search for water. When you work at studying the Bible, you will find life-giving water.

Jesus used water as an illustration of our need to have Christ in our lives. He said, ““Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”” (John 4:14).

To have this experience of drinking living water, a person must study the Bible daily. This lesson tells why we study the Bible.

The Plan

- A. God's Will
- B. Our Needs
- C. Our Attitude

The Goals

1. Explain why Bible study is necessary.
2. Describe how Bible study meets our needs.
3. Describe attitudes that affect the results of Bible study.

A. GOD'S WILL

Goal 1. Explain why Bible study is necessary.

If you love someone, you want to be with him and know everything about him. You want to understand his thoughts and share his feelings. As your love for that person grows through close contact, you become more complete and more satisfied.

God's will for us is that we love Him above all else. When we truly love God, we want to spend time getting to know Him. One way to do this is by reading and studying His Word. Then, our love increases.

Our relationship to God depends upon our obedience to His commands. The only way we can obey Him is to know what His commands are. The Bible tells us to give full attention to our work so that we can understand the Word of God and be able to teach it to others (2 Timothy 2:15). Jesus noted the importance of knowing God's Word: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). As we use our minds to search for the meaning of God's Word, we are fulfilling part of God's great command: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). In other words, to do God's will, we must study His Word. In

this way we learn of His commandments and come to love Him more.

In Psalm 119 King David writes about learning God's law. The word *law* in this psalm means the advice and commands given in Scripture. David repeats the idea that learning and obeying go together. He says, "I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands" (v. 6). Obedience produces understanding and wisdom to know the meaning of God's Word. Then we can apply it to our lives and teach it to others.

First Peter 2:2 notes, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." The apostle Paul, in Colossians 3:16, writes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Just as food is eaten and absorbed into our bodies to give us strength, God's Word must envelop our spirits for us to grow spiritually.

Studying God's Word is easier when we ask the Holy Spirit to help us. God expects us to study His Word. Thus, He gave us the Holy Spirit to teach us. Jesus told His disciples:

"When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (John 16:13)

Application

- 1** God's will for you is to
 - a)** have a relationship with Him built on love.
 - b)** always be very religious.
 - c)** become educated about the format of the Bible.
- 2** The study of the Bible is necessary for you to
 - a)** become a Christian.
 - b)** know God's will.
 - c)** prove your goodness.

- 3** Obedience to God's will depends on
- a)** responses you make when you are saved.
 - b)** learning what God's commands for you are.
 - c)** knowing that God will punish you for disobeying Him.
- 4** You can best accomplish the task of studying the Bible when you
- a)** ask your friends to help you.
 - b)** spend much time at it.
 - c)** allow the Holy Spirit to teach you.
-

Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

B. OUR NEEDS

Goal 2. Describe how Bible study meets our needs.

God made us and is concerned about us. He knows our needs better than we know them. A master craftsman knows his product better than anyone else does. If a product does not work, we send it back to the craftsman to have it repaired. He makes it work again.

Our lives are broken. We have bad habits and do not follow God as we should. We need repairing—teaching, correcting, and reshaping. The Word of God is the only instrument equipped to make the repairs. Second Timothy 3:16–17 record, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” God begins to repair our lives when we accept Christ as our personal Savior. He cleanses us from sin and gives us a new start. He instructs us how to become like Jesus. The teachings of the Bible guide us in our growth and describe God's will for us in our daily living.

As God's Word makes repairs, it fulfills many needs in our lives. It helps us know the truth about our salvation. It teaches us what our heritage in Christ is. It gives us strength and power through Christ. It discusses how to be filled with the Holy Spirit

and provides joy and peace that come from God. It directs us to live holy lives.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us, “The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” The Word of God shows us when our desires are against God’s will. It helps us shape our thoughts to be like His. Our desires and thoughts are at the center of our spiritual life in the same way that joints and marrow are central to physical life. The more we read and study the Bible and listen to the Holy Spirit teaching us, the more we are able to know and do God’s will. We will have purpose in life and the wisdom to make the right choices. Psalm 119:130 notes, “The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” This light guides us in our daily lives. It gives us understanding about Christ’s return and our eternal life in heaven. The light of God’s Word changes us into the image of Christ. As we study, we take off our old self with its practices and have put on the new self (Colossians 3:9–10). Then the likeness of Christ can shine through us to a lost world who needs Him. When we truly know God, our spirits are joined with His Spirit which is the source of life. In this way our greatest need is met—the need for life itself.

Application

5 Who is best qualified to meet our needs?

- a)** We are.
- b)** Our parents are.
- c)** God is.

6 Circle the letter in front of the correct completion: The Bible teaches us

- a)** how to earn special favors.
- b)** God’s will for us personally.
- c)** the major religions of the world.

- 7** (Circle the letter of all the correct completions.) God’s Word meets our needs by
- a)** teaching the truth.
 - b)** condemning us.
 - c)** correcting our faults.
 - d)** giving instruction for right living.
-

C. OUR ATTITUDE

Goal 3. Describe attitudes that affect the results of Bible study.

The Bible is different from all other books. We must approach God’s Word in an attitude of obedience. The apostle Paul was concerned about the disobedience of the church in Corinth and wrote them a letter (1 Corinthians) to counsel them. He explained that because of their arguing and other bad attitudes, they were not growing spiritually. Paul wrote, “I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly” (1 Corinthians 3:1–3).

Our attitude must include discipline. We cannot expect God to reveal things to us unless we make a real effort to learn. Jesus taught, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). We need to spend time in careful study.

Now, for our study to change our lives, we must be teachable and be willing to receive our heavenly Father’s instruction. Both King David and the prophet Isaiah admitted to God their need and desire to be taught. The psalmist wrote, “I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:102–103). Isaiah records, “The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning

by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught” (Isaiah 50:4). When we are teachable, we approach God’s Word humbly. We must not to boast, for it is God who made us what we are. God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By Him we are put right with God; we become God’s holy people and are set free. So then, as the scripture says, ““Let him who boasts boast in the Lord”” (1 Corinthians 1:30–31).

We can never learn everything in God’s Word, but we continue to learn as the Holy Spirit reveals God’s truth to us. Our learning will go on even in heaven, for God’s Word will not pass away.

Application

8 (Read 1 Corinthians 2:10–12 and circle the correct answer.) People who are not Christians cannot fully understand the Bible because they

- a)** are not teachable.
- b)** do not have God’s Spirit.
- c)** are not hungry for truth.

9 Our attitude toward studying God’s Word should include all the following except

- a)** hunger.
- b)** obedience.
- c)** self-righteousness.
- d)** discipline.
- e)** teachableness.
- f)** humility.

10 The proper attitude toward God’s Word develops when we

- a)** think we are wise.
- b)** open our hearts to receive His Word.
- c)** have learned everything.



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order, so that you will not easily see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Look for the number you need, and try not to look ahead.

- 1 a)** have a relationship with Him built on love.
- 6 b)** God's will for us personally.
- 2 b)** know God's will.
- 7 a)** teaching the truth.
 - c)** correcting our faults.
 - d)** giving instruction for right living.
- 3 b)** learning what God's commands for you are.
- 8 b)** do not have God's Spirit
- 4 c)** allow the Holy Spirit to teach you.
- 9 c)** self-righteousness.
- 5 c)** God is.
- 10 b)** open our hearts to receive His Word.

LESSON 2 Basic Information About the Bible

The Bible is for all people—young and old, uneducated and educated, rich and poor. It is a spiritual guidebook to teach people how to be saved and to know God’s plan for them. The apostle Paul writes of the Bible, “Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4). Thus, each person can relate personally to the Bible.

We can receive blessing and instruction from reading the Bible, even though we do not understand it completely. But the full joy of Bible knowledge comes only with serious study. Therefore, we need to have some basic information. In this lesson we will learn about the writing of the Bible, its central ideas, unity, and divisions.

The Plan

- A. Writers of the Bible
 - 1. Inspiration
 - 2. Authority
- B. Transmission of the Bible
- C. Unity of the Bible
 - 1. Old and New Testaments
 - 2. Progressive Revelation

The Goals

- 1. Describe how the Bible was written and transmitted to us.
- 2. Discuss the main theme and structure of the Bible.
- 3. Indicate the main factors that create unity in the Bible.

A. WRITERS OF THE BIBLE

Goal 1. Describe how the Bible was written and transmitted to us.

Inspiration

About 40 men wrote the Bible during a period of about 1600 years. With so many different writers and circumstances involved, the Bible could have had little or no unity. But the Bible tells us that the supernatural God guided or inspired the writers to record His dealings with humanity.

Inspiration, in reference to the Bible, is the actual “breathing in” of God’s Spirit to guide the thoughts of the writers. This is easy to understand if we recall that God created man out of soil and gave him life by breathing life-giving breath into his nostrils.

Some critics believe that though the Bible does contain God’s truth, it also contains errors. Others try to explain that

parts of the Bible become the inspired Word of God to each person when God speaks to people through these particular Bible words. Still others explain that God dictated the Bible word by word to men who wrote it without thinking about the words. These are all wrong ideas about inspiration.

The Bible says, “All Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16). In 2 Peter 1:21 is written, “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” If we accept any of God’s Word as truth, then we must accept the whole Word as truth.

Also, we cannot say that the writers were mere machines with no freedom of choice. Though some did not fully understand what they wrote, especially concerning prophecies yet to be fulfilled, others studied their topics. They even wrote about their own experiences. What all had in common was God’s special revelation. Paul noted this: “The mystery made known to me by revelation, . . . which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 3:3, 5). God’s Holy Spirit continues to confirm God’s Word as truth.

Authority

The words of the Bible, just as the writers wrote them at first, are the best words possible for God’s purpose. Since God inspired them, we can trust them. They are always true, and they cannot fail.

The Bible is complete. As the Word of God, it needs nothing else. Nothing is to be added to the Bible words, and nothing is to be taken from them.

Because the Bible is true, complete, and inspired by God, biblical scholars say that it has authority. Even the crowds who heard Jesus speak recognized divine anointing. They said He was not like other teachers, but he taught with authority (Matthew 7:29). The three main meanings of authority are: final truth, official statement or law, and power to give commands. God’s Word has authority in all three areas. It reveals the truth

about God. It is the official plan of redemption for all people. And it has power to change lives as people obey its commands.

When we accept the authority of God's Word, we can study it with greater understanding. We no longer just say it is God's Word and forget about it; we respond to it as the real, living Word of God, which transforms our lives. As we understand its teachings, we accept them without doubt. Paul was so thankful that the church of the Thessalonians received and accepted God's message "not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

We can rely on the authority of the Bible. We can believe God's promises are real and claim them for our lives. His joy and peace will follow. Then we can respond to the Word in complete obedience.

Application

- 1** To understand the Bible, we must recognize that it was written under divine
 - 2** Because the Bible is true, it speaks with
 - 3** We recognize inspiration of the Bible through
 - a)** its own words.
 - b)** its literary qualities.
 - c)** the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - 4** The authority of the Bible is seen in its
 - a)** final truth.
 - b)** power to change lives.
 - c)** hundreds of commentaries.
-

B. TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

Goal 2. Discuss the main theme and structure of the Bible.

