

Thoughts on studying the Bible

1. Handle with care.

- The Bible is not a book but rather a collection of very ancient manuscripts.
- The Bible was written in ancient, no longer spoken, languages.
- Every translation is an interpretation of some kind.
- The world to which and within which the Bible was written is very different to our own. Context is vital when studying Scripture.

2. Genre matters.

- As with any collection of books, the Bible contains many genre.
- We read different genre of writing differently (no-one reads the Encyclopaedia Britannica in the same way as the latest John Grisham novel).
- Three examples: Psalm 58, Judges 19, Philippians.

3. Three questions to ask.

- What does it say?
- What does it mean?
- 'Am I bovered'?

4. What does it say?

- Skim reading or reading with pre-conceived ideas can cause us to miss what is actually being said.
- Read slowly and repeatedly.
- Mark words/phrases that stand out to you or that are repeated.
- Write down any questions that you have.

5. What does it mean?

- Use multiple translations to get a clearer sense of the big point of a passage (YouVersion app).
- Always remember context-was there anything going on at that time or in that place that would explain what is being said?
- Commentaries are always useful but getting together and hearing from each other is a great way of wrestling with a passage.

6. Am I bovered?

- Bible study is NOT an information gathering activity.
- If what I study does not change me then I have missed the point.
- Ask God what He wants to say to you through a passage.
- Ask God if what He is saying is only for you or is it for the building up of His church.

God gave us His Word because He longs to communicate with us and this is one way that He chooses to do so. If we will take the time we will find that God will speak to us...He does not just speak to 'professional Christians'!

One tool that might be useful for some: <https://biblehub.com/> This site gives us access to multiple translations but also contains a Lexicon which shows you the original word used and will direct you to a dictionary that gives you the meaning.

However don't try to be a Greek or Hebrew scholar (or pretend to be one!). Use it if it's helpful but remember that the Holy Spirit is our teacher and He will help us if we ask Him.

Some questions to discuss

How has the Bible been influential in your journey with God so far?

What are some of the reasons we avoid Bible study/find it difficult?

What is your biggest question about the Bible?