

How to Study the Word of God

Hello, many blessings.

We are now in class number 4 of level 1.

Before we start this class, let me pray:

“Lord, I ask that you open our minds so that we may receive everything you have prepared for us regarding the Bible. We especially ask that each of us encounters you and hears your voice through the Bible. Amen.”

Today, I want to talk to you about **How to Study the Word of God**. As disciples of Christ, we need to read and study the Bible in order to:

- Truly know God
- Understand our condition before Him
- Examine ourselves daily in the light of His Word

An important point: To create the discipline of studying the Bible, you must train yourself until it becomes a habit, as a disciple of Christ. Reading the Bible and studying it are fundamental and non-negotiable activities of the Christian life. Studying the Word can accelerate the transformation process in our lives.

A Major Problem

We don't know how to study the Bible. Maybe we only read the Bible when we have an urgent need, or to seek out its beautiful promises, or to find verses that address a particular struggle we're facing at a given moment. But the truth is that limiting our study of the Word to specific situations leads to an isolated and superficial understanding of its content. This way, we won't find the true meaning of what God wants to tell us.

Why do I read the Bible but fail to understand the truths it contains?

I can give two answers:

- We do not read it with discipline.
- We do not study it with discipline.

Studying the Word of God is of great importance. When we study it, we gain an understanding of everything written under divine inspiration.

When I study the Bible with discipline, I will be able to understand it, and I will have an explanation of the things it reveals to us. This is what we call interpretation. Interpretation is the ability to understand and explain all those truths revealed to us.

Studying the Bible is like the work of a miner: digging and digging until you find a treasure.

If I study the Bible, I can interpret what God wants to tell me through it. Studying the Bible can also be related to the word searching.

John 5:39 (NKJV) says: *“Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”*

I need to know the meaning of the text I am reading and what the author wants to tell me.

When studying the Bible, there are three principles we need to know:

1. The Bible is interpreted spiritually.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV), the Apostle Paul writes:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

This means that although the Bible was written by men, its content did not come from human will, but from the Spirit of God, from the will of the Father.

To properly interpret the Bible and discover its treasures, we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. The Holy Spirit gives us the illumination and discernment we need.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV), Paul writes:

“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.”

2. The Bible tells a single story.

The 66 books of the Bible, divided into the Old and New Testaments, tell one great story—the one God has written and reveals to us: “The redemption of the world through Jesus Christ.”

Reading and studying the Bible with this principle in mind will help us understand it from the right perspective. The Bible’s content is not independent but integrated, forming one whole story.

3. The Bible is interpreted according to its context.

When we talk about context, we refer to the general and specific environment in which the biblical text was written. We cannot interpret God’s Word in isolation or according to our convenience.

We need to stop and understand the background in which certain statements were written by the author and how they were written.

If we do this, we will be able to discern the real meaning of a particular biblical passage.

There are two types of contexts we must consider: literary and historical.

Literary Context:

The context includes the biblical texts before and after the selected portion. To understand the context of what I'm reading, I must look at the verses before and after the chosen portion of the Bible. This involves doing a detailed analysis of the environment in which the biblical passage is inserted.

To interpret the real meaning of a specific verse, it will be necessary to consider the chapter it belongs to, the book of which it is a part, and even whether it is in the New Testament or the Old Testament.

How would I conduct my study?

First, I select the portion of the Word I will study. Second, I read the entire text where the verse is located, and I also read the chapter that surrounds it. Many times, I may need to read the previous or following chapters as well. This helps our study.

Some advice:

- Read and study the Bible, paying close attention to the grammar of the text. It is important to recognize, for example, that the text we read and study contains certain punctuation marks like commas or periods, which give greater meaning to what is written and should not be overlooked. Also, see if there are exclamation or question marks.
- Similarly, we must consider the grammatical tenses the author uses: is it written in the present, past, or future tense?
- As we study, we must distinguish whether the word we are reading is a verb, a noun, or a pronoun, etc.

It's important to remember that the Bible we have in our hands is a translation. The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—not Spanish or English.

For example, Hebrew uses a very different alphabet from ours, and it is read and written from right to left. We give thanks to God for the great effort of those who translated the Bible so that we can read it in our own language today.

Another important aspect of literary context is literary genre. Literary genre refers to the various forms in which the Bible was written. These compositions allow the message to be conveyed to us.

Some books of the Bible were written as:

- Historical narratives: accounts of historical events and the experiences of the people of Israel (e.g., Genesis, Exodus, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, etc.).
- Laws: (e.g., Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).
- Poetry: (e.g., Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon).
- Prophecy: (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel).
- Letters: (e.g., Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, written by Paul).

- Parables: as taught by Jesus to His disciples.

The way the Bible was written is considered a great literary treasure. It's extraordinary how God presents His Word—varied and rich in literary elements.

Historical Context:

Another context we must consider when studying the Bible is the historical context. The Bible was written in a different era, separated from ours by about two thousand years. The part of the world where the recorded events took place was Israel and its surroundings, separated from our world by an ocean and a continent.

The idea is to place ourselves in the time the Bible was written, and to study it in light of the historical, political, cultural, social, and geographical events of that period, in order to understand the circumstances that gave rise to the biblical truth.

Recommendation:

When studying the Bible, we should use tools that help us understand it better, such as:

- Bible dictionaries
- Biblical commentaries
- Concordances
- Geographical maps
- Various Bible translations
- Popular search engines like Google, etc.

Essential Requirements for a Good Study and Interpretation of the Bible:

1. The Guidance of the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 2:12 (NIV): "We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us."

2. Prayer (Basic Requirement):

As part of the spiritual disciplines of a disciple, prayer is essential. Each time we want to communicate with God to hear His voice, we go to Him in prayer. We communicate with God, asking Him to reveal Himself to us through study.

3. Faith:

Faith allows us to interpret the Bible spiritually and enables us to accept and believe what the Bible communicates to us. When studying the Bible, we do so with faith—the certainty that the Bible is the Word of God, inspired by Him, and that its teachings are true and relevant for us.

4. Humility:

When studying the Bible, we must exhibit a spirit of humility and a mind ready to receive God's teachings. We listen to His voice as a creature before its Creator, as a servant before his Master or King.

5. Reverence for Divine Revelation (Essential Requirement):

The Bible is not just any book. It is the Word of God given to men for their benefit. Reverence means recognizing the author and His great purpose of guiding us along the best path.

6. Obedience:

To obey is to follow or comply with orders, instructions, or rules from an authority. The key to our good relationship with God is obedience.

James 1:22 (KJV) says: *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*

Summary

These six essential or basic requirements—guidance of the Holy Spirit, prayer, faith, humility, reverence, and obedience—are necessary for a good study of the Word of God.

Final Recommendations — Begin to practice the discipline of studying the Bible.

How?

1. By studying a book of the Bible

Read an entire book several times, divide it into sections, and study each section in detail, paying attention to its structure, main themes, and the author’s purpose.

In our discipleship, we are reading and studying the book of Luke.

2. By participating in discipleship groups

Sharing and learning in community is a great experience. In a discipleship group, you can live this experience.

We hope that all this information is of great value to your life. Our purpose is that you can have a clearer and broader vision of each topic we are presenting, and that it helps you grow as a disciple of Christ.