For a long time there was no written revelation from God to humanity. But God did speak to people and guided them in

many of their actions. God's Word was given to each person in a direct way. For instance, God called Abraham and told him that through him and his descendants (the Hebrew nation), all the world would be blessed. Out of that nation God chose certain men to write His revelation. We will describe how the Bible was written and transmitted or given to us.

God inspired Moses to write a revelation that would explain the creation of the earth and give God's laws, promises, and prophecies. Thus, Moses wrote a set of books to which other holy men of God added writings. These writers wrote the books of the Bible on stones, clay tablets, skins, and scrolls. These first writings do not exist today, but God guided wise and faithful men to copy all the books of the Bible. Many copies of the first writings do exist today. They are in museums and libraries throughout the world.

For many years the books in the Bible were called "the Books." The word "Bible" came from the Greek word *biblia*, which meant "book." Then the Bible became known as "the Book," corresponding with the Greek. Thus, the meaning of the name "Bible" is appropriately ascribed to the 66 books, which make the holy book.

Bible scholars have examined and accepted the Bible as the inspired Word of God. In fact, they call the books of the Bible "the canon." The canon is complete. There are other ancient writings about God, but they are not inspired. They are not part of God's revelation to us.

God wants us to understand His message. He had the Old Testament writers use Hebrew so the Hebrew people could understand them. The New Testament writers used Greek, which was the common language of Jesus' day.

Today, the Bible has been translated into more than 1300 languages, so that more people can understand the message of God. It is common to find different wording in different translations. But the message is the same.

Application

- 5** In modern language the word *Bible* means
- a)** the Book.
 - b)** Greek books.
- 6** The Bible is translated into more than 1300
- a)** books.
 - b)** languages.
- 7** The books of the Bible are called the canon because
- a)** they are accepted as the inspired Word of God.
 - b)** they are written by 66 men.
- 8** We have the Bible today because
- a)** it was written on solid stones.
 - b)** God guided wise men to copy the writings.
 - c)** God preserved the clay tablets and scrolls.
-

C. UNITY OF THE BIBLE

Goal 3. Indicate the main factors that create unity in the Bible.

Old and New Testaments

The 66 books of the Bible are divided into the Old Testament with 39 books and the New Testament with 27 books. Yet they are one book, one history, one story. The main idea of each book is God's plan of redemption for humanity. The Old Testament predicts what will happen in the New Testament, and the New Testament explains and fulfills the old covenant. Thus they work together in unity, for both were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The central figure of both Testaments is Christ. Each book shows Him in a special way. For instance, Genesis shows Christ as the Creator, Exodus shows Him as the Redeemer. Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles show Him as the King, and Isaiah shows Him as the Messiah. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John show

Christ as the promised Messiah, the Servant of God, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. As you study each book, try to see how Christ is shown.

Christ in the Bible	
Genesis	Creator
Exodus	Redeemer
Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles	King
Isaiah	Messiah
Matthew	Messiah
Mark	Servant of God
Luke	Son of Man
John	Son of God

The word *testament* means “agreement.” The Old Testament reveals God’s agreement with man about his salvation before Christ came. This was based on the laws God gave Moses to write down. The New Testament is God’s agreement with humans after Christ came. It is based on God’s grace, which is His complete love for humanity. God sent His Son to die and rise again so that we can have the gift of salvation.

The Old Testament predicts the coming of Christ and shows the weakness of the old agreement. The covenant of the Old Testament was for a limited time and for one nation, the Jews. It was limited in other ways, for instance, the people had to sacrifice animals each year to keep paying for their sins. (See Hebrews 10:4–7, 10, 14.)

The New Testament tells of Christ’s coming and fulfills the predictions of the Old Testament: “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son” (Galatians 4:4). The new agreement lasts forever (Hebrews 7:24, 28). It is for all nations (Acts 10:34–35) and pays the penalty for all sins. All we have to do is accept God’s gift of His Son.

The following chart shows how to group the books of the Bible.

Old Testament		
Law	Genesis–Deuteronomy	5
History	Joshua–Esther	12
Poetry	Job–Song of Songs	5
Prophecy		
Major Prophets	Isaiah–Daniel	5
Minor Prophets	Hosea–Malachi	12
New Testament		
Gospels	Matthew–John	4
History	Acts	1
Epistles		
Paul’s	Romans–Philemon	13
General	Hebrews–Jude	8
Prophecy	Revelation	1

Progressive Revelation

The Bible story begins in Genesis with the creation of the world and man. It ends in Revelation with the ending of life on the earth as we know it. Between these two books is the story of how God worked out humanity’s salvation so that we can enjoy eternal life in heaven.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they sinned. They were then separated from God spiritually. But God still loved them. He began to make a way to heal their spirits. It took a long time for man to receive the full revelation of God about spiritual healing. Hebrews 1:1–2 tells us, “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.”

Today, we have the full revelation through Christ, who is the living Word. The people who lived in the Old Testament times did not have this. They had a part of it. As time went by, God

revealed more and more of His truth. (See Isaiah 28:10.) We call this progressive revelation.

God dealt with Old Testament people in a different way than He deals with us. The teachings in the New Testament against polygamy and divorce, for example, seem to conflict with Old Testament stories of these practices. But Jesus explained that God dealt differently in the past. They had less of the truth revealed to them than we have (Matthew 19:3–9). We have more truth because Jesus came to show us the way. As you study the Bible, you will see more the unity of God's plan for your life.

Application

9 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement:

- a)** The main theme of the Bible is the creation of the world.
- b)** The Old and New Testaments are God's old and new agreements with man.
- c)** The Old and New Testaments work together to explain God's plan for man.
- d)** The message of each book in the Bible centers on a different character.

10 Select the description below that best represents progressive revelation.

- a)** The revelation of God is for a few people.
- b)** People tell others about God's revelation from beginning to end.
- c)** God revealed His truth a little at a time.

11 Select those statements that illustrate the unity of the Old and New Testaments.

- a)** Both were written on ancient scrolls.
- b)** The Old Testament predicts what will happen in the New.
- c)** The central figure of both Testaments is Christ.
- d)** God dealt with people the same in Old Testament times as in New Testament times.
- e)** The New Testament reveals truths from the Old Testament.



Reading the entire Bible through will help you to see that what some unbelievers have called contradictions are, in fact, confirmations of the completeness of God's Word.

Check Your Answers

- 1** inspiration.
- 7 a)** they are accepted as the inspired Word of God.
- 2** authority.
- 8 b)** God guided wise men to copy the writings.
- 3 a)** its own words.
c) the work of the Holy Spirit
- 9 a)** False
b) True
c) True
d) False
- 4 a)** final truth.
b) power to change lives.
- 10 c)** God revealed His truth a little at a time.
- 5 a)** the Book.
- 11 b)** The Old Testament predicts what will happen in the New.
c) The central figure of both Testaments is Christ.
e) The New Testament reveals truths from the Old Testament.
- 6 b)** languages.

LESSON 3 The Bible as Literature

When you talk to someone, you want that person to understand you. So you choose a way to express yourself that will make your ideas clear. In other words, you know that what you say and how you say it work together. Like speech, literature or writing is effective when the writer states his ideas clearly.

The writers of the Bible chose their words and arranged them to fit their purposes. Studying how writers express their ideas will help you in your Bible study. You will be better able to see the main idea in a passage of Scripture and better understand the writer's purpose when you can identify his style or manner of expression.

The Plan

- A. Literal and Figurative Language
- B. Organization of Ideas
- C. Styles of Writing

The Goals

1. Distinguish between literal and figurative uses of language in the Bible.
2. Identify six ways to organize thoughts.
3. Discuss the main styles of writing used in the Bible.

A. LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Goal 1. Distinguish between literal and figurative uses of language in the Bible.

God wants us to understand the truth that He has revealed to us through His Word. The biblical writers wrote about reality, and, most often, they used language that is literal or factual. Therefore, we can know what the Bible means by accepting the natural meanings of its words. When we read, “Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray” (Luke 6:12), we know that this is literally or actually what He did. When He ordered the fever to leave someone and it left (Luke 4:39), this is the literal truth.

But when we read a passage like, “John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29), we cannot interpret all the words literally. Jesus is not a lamb or animal. He is like a lamb, which in the Old Testament was sacrificed for the sins of the people. Thus, some of the language of the Bible is figurative or symbolic in meaning. It helps to explain a literal truth.

Figurative language is made up of figures of speech. These are words or phrases that help us understand something hard to explain by relating it to something we know about. John gave us a mental picture of Christ as a lamb being offered on an

altar for our sins. This helps us understand Christ's purpose in coming to the world.

Figures of speech help us to understand spiritual things, which we cannot see with our natural eyes. Remember, in Lesson 1 we said Jesus compared himself to life-giving water. He also compared himself to bread, light, and a shepherd. On one occasion He said, "Behold, I come like a thief!" (Revelation 16:15). These examples show us we cannot go too far in comparing Jesus to any one of these things. He is like each thing in a limited way. These figures of speech help us to remember particular truths.

Christ often used figurative language when He talked to His followers. He told them simple stories to help them understand important spiritual truths. In Matthew 18:10–14, Christ tells the story of the lost sheep. In this comparison, He teaches that He is as concerned about each one of us as a shepherd is about a lost sheep.

Some figures of speech are called symbols—words that represent truth about something. The words *light*, *salt*, and *sheep* are symbols of Christians. And in the Lord's Supper, the bread and cup are symbols of Christ's body and blood. They remind us of Christ's death and suffering for our salvation.

Application

1 Identify each statement as being either literal or figurative language. Write in front of each statement the number of the kind of language it matches. Remember not to look up answers before you have marked your own.

- | | | |
|--------------|--|-----------------------------|
| ... a | Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool (John 5:2). | 1) Literal
2) Figurative |
| ... b | There is the Lamb of God (John 1:29). | |
| ... c | I am the gate for the sheep (John 10:7). | |
| ... d | There are other sheep that belong to me (John 10:16). | |

2 Read the story of the weeds in Matthew 13:24–30 and the explanation of it in verses 36–43. Read the description in the far right column and write in front of each symbol in the left column the number of the description it matches.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ... a The sower | 1) People belonging to the kingdom of God |
| ... b The enemy | 2) The Son of Man |
| ... c Good seed | 3) The devil |
| ... d Weeds | 4) People belonging to the evil one |
| ... e Wheat and weeds together | 5) The end of the age |
| ... f Weeds gathered up | 6) The heavenly kingdom |
| ... g Wheat by itself | 7) The world as it is |



B. ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS

Goal 2. Identify six ways to organize thoughts.

When we write, we are careful to organize our ideas. We bring together related ideas to support a main idea and arrange the ideas so that they fit together smoothly. In this section, we will describe several ways writers organize their ideas.

1. **Repetition.** The writer uses the same or similar terms over and over. In 2 Corinthians 8:1–15, the idea of Christian giving is developed through repeated ideas of generosity.
2. **Progression.** The writer creates a forward movement by adding detail after detail, as we do when we tell a story. The story about Philip in Acts 8:26–40 shows progression. The Spirit spoke to Philip to go to a certain road. Then He led Philip to a certain man to share the Good News about Jesus. After the man accepted Christ and Philip baptized him, the Spirit took Philip away.
3. **Climax.** The writer leads up to a high point in a progression of details. In Philippians 3:10 Paul tells us what true

righteousness is: “To know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” Verses 1–9 lead to this climax.

4. **Contrast and Comparison.** For contrast, the writer brings together two opposites to emphasize their good and evil or light and darkness. Psalm 1 contrasts godly men who are planted like trees, bearing fruit, with evil men who are like straw being blown away. Notice in this contrast the use of comparison: “the wicked . . . are like chaff that the wind blows away” (v. 4). For comparison, the writer brings together two things to emphasize their similarity.
5. **Main Points.** The writer uses turning points in a progression of ideas. These points are necessary to the particular outcome of a story or to the meaning of a passage. In the book of Esther, one of the main points is Queen Esther’s winning the king’s favor when she approaches him uninvited. Without his favor she could not have fulfilled her plan to help protect the lives of her people.
6. **Reasons and Results.** The writer arranges ideas to show the relationship between a certain result and the reasons for it. He may begin with either the result or the reasons. In Colossians 1:3, Paul tells the church that he gives thanks to God for them. This is a result. In verse 4 he gives the reason: “We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints.” Then he repeats this idea in verses 8 and 9, beginning with the reason and ending with the result. Sometimes we combine two or more of these ways to organize our ideas. In 1 Corinthians 1:3–4, 8–9, Paul used reasons and results and repetition to make his meaning clear to us.

Application

3 Read each Scripture and decide which way of organizing listed in the right column was used to make clear the main idea. You may use a description more than once.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| ... a) Galatians 6:7–9, the idea of reaping what we plant | 1) Repetition |
| | 2) Reasons and results |
| ... b) Ephesians 2:14–18, the idea of Christ uniting Jews and Gentiles in peace | 3) Contrast |
| | 4) Progression |
| ... c) 1 Kings 17:8–24, the idea that Elijah's obedience made him a man of God | 5) Main points |
| ... d) Judges 6:11–40, the idea that Gideon's response to God's call brings about changes | |
| ... e) 2 Chronicles 1:7–12, the idea that because Solomon did something, God did something | |
| ... f) Ephesians 4:17–32, the idea of what new life in Christ involves | |

C. STYLES OF WRITING

Goal 3. Discuss the main styles of writing used in the Bible.

History

The Bible is the history of God's dealings with humankind. Thus, it is a written story of what happened in the lives of certain people. The Holy Spirit guided the writers to choose certain events to share with us. As we read about them, we can build up our faith through learning from their struggles and victories.

For example, when we read about the task God called Gideon to do and Gideon's struggle with fear, we can learn to

reverence God and conquer our fears of other people and of failure. (See Judges 6 and 7.) The greatest story is of Christ himself. By following His example, we can live in obedience to God's will.

History is found throughout the Bible. The historical books are Joshua through Esther in the Old Testament and Matthew through Acts in the New Testament. Genesis through Deuteronomy are a mixture of history and prophecy.

Prophecy

In Bible history, God used prophets to speak directly to the people for Him. The prophets declared God's will and purpose. They proclaimed truth for immediate fulfillment and predicted truth for future fulfillment. Some prophecies are not fulfilled yet. They predict events that will happen in the end times. The books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation contain many of these.

It is helpful to study first the prophecies that are already fulfilled and explained in the New Testament. Acts, for example, refers to the fulfillment of several Old Testament prophecies. These include the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, Christ's suffering and rejection, the enslavement of the children of Israel in Egypt, Christ's resurrection, salvation for Gentiles, and the hardness of men's hearts toward understanding the gospel.

Although the meaning of some prophecy is hard to understand because it contains many symbols, we need to study it to get a clearer picture of God's plan for us. The last 17 books of the Old Testament, the book of Psalms, and Revelation contain important passages of prophecy.

Poetry

Poetry is writing that uses patterns in lines and rhythm to express deep emotion. While history tells of actual events or what man does, poetry reveals what man thinks and how he feels—happy, sad, despairing, or joyful. Poetry uses much

figurative language. It cannot be interpreted literally in the way history is. So, when we read Job, the poetic books of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs, and the other poetic passages scattered throughout the Bible, we need to watch for the use of figurative language.

To give rhythm to their ideas, the Hebrew writers often related two lines of thought to each other. This is called parallelism. The relation could be repetition. In Psalm 5, the meaning of the first line, “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my sighing,” is repeated in the next line, “Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray” (vv. 1–2). The next two lines repeat each other, and the method is continued throughout the passage.

PARALLELISM

Give ear to my words

Listen to my cry

CONTRAST

Two lines may be related by contrast: “An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up” (Proverbs 12:25). Or, two lines may be related by adding one thought to another to help explain it. This method is used in Job 36:21, which begins, “Beware of turning to evil.” The next line adds to the meaning.

The main ideas of the poetic books are about emotions. Job describes human suffering. Psalms guides us in worship to God. Proverbs shows our need for wisdom to carry on practical, everyday affairs. Ecclesiastes shows a negative view of life, full of doubt. Song of Songs expresses marital love.

Letters

Letters are easy to identify. They begin with a greeting, have a main message, and close with a farewell greeting. The main body of the letter may be concerned with answering questions mentioned in someone else’s letter. Thus, it is good

to remember that a letter is a response to specific needs. It does not offer complete teaching on any topic.

The apostle Paul wrote 13 of the New Testament letters, called epistles. Several other men wrote the other 8 letters. When we study all these letters and compare their teaching, we receive guidelines for our faith and new life in Christ.

Application

4 Read each of these Scriptures and write which style of writing is used in each one.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| ... a) Philippians 1:1–2 | 1) History |
| ... b) Zephaniah 1:14–18 | 2) Prophecy |
| ... c) Psalm 91 | 3) Poetry |
| ... d) 1 Corinthians 5:9–11 | 4) Letter |
| ... e) 2 Samuel 7:18–28 | |
| ... f) Job 36:22–26 | |
| ... g) Acts 2:1–13 | |
| ... h) Revelation 4:1–11 | |



Check Your Answers

- 1 a 1) Literal
 b 2) Figurative
 c 2) Figurative
 d 2) Figurative

In c) and d) Jesus is referring to Christians as sheep.

- 3 a 3) Contrast; the harvest of death is contrasted with the harvest of life.
 b 1) Repetition; similar terms such as “Christ himself,” “with his own body,” “He abolished,” “by his death,” “by means of the cross Christ came and preached,” “through Christ.”
 c 4) and 5) Progression and Main points; Elijah obeyed God, depends on God at each point in this sequence of events, and at the end the widow recognizes him as God’s servant.
 d 5) Main points; God gave Gideon three signs which together created a turning point.
 e 2) Reasons and results; Solomon prayed for wisdom and knowledge which pleased God who, as a result, gave this and much more.
 f 3) Contrast; old life of evil, lying and anger is contrasted with new life or new desires and new way of thinking, truth, and calm.
- 2 a 2) The Son of Man
 b 3) The devil
 c 1) People belonging to the kingdom of God
 d 4) People belonging to the evil one
 e 7) The world as it is
 f 5) The end of the age
 g 6) The heavenly kingdom

- 4 a 4)** Letter; this is the greeting at the beginning of a letter.
- b 2)** Prophecy; this predicts future events in the end times.
- c 2)** Prophecy and 3) Poetry; this has a pattern of lines and parallelism and it proclaims God's truth.
- d 4)** Letter; this is a response to specific people about a problem they have.
- e 1)** History; this is a record of what happened to King David.
- f 3)** Poetry; this has a pattern of lines and parallelism.
- g 1)** History; this is a record of what happened on the Day of Pentecost.
- h 2)** Prophecy; this is a vision or a prediction of future events.

LESSON 4 Preparation for Bible Study

Now that we have stated reasons for studying the Bible and briefly described the Bible, we need to discuss how to study the Bible. In this lesson we want to talk about things that will prepare you to study. Then, in the next four lessons we will present some methods of organizing your study.

You might think that to study the Bible is an impossible task. There is so much material to cover and some of it is difficult to understand. But as with any other large task, if you know how to divide it into smaller parts, you will accomplish a great deal.

It took over 20 people to prepare this book, *How to Study the Bible*, in a process of 35 steps. Many of the steps took weeks to complete and some of them had to be repeated. This book is just one in a series that has been and is being written to help you know about God and His will for your life. Years ago this whole task seemed impossible, but it is being accomplished because of a plan of action.

The Plan

- A. Basic Tools for Study
- B. Basic Rules of Interpretation
- C. Prayer for Guidance

The Goals

1. Describe the basic tools for Bible study.
2. State basic rules for how to interpret the writer's intended meaning.
3. Recognize the relationship between prayer and your study of God's Word.

A. BASIC TOOLS FOR STUDY

Goal 1. Describe the basic tools for Bible study.

The best way to grow spiritually is to study the Bible. You cannot rely on the studies or teachings of other people. The study of God's Word is an individual task. It is perhaps the most personal task you will ever become involved in. This task will affect your whole being—who you are and what you do.

Naturally, you influence other people around you. Therefore, what you learn in your private Bible study, you must share with others. As you learn and grow in the knowledge of God, you should teach Sunday school, share in group Bible studies, and tell your friends and neighbors about Christ.

Have Your Own Bible

The tools you need for Bible study are very few. Of course, you need a Bible. (It is helpful to have more than one version of the Bible so you can compare the wording of difficult passages of Scripture.) The Bible expresses all of God's revelation to man. It tells you all you need to know about your new life in Christ and your eternal life in heaven. Thus, the Bible is its own

best interpreter. The more you read it, the more you understand its meaning.

Your eyes and mind are the second tool for study. When you use your eyes, you can experience many things a blind person cannot. Yet, so many people who can see are careless and do not really “see” or experience all that they could through using their eyesight and their ability to think.

Read and Think

Physical sight is closely connected to spiritual sight, which is knowledge or insight into the hidden truths of God. In fact, the Scriptures use the word *seeing* to mean “knowing spiritual truth.” According to 2 Corinthians 4:4 those who do not believe the gospel about Christ are blinded by Satan so they cannot see the light that comes from God’s Word. (See also Matthew 13:14–16.) Isaiah 44:18 says that those who reject God “know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand.” On the other hand, the pure in heart, those who love God, will see God. (See Matthew 5:8.) Yet, so many Christians are guilty of not studying God’s Word, as they should. They do not see or experience as much of the truth as they could.

You can begin to have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), if you allow the Holy Spirit to make the Word clear to you. The goal of your study is to have spiritual sight. You want to know God’s truth and apply it in your daily decisions and actions (1 Corinthians 2:13–16). Through careful study you will receive knowledge of the Bible’s teachings about your new life, and you will be better prepared to reject false teachings. The apostle Paul warned the young churches and his friend Timothy to be aware of false teachers, who would try to lead Christians away from the truth by making them obey rules that are not biblical. (See Ephesians 4:14.)

Write

Your third tool is a pen to write notes as you read the Bible. Writing helps you to remember things. As you write repeated words or ideas that are mentioned, you will see more of what the writer wrote. Write references that are made to other passages so that you can read and compare them. And write questions or thoughts that come to your mind as you read. Later when you read over your notes, you will understand the Bible better and you can answer some of your questions.

These three tools, the Bible, your physical and mental eyes, and a pen, are really all you need to study the Bible. There are other tools that are helpful to Bible study. You may be able to use a Bible concordance, which lists in alphabetical order all the words of the Bible and their Scripture references. If, for example, you wanted to read several Scriptures about faith, you could easily find them by referring to the word “faith” in the concordance. Many Bibles have a small concordance in the back.

The Bible dictionary is a tool that provides definitions of difficult words and information about biblical times, places, culture, and people. Another kind of tool is the Bible commentary. These are books written by various Bible scholars who share their own understanding of the Scriptures based on their long and intense study.

If none of these extra tools are available to you, do not worry. The Holy Spirit will reveal the meaning of the Word to you even though you have no study helps. Ask for divine guidance as you put into practice the study methods you learn in this course.

Application

1 You can depend on just the Bible for learning about God’s revelation to man because

- a)** other great religious books duplicate its material.
- b)** no other books discuss God’s revelation to man.
- c)** the Bible expresses all of God’s revelation to man.

- 2** The most important tools for Bible study are
 - a)** commentaries by well-known writers.
 - b)** a Bible, your eyes, and a pen.
 - c)** books on new revelations.
 - 3** The relationship of spiritual sight to eyesight is suggested by the term
 - a)** *seeing the truth.*
 - b)** *circumstances of truth.*
 - c)** *light for seeing.*
 - 4** The main purpose of writing notes as you study is to
 - a)** keep a record of what you have studied.
 - b)** keep from having to remember what you read.
 - c)** see in a different way what you are studying.
-

B. BASIC RULES OF INTERPRETATION

Goal 2. State basic rules for how to interpret the writer's intended meaning.

You may wonder how to begin your study of the Bible. What book should you start with? How many verses should you study each day? You should begin with a short book (such as Colossians which we will study in Lesson 5) and study about 20–25 verses a day. You may be able to read more than this, but your study will take more time. You should cover a short passage each day to gain the most out of your study.

Just as you may have questions about how to study, you may have questions about the meaning of certain passages of Scripture. How can you interpret or explain the meaning of them? One rule of interpretation is: Ask questions about each passage of Scripture. Who is the author? What is his main purpose? To whom is he writing? Who or what is the passage about? How was something done? When did it happen? Where did it happen? What does this passage mean? What was the purpose in saying this? What truth does it suggest?

We will use Romans 8:26–27 as a sample passage to interpret.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

We cannot answer the first three questions. But we can see what these verses are about. They are about prayer; the Holy Spirit's prayers on our behalf. The Spirit prays in groans that come from deep inside us, where the Spirit dwells. (See John 14:15–17.) The Spirit prays when we do not know how we ought to. The Spirit prays on behalf of God's people wherever they are. This passage means that we have a great Helper, who not only pleads with God for us but also pleads for that which is according to God's will. We cannot see yet how these verses serve the author's main purpose, but they do serve to encourage us in our faith. They also suggest that as we seek to do God's will, the Holy Spirit will renew our mind! Then we will pray in accordance with God's will.

To answer the other questions, we must read the verses that surround this passage. Surrounding material is called *context*. By reading verses 1–25, we see that the author is discussing our new life in the Spirit (vv. 5, 9) as children of God (vv. 14, 17) who have hope in a future glory (v. 18). This context helps us to better understand why we have the power of the Holy Spirit in our prayers. It is because of who we are in Christ.

By reading chapter 1 of Romans we learn that Paul, an apostle (v. 1), wrote this letter to the church in Rome (v. 7). After giving his greetings, he states his main purpose in verses 16 and 17: the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that salvation is by faith, not by anything else. Now we can see how the emphasis in verses 26 and 27 on our victory through the Holy

Spirit supports Paul main purpose. He teaches that faith brings salvation and future glory in heaven.

The second rule of interpretation is: Explain the meaning of a Scripture as it relates to its context. False teachings can arise from taking a verse or part of a verse out of its context. Sometimes people claim God's promises while ignoring the conditions that go with them (See the condition in Matthew 6:33.) Others may use a verse to support their own belief without paying attention to the intended meaning of the verse that is based on its context.

When a passage presents limited teaching or a seeming conflict, we need to study other passages that give related teaching. This third rule of interpretation provides a balanced teaching of the truth. Look in the margins of your Bible for references to related Scriptures. These three rules become easier to use the more you read the Bible.

Application

- 5** Select the best completion for the following sentences:
- a)** If you ask questions as you read a passage of Scripture, it helps you interpret the passage. See how much you already know.
 - b)** If you cannot answer many questions about a Scripture, you should go on to find something else. Read the context to find more answers.
 - c)** References listed in the margins of your Bible are helpful for anyone who studies. This is important for teachers only.
 - d)** Using the rules of interpretation helps you find support for your ideas. Avoid false ideas.

- 6** Read Romans 14:4 and interpret it as you read and answer the following questions.
- a)** What is this verse about?
 - b)** Read the context in verses 1–6. What seemed to be causing problems in the church at Rome?
 - c)** Read Colossians 2:16, which is given as a reference for Romans 14:1–6, and 1 Timothy 4:3, a verse we referred to in the lesson. What do these verses suggest?
 - d)** Read James 4:11–12, which gives related teaching. What particular new meaning does it suggest?
 - e)** Read Matthew 7:1–5 and Luke 6:37–38, 41–42, which give Jesus’ own instructions on this matter. What additional emphasis is made about our conduct towards others in Luke 6:37–38?
 - f)** Now read all of Romans 14 for thorough teaching of what verse 4 means. What should you do about Christian brothers who believe differently than you do?
-

C. PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE

Goal 3. Recognize the relationship between prayer and your study of God’s Word.

We have the Holy Spirit to direct us in God’s will. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, continually, and is our guide. This is described in 1 John 2:27: “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.” People who do not have God’s Spirit in them cannot correctly interpret the spiritual truths of the Bible. Neither can we unless we ask the Holy Spirit to help us. He does not force the truth on us. We must pray for understanding as King David did, repeatedly. “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me” (Psalm 119:18–19).

Effective Bible study depends on prayer. Prayer indicates our humility, sincerity, and dependence in our relationship to God. Prayer shows us our need for help and guidance. Prayer helps us pay attention to our study and respond to Bible lessons. Prayer opens our minds so that we are ready to receive truth: “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:13).

Once again we refer to 2 Timothy 3:16–17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you learn as much as you can about interpreting God’s Word as you continue studying this book.

Application

7 (Circle the letter in front of each correct completion.) Prayer is necessary for effective Bible study because

- a)** the Holy Spirit is our teacher.
- b)** we acknowledge our need for guidance through prayer.
- c)** it makes us receptive to the truth.
- d)** it reduces the burden on us to study hard.



Now that you have completed the first four lessons, you are ready to do the first unit evaluation. Review Lessons 1–4, then follow the instructions in your Unit Evaluation directions.

Check Your Answers

- 1 c) the Bible expresses all of God's revelation to man.
- 5
 - a) interpret the passage.
 - b) read the context to find more answers.
 - c) helpful for anyone who studies.
 - d) avoid false ideas.
- 2 b) a Bible, your eyes, and a pen.
- 6
 - a) We are not to judge our brothers in Christ. Their master is Christ. He will judge them.
 - b) There is arguing about what people can and cannot eat and whether or not one day should be set above the other. If you read verse 17, you see that these are not to be our concerns.
 - c) We need to look to God for guidance rather than to men. Thus we will be judged by God, not by men.
 - d) The act of judging another person shows our disobedience. We must not play God or we will be judged even more severely.
 - e) Not only should we not judge others, but we should forgive them and love them by giving to them.
 - f) Do not judge or condemn them; instead protect them by not doing anything that would weaken their faith.
- 3 a) seeing the truth.
- 7
 - a) the Holy Spirit is our teacher.
 - b) we acknowledge our need for guidance through prayer.
 - c) it makes us receptive to the truth.
- 4 c) see in a different way what you are studying.



Lessons

- 5 Individual Book Study**
- 6 Topical Study**
- 7 Character Study**
- 8 Devotional Study**

LESSON 5 Individual Book Study

It might seem easier to rely on a few favorite Bible verses to guide and nourish us spiritually, but we need a full diet of God's Word to grow into the stature of Christ. We must eat heartily of God's Word day after day to reach this goal. Jesus said, "'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty'" (John 6:35). As the bread of life, Jesus is our source of life. To better understand our life in Christ, we need to study what each book of the Bible says about Him. Our belief increases with our knowledge.

When the people asked Jesus what they could do to please God, His answer was that God wanted everyone to believe in His Son. When we believe in Him, then we can do what God wants and please Him (John 6:28–29).

The Plan

- A. The Benefits of Book Study
- B. The Approach to an Individual Book
- C. The Book of Colossians

The Goals

- 1. Identify personal benefits of individual book studies.
- 2. List the three main steps in book study.
- 3. Identify main ideas in the book of Colossians.

A. THE BENEFITS OF BOOK STUDY

Goal 1. Identify personal benefits of individual book studies.

In time your studies of each book of the Bible will provide you with strong familiarity of God's whole revelation. You will be able to see how the events of the Bible fit together and will be better informed and spiritually prepared for the fulfillment of prophecy regarding Christ's second coming. You will build a solid foundation for other studies on specific spiritual lessons and truths.

A very important benefit of studying God's Word book by book is being able to see particular teachings in context. Often we can understand the intended meaning of a passage only when we see its context. Thus, familiarity with the whole Bible will help you to recognize and resist false teachings. They are as widespread today as they were in the early church. Many of the epistles in the New Testament deal directly with false teachings that arose with the rapid spread of the gospel right after Christ's death and resurrection.

The greatest benefit of studying the Bible book by book is that the Bible will become the living Word in you. Any time you have problems, you will be able to turn to teaching in the Bible to strengthen your faith and instruct you in what to do.

Application

- 1 List three personal benefits of individual book studies.

.....



B. THE APPROACH TO AN INDIVIDUAL BOOK

Goal 2. List the three main steps in book study.

You begin the study of a book by reading it through. When you complete a book you begin to see the whole picture. It would be wise to read Colossians, or any book you are going to study, two or more times before you begin writing notes or trying to answer too many questions. This will give you a general impression about the main subject of the book, and it will let you know how the author feels. These feelings might be of despair, encouragement, worship, hope, joy, concern, sorrow, humility, judgment, or some other human emotion. Your reading will reveal key words and phrases that are repeated throughout the book.

The first step is to read and observe until you see what the author is saying. This step takes time and patience as well as a desire to know what God’s Word says.

The second step is to interpret what the author means. Use the three rules of interpretation we described in Lesson 4. Ask questions, pay attention to the context, and read related Scriptures. Also, notice the literary style, the language, and the organization of ideas. Write notes based on what these things show you. Sum up the meaning of the book. Pick out the book’s main points and show their relationship to each other in a brief written form. Use your own words. Once you have done this, the book becomes alive to you and can become a part of you.

The third step is to apply this living force to your life. You must allow what you learn about Christ to transform your character and your actions. When this happens, your life will be a light to others. You will be able to show them the way to Christ

Application

2 Name the three main steps in your approach to studying a book of the Bible.

.....

C. THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

Goal 3. Identify main ideas in the book of Colossians.

Before you go any further in this lesson, read Colossians. If you are using the Good News Bible: Today's English Version, be sure to read the "Introduction" and "Outline of Contents" at the beginning of Colossians. This brief description tells that Paul wrote this letter to the church at Colossae to oppose the false teachings there. His main point is that Jesus Christ is able to give full salvation.

After you have read the book once, continue your study by rereading and making notes on your first impressions of the book. Notice how often these words or ideas are repeated: "faith," "set free," "life in Christ." Notice repeated words as you read; they help you to identify main ideas.

Application

3 What seems to be Paul's mood or feeling as he writes this letter? See verses 1:2–14; 1:24; and 2:1–2, 5 for help.

- a)** Irritation
- b)** Pity
- c)** Concern

4 Which statement gives a main idea from the book of Colossians? Read verses 2:10 and 3:11 for help.

- a)** We receive full life through union with Christ.
 - b)** We will receive full life in heaven.
-

Colossians is written in the literary style of the letter. The writer, Paul, is discussing the false teachings about salvation. He uses figures of speech to help the people picture what union with Christ really means. For example, in verse 2:8, he says, “See to it that no one takes you captive.” When we are united with Christ, we are set free from man-made rules regarding salvation. Salvation is not imprisonment.

Paul also uses different ways of organizing his ideas to emphasize his main points. Make notes on what you find and then complete the following exercises.

Application

5 Fill in the blank spaces with the correct word or words:

- a)** Paul uses three figures of speech to illustrate the complete change in our lives that comes from union with Christ. Verses 2:11–12 and 20 symbolize this change.

.....
.....
.....

- b)** There are several illustrations of our life in Christ. In verses 1:18 and 2:19, the church is compared to a which is controlled by Christ who is the In verses 3:9–14 our new life is compared to

How To Make An Outline

A. First main idea

- 1. First major point related to first main idea
 - a. Minor point
 - b. Minor point
- 2. Second major point related to first main idea
 - a. Minor point
 - b. Minor point

B. Second main idea

1. First major point related to second main idea
 - a. Minor point
 - b. Minor point
2. Second major point related to second main idea

6 For each main point described in the left column, write the number that represents the way of organizing ideas named in the right column.

... a	Verses 2:12–13, 20, and 3:1 refer to life in Christ.	1) Contrast and comparison
... b	Verses 3:10–11 refer to all Christians as being the same in Christ.	2) Repetition
... c	Verses 2:20 and 3:1, 5, 9–10 refer to the relationships between sin, death, and life.	3) Reasons and results

It is helpful to put the teaching of a book into context by comparing it with related teachings in other books. The book of Colossians has several references to Ephesians. One of these references is Ephesians 2:1–10, where we read about passing from death to life.

Example of An Outline of Colossians

A. Greetings and prayers

1. Thanks for the people
2. Prayers for the people

B. The nature and work of Christ

1. What Christ is like
 - a. The full nature of God
 - b. Creator and Savior
2. What Christ does for us
 - a. Makes us His friends
 - b. Gives us power to serve

- C. The new life in Christ
 - 1. A life of strength
 - 2. A life of freedom
 - 3. A life of new relations
 - a. Relations with God
 - b. Relations with people

Application

7 Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s
created in Christ Jesus to
which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

The thoughts in this verse were not new to you because they relate to what you have already learned from your study of Colossians. It reminds us again that the Bible consists of many books, but it is still one book.

Application

8 Write a brief summary of what the study meant to you.



Only as you prayerfully consider the teachings in God’s Word and respond to them that you can benefit from your study. Knowledge alone is not enough. You must apply what you have learned and allow God to fit your life into His plan.

None of us would say that we have arrived at a point where we could claim living 100% the life described in Colossians. Yet God has helped us, and we claim His promises for continued help.

Application

9 To enter God's presence I must not allow myself

a) to be shaken from the hope I have gained.

b) to visit another church.

10 To preach Christ to others I must use

a) the strength Christ supplies.

b) whatever strength I have in myself.

11 See to it that no one enslaves you by using

a) heavy iron chains.

b) the deceit of human wisdom.

12 Be fair with others, remembering that

a) they might try to get even with you.

b) you, too, have a Master in heaven.



This completes our lesson on Colossians. You will want to study Colossians further when you see how it relates to other books. Also, it holds precious truths to enrich your devotional life. May God bless as you apply your skills to this book and other books of the Bible.

Check Your Answers

- 1** Be familiar with the whole Bible, recognize and resist false teaching, have the living Word in you.

You may wish to list other personal benefits that you have learned from experience.

- 7** workmanship, do good works
- 2** Read and observe, interpret, apply.
- 8** Your own answer. It may be that the study helped you realize how full your life in Christ can be. It may be that you have found a truth you can apply in teaching others.
- 3 c)** Concern; Paul feels love for these Christians (1:3, “always thank God”; 1:9, “have not stopped praying for you”). He cares enough for them to suffer (1:24) for them and to work hard (2:1) for them and to encourage them in their faith (2:2).
- 9 a)** to be shaken from the hope I have gained.
- 4 a)** We receive full life through union with Christ. Christ is the key to our lives (2:3). Christ is mentioned at least 38 times as Christ, 12 times as Jesus, Lord, or Son, and many times as He or Him. Repeated words help to identify main ideas.
- 10 a)** the strength Christ supplies.
- 5 a)** circumcision, burial, death; all these suggest being cut apart from.
b) body, head, new clothing.
- 11 b)** the deceit of human wisdom.

- 6 a 2)** Repetition; the idea of being raised from death to life is mentioned in each verse.
 - b 3)** Reasons and results; as a result of our new life, we are all the same in Christ: “Christ is all, Christ is all in all.”
 - c 1)** Contrast and comparison; our death to sin (2:20) is like putting to death our earthly desires (3:5) just as our life in Christ (3:1) is like putting on a new self (3:9, 10).
- 12b)** you too have a Master in heaven.

LESSON 6 Topical Study

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote, “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” (Colossians 4:2). Then he asked the people to pray for him and his fellow workers. He wanted God to give them chances to preach the gospel. To understand why Paul told the people to be persistent, to keep alert, to give thanks, and ask for specific things in prayer, we will do a topical study of prayer.

Topical Bible studies help you to understand deeper truths about the Christian life. You may want to know how to live by faith, or maybe you need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Do you know who you are in Christ? How can you live a holy life? Whatever the topic, a study of it will show more of God’s plan for you.

The Plan

- A. Benefits of Topical Study
- B. The Approach to Topical Study
- C. The Topic of Prayer

The Goals

- 1. State two benefits of topical study.
- 2. List three steps in topical study.
- 3. Practice a topical study of prayer as a model for other topical studies.

A. BENEFITS OF TOPICAL STUDY

Goal 1. State two benefits of topical study.

We already suggested one benefit of topical study—to find answers to questions about how to live a Christian life. You might want assurance of your salvation, victory over fear, or knowledge of God’s will for you. You can find these answers by searching the Bible for passages that teach about these things.

Another benefit of topical study is that it helps you to balance the teachings on main topics of God’s Word. These main topics are the basic truths God intends for us to live by. Paul advised Titus to “hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9). As you study each truth from various viewpoints, compare one reference with another to better be able to interpret God’s Word as He intends.

Application

- 1** In your own words, state two reasons why topical study helps us.



B. THE APPROACH TO TOPICAL STUDY

Goal 2. List three steps in topical study.

A topical study may be time-consuming. Some topics, like the Holy Spirit or salvation, occur often in the Bible. Bible scholars who write books on these topics sometimes spend years searching for all the references to the topic. In doing a topical study, adhere to the following steps:

Step 1.

List all the references you can find to the topic you wish to study. (A Bible concordance lists many references for any given topic.) Write both the reference and the relevant part of the Scripture in a notebook.

Step 2.

Arrange the references into groups of related material. Write a title or heading for each list of references.

Step 3.

Summarize the main points about the topics in each list. To do this, read each Scripture and its context to be sure of the correct meaning. Place Scriptures under other headings if you see they should be changed. Write brief summaries in your own words.

Application

2 List three steps in a topical study.

.....

C. THE TOPIC OF PRAYER

Goal 3. Practice a topical study of prayer as a model for other topical studies.

Prayer is an important topic in the Scriptures. The word *prayer* is stated over 500 times. We chose some of these

references for our study. You may find other references to include.

Follow our study and do the work yourself. The exercises will help you check your progress. First, list all the references to prayer you can find. Write a portion of the Scripture with each reference. For example, Genesis 20:17–18 states, “Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, . . .”

Here are the references we used in this study:

Genesis 20:17–18; 25:22–23

1 Samuel 1:10–20

2 Samuel 7:18–29

1 Kings 18:36–38

2 Chronicles 6:12–42

Nehemiah 1:5–11

Psalms 4:3; 63:1; 95:6

Proverbs 15:8; 28:9

Isaiah 1:15–20; 38:1–20; 56:7; 59:2

Jeremiah 14:11; 33:3

Daniel 9:3, 21–23

Jonah 2:7

Matthew 5:44–45; 6:1–14; 14:19, 23; 18:19–20; 19:13–15; 26:36–44

Mark 1:35; 6:46; 11:24–25; Luke 3:21–22; 5:16; 6:28; 9:28–36; 10:2; 11:1–13; 18:1, 7, 10–14

John 15:7; 17:1–26; Acts 1:14, 24; 4:29; 6:6; 8:15, 22; 9:40; 10:1, 2, 9, 31; 16:25

Romans 8:26–27; 10:1; 12:12; 15:31

1 Corinthians 14:13–25

2 Corinthians 1:11

Ephesians 3:20; 6:18–20

Philippians 1:19; 4:6

Colossians 4:2–4

1 Thessalonians 3:10; 5:25

2 Thessalonians 3:1–2

1 Timothy 2:1–8; 4:4; 5:5

Hebrews 5:7; 10:22; 11:6; 13:18

James 1:5–8; 4:3; 5:13–17

1 Peter 4:7

1 John 3:20–22; 5:14–16

Jude 20

Revelation 5:8

Write enough of the passage to know what it says about prayer. For 1 Samuel 1:10–20 you might write: “Hannah continued to pray to the LORD for a long time . . . ‘I have been praying like this because I’m so miserable’ . . . the Lord answered her . . . she gave birth to a son.”

For step 2 we organized the Scriptures into these categories:

Whom to pray for. Matthew 5:4; Acts 6:6; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 1 Timothy 2:1–2; James 5:16.

When to pray. 1 Samuel 1:10, 16; Matthew 26:36–44; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 18:7; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:5.

Hindrances to prayer. Proverbs 15:8; 28:9; Isaiah 1:15; 59:2; Matthew 6:5; Luke 18:10–14; 20:47; James 1:6–8; 4:3.

Where to pray. Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 9:18; Acts 1:14; 10:9; 1 Timothy 2:8.

Answers to prayer. Genesis 20:17–18; 25:22–23; Daniel 9:21–23; Jonah 2:7; Acts 4:29–31; 8:17; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 12:8–9.

Prayer requests. 1 Kings 18:36–38; Nehemiah 1:5–11, Psalm 64:1; Isaiah 38:2–5; Matthew 26:41; Luke 22:32; John 17:1–26; Acts 1:24; 4:29; 8:15, 22; 9:40; Romans 10:1; 15:31; Ephesians 6:18; James 1:5; 5:13–14.

How to pray. Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 6:7–14; 18:19–20; 26:39; Mark 11:24–25; Luke 11:5–13; 18:1, 10–14; John 14:13–14; 15:7; Romans 8:26–27; 1 Corinthians 14:13–25; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 5:7; 10:22; 11:6; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 John 3:20–22; 5:14–15; Jude 20.

Praise and thanksgiving. 2 Samuel 7:18–29; Isaiah 38:10–20; Matthew 14:19; Acts 10:1–2; 16:25; 1 Timothy 4:4; James 5:13.

Posture. 1 Kings 8:22; Psalm 95:6; Jeremiah 33:3; Daniel 9:3; Matthew 19:13–15; 26:39; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:13; Acts 8:17; 9:40; 1 Timothy 2:8; James 5:14.

Effects of prayer. Proverbs 15:8; Luke 3:21–22; 9:28–35; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 1:19; James 5:16–17; Revelation 5:8.

Application

3 Draw a circle around the letter in front of each Scripture that refers to prayer.

- a) 1 Peter 3:7
- b) 1 Peter 3:9
- c) 1 Peter 3:12
- d) 1 Peter 3:17

4 Match each Scripture with the category it fits and write the number in front of the category in the space in front of the Scripture.

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| ... a | Psalm 66:18 | 1) Praise and thanksgiving |
| ... b | Matthew 7:7–11 | 2) Hindrances to prayer |
| ... c | Mark 6:41 | 3) How to pray |
| ... d | 1 Thessalonians 5:17 | 4) Effects of prayer |
| | | 5) When to pray |

Now we are ready to summarize the main points given under each heading relating to prayer. Let the Bible speak to you and answer your questions.

Application

5 Turn back to the Scriptures listed under *whom to pray for*, and look them up. Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement about whom we should pray for.

- a)** Pray for leaders, but only if they are godly.
- b)** Pray for all God’s people everywhere.
- c)** Pray for our enemies.

6 Turn to the Scriptures listed under *when to pray*. Circle the letter in front of each answer that could complete this sentence. We should pray

- a)** both day and night.
- b)** continually.
- c)** no matter how we feel.

7 Another reason we should pray always is found in Psalm 121:4. Write that reason here.

.....

8 Are we sometimes responsible for our prayers not being answered? Read the Scriptures under hindrances to prayer. Then mark the reasons you would give if someone asked you what might hinder our prayers.

- a)** Disobedience or hidden sin in our lives
- b)** Asking for selfish reasons
- c)** Maybe our parents or grandparents sinned.

9 The list of Scriptures given in this course is by no means complete. Bible stories, too, give insights concerning the places where people have prayed—like Jonah crying out to God from the belly of the whale. After reading the Scriptures under *where to pray*, mark the correct sentence.

- a)** The church is the best place to pray.
- b)** If you really want answers, pray alone.
- c)** We can pray anywhere and God will hear.

10 Circle the correct letter. Some people receive answers that are different from what they expected,

- a)** and some will never get answers.
- b)** but all receive answers from God.
- c)** so maybe they did not have faith.

11 Prayer requests vary. People ask for signs, healing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, divine guidance, greater faith, and for material needs to be met. Perhaps what you want most has not been named, but you can ask in faith and receive. On the lines below write your request and the Bible reference you choose as your authority.

.....

12 We must ask God for all that we need in the name of Jesus. We must ask from a heart free from sin. In the list of Bible references given, one is a pattern for prayer. What do we usually call that pattern and where is it found?

.....

13 Our posture during prayer seems to be a matter of personal choice. Some people stand up and some raise their hands. Others bow or kneel. Over a period of time we may do all of these. After reading the verses listed under *posture*, which statement would you say is correct?

- a)** Our posture in prayer must hold true to tradition.
- b)** The Bible gives us no set of rules for posture during prayer.

14 Prayer is powerful. It draws us to God, transforms us into Christ's image, releases the power of the Holy Spirit within us. And our prayers are precious to God. What Scripture in the list given tells us that our prayers are as incense to Him?

.....

From this study you can see that prayer is communication with God. You talk to Him and He answers you. As you practice the Bible's teachings on prayer, your life will change.

You will receive great blessing from God and will have power to share the gospel with others.

Continue to learn about prayer. Add references to your study of prayer as you study other topics, for the main themes of the Bible are closely interwoven. Also, take time to listen to other people's experiences with prayer.

Check Your Answers

- 1** It helps us find answers we need and also helps us balance Bible truths.
- 9 c)** We can pray anywhere and God will hear.
- 2** List Bible references.
Group the references.
Summarize the main points.
- 10 b)** but all receive answers from God.
a) 1 Peter 3:7.
c) 1 Peter 3:12.
- 11** Your own answer. It might be one like asking for wisdom on the basis of James 1:5.
- 4 a 2)** Hindrances to prayer
b 3) How to pray
c 1) Praise and thanksgiving
d 5) When to pray
- 12** The Lord's Prayer. Matthew 6:9–13.
- 5 a)** False
b) True
c) True
- 6 a)** both day and night.
b) continually.
c) no matter how we feel.
- 13 b)** The Bible gives us no set of rules for posture during prayer.
- 7** God never slumbers nor sleeps. Revelation 5:8.
- 8 a)** Disobedience or hidden sin in our lives
b) Asking for selfish reasons
- 3 a)** 1 Peter 3:7
- 14** Revelation 5:8

7 Character Study

People everywhere, young and old, enjoy stories. Stories entertain us, but they also can teach us. Jesus knew the value of stories. He used them to illustrate deep spiritual truths.

We can be thankful that God chose to record many of the Bible's lessons in story form. The characters of these stories are real people who lived long ago on this earth. They faced the same kinds of problems that we face today. People like Moses, David, and Peter made mistakes and learned by their mistakes. Now we can read about what happened and profit by their experiences. We can read of their victories and be strengthened by their faith.

The Plan

- A. The Purpose of Character Studies
- B. Approach to a Character Study
- C. The Story of Jacob

The Goals

1. Explain how character studies are important.
2. Demonstrate how to study the life of a Bible character.
3. Indicate lessons learned from Jacob's life.

A. THE PURPOSE OF CHARACTER STUDIES

Goal 1. Explain how character studies are important.

The Bible mentions over 2,900 different persons in its pages. While many of these are only named, others are described in some detail. These descriptions offer us subject matter for individual studies. In character study, we look at a person's life history. We see who he was, what he did, and what he was like.

This method of study is very effective in teaching children. They listen closely to the stories of baby Moses in a basket, of young David facing the giant Goliath, of Ruth gathering fallen grain, and of baby Jesus in the manger. Children identify easily with their Bible friends. They learn important lessons about God's will for their lives.

Adults, too, identify with Bible characters, especially those who struggled with weaknesses and doubts as people everywhere do. Although some Bible characters appear to be almost perfect, they were not perfect. James 5:17 makes this clear: "Elijah was a man just like us." Our prayers will be just as effective as his were if we ask in faith.

David was called a man after God's own heart. Yet, on occasion he was guilty of lying, adultery, and murder. This does

not mean that God was pleased with his sin. David was a man after God's own heart because he repented of his sins. He found God's forgiveness and learned from his mistakes to submit to God.

We learn from David's life not to make the mistakes he did. His failure is like a flare on a dark night, warning us to pray that we do not fall into temptation. Thus, the Scripture emphasizes the purpose of studying the lives of Bible characters: "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Our parents can give us good advice, for they have known the problems of life. They know certain truths about the weather, the farm, animals, work, business, and people. Usually, we find it easier to learn from them than to learn rules from books.

The Bible is not written as a set of rules. Instead, most of it records the experiences of real people, of how God worked in their lives. We study these personal experiences to gain knowledge and help in Christian living. In our study of Jacob, see how many times you learn a new truth or receive practical help.

Application

1 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE reason why biographical studies are important.

- a)** We can relate better to people with Bible names.
- b)** All people can learn from each other's mistakes.
- c)** We can be proud we never made the same mistakes as those of Bible characters.
- d)** Life stories appeal to both children and adults, and we can learn from them.



B. APPROACH TO A CHARACTER STUDY

Goal 2. Demonstrate how to study the life of a Bible character.

After you choose the person you want to study, list all the Scriptural references you can find that relate to him or her. This is the same process as for a topical study. Some studies will be short, others very long. For example, Queen Esther is described only in the book of Esther. Moses stands out as a central character in four books and is mentioned in 26 other books.

Do not neglect reading the scattered references to a character. A brief reference may help you to better understand that person. We do not want to confuse references relating to two or more persons having the same name. To illustrate, there are six women named Mary in the New Testament, four men named John, and three named James.

Second, read the references. Write notes about the person's life, work, and personal traits. Note everyone's life story is given in detail. But find out as much as you can about his or her background. What does his name mean? What is her ancestry? Where did he spend his early years? What influences were important in her youth? For example, Timothy grew up with the godly influence of his grandmother, Lois, and mother, Eunice. Note the person's friends and associates. How did they influence him? In a study of David, it is helpful to study his friend Jonathan.

Note the places where the Bible character has lived and traveled. For instance, Moses' life is in three divisions. He spent forty years among royalty in Egypt, forty years as a shepherd in Midian, and forty years leading the Israelites toward the promised land. Likewise, some of Paul's letters become more meaningful when we realize he wrote them while in prison.

How do Bible characters differ personally from each other? Paul, Peter, and John were strong leaders in the early church. God used all of them with their particular traits and talents to present his truths. Paul is known as the apostle of faith, Peter

as the apostle of hope, and John as the apostle of love. We see their strengths and their weaknesses. How did some of their failures affect their futures? How did God deal with the person you have chosen to study?

Note the great events in the person's life. How did he react in times of trouble and in times of happiness? What changes took place in him? What contributions did she make in the time she lived and to our lives today. Sum up the main lessons you learn from the story of this person's life.

Application

2 Circle the letter in front of each correct completion for the following statement: As part of a complete study of a Bible character, you need to pay attention to

- a)** scattered references to the person.
- b)** the last part of the person's life.
- c)** the person's growth in character.
- d)** details concerning people with similar names.

Make A List Of Important Facts

Character's name

Meaning of name

Place of birth or home

Names of relatives and friends

Place in history

Special traits

Weaknesses

Strengths

Important events

Important acts

Lessons learned



C. THE STORY OF JACOB

Goal 3. Indicate lessons learned from Jacob's life.

The study of Jacob's life is particularly helpful as a character study. He was a man with character flaws. He tried to get the best of others if he could. And those faults are recorded in the Bible. Each of us can see something of ourselves in him, yet God's grace and power transformed him from a deceiver into a prince having a special relationship with the Lord. (See Romans 9:10–13.) The Scripture applies Jacob's experience to all of us: "So then, everything depends, not on what man wants or does, but only on God's mercy" (Romans 9:16). Certainly there is hope for us, too, as we allow God to transform us.

The first step in a study of Jacob is to find the references to him. His life story is in Genesis 25–50. There are many other brief references to him, including Matthew 1:2; 8:11; Luke 1:32–33; John 4:5–6; Acts 7:8–16, 32; Romans 9:11–13; Hebrews 11:9, 13, 21.

Jacob and Esau

Second, read the passages and take notes. Jacob was born after his twin brother Esau, holding on to Esau's heel. The meaning of Jacob is often translated *deceiver* (Genesis 25:26). Jacob's father and mother were Isaac and Rebecca, and his grandfather Abraham was known as the father of the Hebrew nation. Abraham was a direct descendant of Noah through the line of Shem (Genesis 11:10–26).

Jacob lived with his parents and his brother Esau. He was a quiet man and his mother's favorite (Genesis 25:27–28), but he was deceitful (25:31–34). He stole his brother's birthright as the elder son; then he stole Esau's blessing as well (27:33–36).

Jacob and Laban

After this, Jacob had to flee from his home to escape Esau's anger. He went to Haran to live with Laban, his uncle (Genesis 27:42–43). During this time Laban cheated him. Jacob wanted to marry Rachel, but Laban gave him Leah first (29:23). As a

result Jacob had to work fourteen long years to get Rachel and then six more years to build up his own flocks (31:41). To make matters worse, Laban changed Jacob's wages ten times (31:7).

Jacob's life story unfolds in several places. In Beersheba he was a deceiver (Genesis 28:10). In Haran he served Laban and was both the deceiver and the deceived (30:25–43). In Hebron he became a saint after his meeting with God at Peniel (37:1). And at the end of his years he became a respected man of wisdom in Egypt (Genesis 46:3–4).

By nature Jacob was a deceiver. But even though he did wrong, he set his heart on that which God had promised (Genesis 25:23). He believed in the value of both the birthright, which Esau did not care about (25:33–34), and the blessing. He appreciated spiritual values. After his dream about God's promises to him, he set up a memorial at Bethel where people would worship God. He vowed to pay back to God a tenth of everything God gave him (28:18–22).

Jacob's Memorial at Bethel

Nevertheless, Jacob suffered for his wrong doing. His daughter Dinah was disgraced. His sons became deceivers and murderers (34). Rachel, his beloved wife, died in childbirth (35:16–20). He lost Joseph, his first son by Rachel (37:34–35). He felt the disgrace of Judah, his fourth son (38), and he was separated from Benjamin, his youngest son (43).

Looking back on Jacob's life we see the crisis came at Peniel, where he wrestled with God. It had been twenty years since Jacob had made his vow to God at Bethel. When Jacob's struggle with God ended in a face-to-face battle, God changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means Prince with God. He gave Jacob a new blessing (32:24–30). Jacob submitted the rest of his life to God, even in the midst of problems and tragedies (47:9). God allowed Jacob to see into the future and grant blessings to Joseph's sons (48:13–20) and his own sons (49).

Application

3 Jacob's life teaches us many lessons. Answer the following questions, using Jacob's life for your illustrations. Afterwards compare your answers with the ones we have given. The first answer is done for you as a guide.

a) Is it true that what we sow we will also reap?

Yes, Jacob deceived others, and later Laban deceived him.

b) Does prosperity always mean that God approves of what we are doing?

.....

c) Can God make our enemies be at peace with us?

.....

d) Do we have to pay for our wrong doing?

.....

e) Can God change our nature?

.....



Check Your Answers

- 1** **b)** and **d)** are true.
- 3** **b)** No. Jacob prospered even when he was disobedient.
 c) Yes. Esau forgave Jacob and the brothers became friends again.
 d) Yes. Jacob and even Jacob's sons suffered because of his bad actions.
 e) Yes. He changed Jacob and gave him a new name that means Prince with God.
- 2** **a)** scattered references to the person.
 b) the last part of the person's life.
 c) the person's growth in character.

LESSON 8 Devotional Study

Devotional study is very personal. Its purpose is to draw you close to God and bring you into contact with deep spiritual truth. As you apply the Word of God to your life, the devil will fight you. He wants to make you discouraged. He wants you to doubt God. He creates spiritual conflict within you.

Jesus showed us how to deal with spiritual conflict. When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus resisted him. (See Matthew 4:1–11.) Jesus fought back by using the most powerful weapon in the world. He quoted the Scriptures. The devil fled because God’s Word is truth and life. In Ephesians 6:17, the Word is called “the sword of the Spirit.” With it you will be able “take your stand against the devil’s schemes. . . . so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (6:11, 13). The Word of God brings cleansing, healing, and victory when you hide it in your heart.

The Plan

- A. The Value of Devotional Study
- B. Guidelines for Devotional Study
- C. Application of Devotional Study

The Goals

- 1. Discuss the value of devotional Bible study.
- 2. State the guidelines for devotional study.
- 3. Describe how to apply devotional study to your life.

A. THE VALUE OF DEVOTIONAL STUDY

Goal 1. Discuss the value of devotional Bible study.

You may learn much from the Bible by using the skills you have studied so far in this book. But to fully understand God's Word, you must study the Bible with devotion. Devotional study is gaining knowledge of the Word for personal spiritual reasons.

The word *devotion* means “strong love” and “attachment.” It also means “an act of prayer in which one asks humbly and earnestly of God.” Devotional study demands the full attention of the student. To be in Christ and to have Christ in us is our goal as Christians. Jesus said,

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (John 15:7–11)

Devotional study creates unity between Christ and the believer. In devotional study, we read a short passage of Scripture slowly, several times. We prayerfully think about what it means and ask ourselves, what does this passage say to me? Does it speak to my present need? How does it reveal Jesus?

This process is called meditating or attending to. We read the same verse or passage until our minds are occupied with the meaning and with the presence of the Lord. At this time, the Word feeds us.

The written Word reveals Christ to us. He is the living Word. The more we know the written Word, the better we know the living Word. The better we know Christ, the more we love Him and obey Him.

King David meditated much on God's Word and wrote, "My mouth will speak words of wisdom; the utterance from my heart will give understanding" (Psalm 49:3). When we are in Christ and Christ is in us, we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15–16). Our meditation renews our minds.

Application

1 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement about the value of devotional study.

- a)** It draws us close to God.
- b)** It fulfills our spiritual needs.
- c)** It gives us the mind of Christ.
- d)** It replaces other types of Bible study.

2 The key to devotional study is that which allows us to

- a)** separate ourselves from reality.
- b)** fill our minds with the Word.
- c)** get new ideas of our own.



B. GUIDELINES FOR DEVOTIONAL STUDY

Goal 2. State the guidelines for devotional study.

David prayed, “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” (Psalm 119:18). We need to pray this as we study how to make the message of God’s Word plain, personal, and practical.

Every passage of Scripture has a main truth. Often, there are other less obvious truths too. It is your task to find out what the Holy Spirit intends to say. Follow these five steps to help make the message plain.

Five Steps to Follow

Read. Bible study begins with reading. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul advises, “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.” We must feed daily on God’s Word to be spiritually healthy: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked . . . his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1–2). In Bible days, a group of Christians who lived at Berea were known for their love of Bible study (Acts 17:10–11). They were more than listeners; they searched the Scriptures daily. We need to be faithful in study as they were.

Record. The attentive Bible student writes notes as he reads and studies the Bible. His pencil is a tool to help his eyes and mind “see” spiritual truth as the Holy Spirit guides his understanding.

Search. Bible truth is clear, simple, and meaningful. The deep meanings of the Word are as “silver” and “hidden treasure” for which we must search in our studies (Proverbs 2:4).

Relate. Before interpreting the meaning of a passage, we need to relate it to its context and to related teachings. This helps us find the harmony of each passage with the whole Word of God.

Meditate. We must meditate on the Word. Proverbs 2:1–3, 5 advise, “If you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, . . . then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.” The Holy Spirit will always bring some message to our hearts as we take time to think about what we have read. The psalmist exclaims, “Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long” (Psalm 119:97). If we follow the command of Proverbs 4:20–21 in our meditation, we will gain much. By paying attention to what God says, we gain knowledge of God and His Word as we become more acquainted with Him. When we really listen to God’s words, we allow them to control our lives. We learn obedience. True meditation affects the way we live.

Application

- 3 List five steps for devotional study.
.....
- 4 Read Psalm 119, verses 27, 48, 78, 99, and 148. What word is mentioned in each of these verses?



C. APPLICATION OF DEVOTIONAL STUDY

Goal 3. Describe how to apply devotional study to your life.

Making the Message Personal

Devotional study of God’s Word makes the Bible message plain and personal. A worthwhile part of devotional study is memorizing verses. Deuteronomy 6:6–9 records:

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at

home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

Devotional Bible study helps us to overcome the devil (Revelation 12:11; Luke 4:4), and live holy lives (Psalm 119:9; John 15:3). It helps us to succeed (Joshua 1:8), to develop strong faith (Romans 10:17) and to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2). It helps us to witness to others (2 Timothy 3:16).

Memorizing Bible verses is just part of making the Word personal. We must apply the Word to ourselves by making it a lamp to guide us and a light for our path. (See Psalm 119:105.) The Scripture advises on how to respond to God’s Word:

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22–25)

There are various ways to put God’s Word into practice. We must obey His commands and prohibitions. For example, we must love our neighbor (Luke 10:27) and not judge our brothers in Christ (Romans 14:13). We must claim the promises God has made. It is not enough to know that we have been given full life in union with Christ (Colossians 2:10); we must claim that full life and exercise our freedom in Christ (Colossians 2:11, 20). We must learn from the examples of others, good and bad, as we studied in Lesson 7. Above all, we must believe God’s statements of truth and live according to them. To illustrate, the Bible teaches that we are one in Christ (Ephesians 2:14–18)

and that love is the thing that makes us like Christ (Ephesians 3:17–19; 1 Corinthians 13). Our response to these truths will show whether or not we have applied them to our lives.

Making the Message Practical

God wants us to share the gospel with others. Thus, a main purpose for Bible study is that it helps us to share God’s truth. It gives us knowledge and the desire to teach others.

Teaching begins in the home. We must teach God’s Word to our children (Deuteronomy 6:7). It is a joy to have knowledge and to be able to pass it on to children and young people, especially in our own families.

Then, as Colossians 3:16 states, we are to “teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.” Paul told Timothy, “The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2). Christ gave every Christian the directive to “go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Part of this task is to teach them (Matthew 28:20). Christ wants us to bear fruit. He said, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16).

We must emulate Jesus, who said, “My food, . . . is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). God did not save us so that we could just enjoy our salvation; He expects us to tell others about Him. God wants us to study the Bible as a means of devotion, strength, and joy for ourselves; but He is most pleased when we share it with others. Our love of God’s Word makes us want to share it. May God bless you, as Bible study becomes life to you.

Application

5 Fill in each blank with the correct word: Two ways to apply devotional study to your life are to make it and

6 List five ways to make the Word personal.

.....

.....

7 State why we need to make the message practical.

.....

.....



The more we study the Bible, the more beautiful it becomes. The more we search it, the more it grips our hearts. Our belief in it brings unlimited blessing. Living it adds joy and peace, and sharing it with others demonstrates again its eternal power.

Check Your Answers

- 1 a) True
b) True
c) True
d) False
- 5 personal, practical.
- 2 b) fill our minds with the Word.
- 6 Obey it, claim it, learn from it, believe it, live according to it
- 3 Read, record, search, relate, meditate.
- 7 We must share the gospel with others through teaching and preaching. (To do this we must be able to explain the message of the Word in a practical way.)
- 4 The word mentioned is *meditation* or *meditating*. Verses 15, 23, and 97 also mention *meditate*.

CONGRATULATIONS

You have finished this course. We hope that it has been a great help to you! Remember to complete the second Unit Evaluation and return the answer sheet to your instructor.

CL2220 *How to Study the Bible*

UNIT ONE ANSWER SHEET

Please fill in the blanks below:

Name

Student Number
(Leave blank if you don't know your number.)

Mailing Address

.....

.....

Country

Directions

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the Unit Evaluation answer sheet for that unit. Read each question carefully. There is one best answer for each question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen. *Be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question you are answering.*

Example

- 1** To be born again means to
a) be young in age.
b) accept Jesus as Savior.
c) start a new year.

The correct answer is **b) accept Jesus as Savior**, so you would blacken space **(B)** like this:

1. (A) ☒ (C) (D)

Turn page over when you are ready to begin.

UNIT ONE ANSWER SHEET

Carefully blacken the correct space for each numbered item.

- 1

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This is the end of the requirements for Unit One. For grading, return your Unit One Answer Sheet to your instructor or office in your area. Continue your study in Unit Two.

*For GU Office Use
Only*

Date

Score

UNIT ONE EVALUATION

- 1** Our relationship with God depends on our
 - a)** living productively.
 - b)** obeying His commands.
 - c)** doing works of service.
- 2** The study of God's Word
 - a)** makes us successful.
 - b)** increases our intelligence.
 - c)** helps fulfill our needs.
- 3** A person who grows spiritually through Bible study is
 - a)** educated.
 - b)** someone who is guided by God's Spirit.
 - c)** deeply religious.
- 4** A person who grows spiritually through Bible study has
 - a)** the proper attitude toward study.
 - b)** no need to grow any more.
 - c)** no set pattern for study.
- 5** We must approach the study of God's Word with
 - a)** knowledge.
 - b)** anticipation.
 - c)** obedience.
- 6** Two characteristics of the Bible are inspiration and
 - a)** authority.
 - b)** authenticity.
 - c)** revelation.
- 7** Your Bible or your friend's Bible is
 - a)** the original manuscript.
 - b)** a photocopy of the original manuscript.
 - c)** a translation of the original manuscript.
- 8** The word *Bible* came from the Greek word *biblia*, which means
 - a)** book.
 - b)** bibliography.
 - c)** two books.

9 The New Testament tells about an agreement between God and humanity

- a)** for a limited time.
- b)** as a fulfillment of the Old Testament.
- c)** as preparation for another covenant.

10 The main factor that creates unity in the Bible is that each book

- a)** gives us the full revelation of Christ.
- b)** shows Christ in a special way.
- c)** is written by the same man.

11 The use of the figurative language in the Bible is

- a)** important only as a form of literature.
- b)** confined to the Old Testament types.
- c)** important to illustrate spiritual truths.

12 Which is a way in which ideas are often presented in the Bible?

- a)** Chalkboard illustrations
- b)** Comparison and contrast
- c)** Formal speeches

13 When Bible writers organized and presented their material, they

- a)** used different styles and methods.
- b)** tried to write like each other.
- c)** followed certain rules for writers.

14 Poetry is a style of writing that usually

- a)** provides a record of human events.
- b)** expresses people's thoughts and feelings.
- c)** foretells future events.

15 The main styles of writing used in the Bible include history, prophecy, poetry, and

- a)** fiction.
- b)** letters.
- c)** novels.

16 Writing notes as you study is important as writing helps you

- a)** see in a different way what you are studying.
- b)** keep a record of what you study.
- c)** keep from having to remember what you read.

17 Which is a good approach to understanding a portion of scripture?

- a)** Look up the meaning in a Bible commentary.
- b)** Ask your pastor or Bible teacher.
- c)** Ask yourself the following questions about the verses: Who, what, why, when, and to whom.

18 The most important principle of interpretation is to read

- a)** all the commentaries you can.
- b)** the context of a particular Scripture.
- c)** slowly without interruption.

19 What is the relationship between prayer and studying God's Word?

- a)** You must pray to understand God's Word.
- b)** Prayer is an unnecessary addition to Bible study.
- c)** The Bible can be understood without any prayer.

20 The best way to receive spiritual help from the Bible is to study

- a)** with an attitude of prayer.
- b)** at the same hour each day.
- c)** an original version.

End of requirements for Unit One. Please stop here and return your Unit One Answer Sheet to your instructor. Continue your study in Unit Two.

CL2220 How to Study the Bible**UNIT TWO ANSWER SHEET**

Please fill in the blanks below:

Name

Student Number
(Leave blank if you don't know your number.)

Mailing Address

.

.

Country

Directions

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the Unit Evaluation answer sheet for that unit. Read each question carefully. There is one best answer for each question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen. *Be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question you are answering.*

Example

1 To be born again means to

a) be young in age.

b) accept Jesus as Savior.

c) start a new year.

The correct answer is **b) accept Jesus as Savior**, so you would blacken space **(B)** like this:

1. (A) ☒ (C) (D)

Turn page over when you are ready to begin.

UNIT TWO ANSWER SHEET

Carefully blacken the correct space for each numbered item.

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This is the end of the requirements for Unit Two. For grading, return your Unit Two Answer Sheet to your instructor or office in your area.

*For GU Office Use
Only*

Date

Score

UNIT TWO EVALUATION

- 1** The greatest benefit of studying the Bible book by book is
 - a)** being able to predict the exact time of Christ's second coming.
 - b)** being able to see contradictions.
 - c)** having the living Word in us.
- 2** The first step in book study is to
 - a)** apply its truth to our lives.
 - b)** interpret what the author means.
 - c)** read and observe what the author is saying.
- 3** The main theme of the book of Colossians is
 - a)** the Christian's full life in Christ.
 - b)** Christ's death and resurrection.
 - c)** the Christian's heavenly home.
- 4** In Colossians the symbols of circumcision, burial, and death illustrate
 - a)** three different levels of separation.
 - b)** the truth that the Christian is free from sin.
 - c)** an unpleasant transformation from sin.
- 5** To really benefit from the truth found in Colossians, you must
 - a)** apply it to your life.
 - b)** draw a neat chart of the main points.
 - c)** compare your study with another.
- 6** What does the book of Colossians say about how we can live a full life in Christ?
 - a)** We should follow the example of Paul, the author of the book.
 - b)** Christ provides a life of strength, freedom, and new relations.
 - c)** Colossians repeats many of Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount.

- 7** To study a particular doctrine of the Bible you should do a
- a)** topical study.
 - b)** biographical study.
 - c)** book study.
- 8** A topical study requires a person to
- a)** do very little work.
 - b)** carefully search for references.
 - c)** choose one of a few, limited subjects.
- 9** Prayer, according to our topical study, is
- a)** needed occasionally in our lives.
 - b)** a daily ritual that occurs at a set time.
 - c)** a regular and continual part of our lives.
- 10** After selecting a topic, the first thing to do is
- a)** list all the references on the topic you can find.
 - b)** summarize the references.
 - c)** arrange the references into categories.
- 11** Which is a reason why we can always pray?
- a)** We will always have enemies to pray for.
 - b)** We are given many examples in the Bible.
 - c)** God always hears us.
- 12** Why do character studies help us to understand spiritual truth more easily?
- a)** The Bible tells real experiences of real people.
 - b)** The Bible is a set of rules for people to follow.
 - c)** Bible characters were examples of people who were perfect.
- 13** Which of the following is a good rule for character studies?
- a)** Choose good examples for your study.
 - b)** Find out as much as possible about the character.
 - c)** Start with a study of Adam and continue through the Bible in order.
- 14** In biographical studies it is helpful to
- a)** identify ourselves with the person studied.
 - b)** skip the scattered references to the person.
 - c)** focus on persons who lived perfect lives.

- 15** Jacob is a good biographical study because
- a)** he was a perfect man.
 - b)** his faults are recorded to help us.
 - c)** he moved from place to place.
- 16** A lesson learned from Jacob's life is that
- a)** we earn for ourselves rewards.
 - b)** everything depends on God's mercy.
 - c)** a little sin is acceptable.
- 17** An important part of devotional study is
- a)** listing many references to our subject.
 - b)** organizing the main points into an outline.
 - c)** meditating on a passage of Scripture.
- 18** Which is a true statement about devotional Bible study?
- a)** The truths of the Bible are easily learned by reading and taking notes.
 - b)** Once you have learned the truths of the Bible, they will never be forgotten.
 - c)** One must search for deep meaning and personal application.
- 19** When we obey the Bible's commands and live according to its truths, we are
- a)** going beyond our duty to God.
 - b)** making the message personal.
 - c)** living in bondage.
- 20** Our main goal in devotional study should be to
- a)** read the Bible daily at the same hour.
 - b)** enjoy our salvation alone.
 - c)** become able to share gospel truths.

This is the end of the requirements for Unit Two. Please return your answer sheet for Unit Two to your GU instructor. Now that you have completed study of this course, ask your instructor to recommend another course of study.

FINAL WORDS

Dear Student,

We hope this study has made you think about your relationship with God. After studying the lessons and answering all the questions, have you wondered, “Am I really a Christian? Do I know God? Is He real in my life?” We want to give you the opportunity now to have a relationship with God.

We have all done wrong things. We have hurt ourselves and others. The Bible calls that sin and we are all guilty: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Our sin keeps us from knowing God as a loving Father. But God loves us in spite of our sin. He loves us so much He sent His Son to die for us. “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). When He died, Jesus took the punishment we deserved for our sins.

Do you want to make sure Jesus is your Savior? It is really so simple:

- Admit that you are a needy sinner separated from God, and ask Him to forgive you.
- Believe in Jesus with all your heart, and let Him know you accept Him as your Savior.

You can talk to God in your own words by saying a prayer like this:

Dear Jesus, I know I am a sinner. Please forgive me. I believe You are the eternal Son of God. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. Come into my life. Make yourself real in my life. Be Lord of my life today. Thank You for saving me.

If you prayed this prayer and meant it with all your heart, your sins are forgiven and you have eternal life. Jesus is Lord of your life. The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Welcome to the family of God. We want to rejoice with you, so please write and tell us what God has done in your life. Blessings to you!

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Name.

Do you have a friend who needs to know more about Jesus?

Send us your friend’s name and address for answers to the great questions of life.

Name

Address

.....

WOULD YOU LIKE TO...

UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE?
LEARN HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE?
ENRICH YOUR DEVOTIONAL LIFE?

This course provides a practical approach to the study of God's Word. The methods of study and interpretation are easy to follow. Also, the author teaches the importance between learning and application. Relying on the dynamics of the Holy Spirit is essential for personal preparation and understanding.

The Christian Life series comprises 18 courses divided into three units of six courses each.

How to Study the Bible is Course 2 in Unit 2.



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L2220E-90
ISBN 978-0-7617-1512-2