

Life Changing Bible Study Tools

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They asked each other, "were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

A. Attitude

The most important factor in having a practical and refreshing encounter with God through His Word is our attitude.

Here are four essentials:

1. *Desire* ensures a reward. Prov. 2:1-5
2. *Reverence* ensures accuracy and obedience. Isaiah 66: 1-2
3. *Expectation* ensures practical insights. Psalm 119:18
4. *Gratitude* ensures humility, joy and love for the Word Psalm 119:62, 72, 164

B. Understanding

Below, several suggestions are offered to help you correctly understand and apply the Word of God.

1. **Prayer.** Begin with a prayer, and then expect an answer. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, God wants our hearts to burn within us as we study the Scriptures. Ask and it shall be given.
2. **Severel readings.** Sometimes it helps to read a passage over several time in order to grasp the meaning. Read at an average pace for an overview, then slowly to digest.
3. **Carefulness.** Accuracy depends on carefulness. When reading, consider the context of a passage, the historical setting, the specific choice of words and the purpose of the writer. Take note of key words and recurring themes. Be careful to ask yourself: Who? What? When? Where? Why? (1 Peter 1:10).
4. **Meditation.** Meditation is simply *concentrated thinking*. Over and over the Bible enjoins us to meditate on the Word of God. Eat and drink the Scripture. Try to completely absorb what you read. Reflect, don't rush. Think deeply about the words, the ideas and the events of Scripture. All day long fill your heart and mind with the thoughts of God.
5. **Imagination.** Although some parts of the Bible are easier for this than others, in general, use all of your creative powers to visualize what you read. Who is there? What are they doing? What do you hear? See? Smell? What are their facial expressions? Hand gestures? Body postures? Tones of voice? Notice the geography, the climate, and general surroundings. What are the colors, lengths, numbers and textures? I hope you get the picture.
6. **Emotion.** The Bible is a book filled with human emotion. One of the best ways to make your Bible Study come alive is to let yourself go and allow your heart *to* feel. What are the characters you are reading about feeling? Place yourself in their shoes and by to identify with them. How would *you* feel if Christ washed your feet right now? If *you* were caught in the act of adultery? If *you* had leprosy? Or if *you* were given sight for the first time?
7. **Application.** Bible study without personal application is useless. The Bible strictly warns us against only hearing the Word but not doing what it says. Applying what you read to your present circumstances requires prayer and effort. As a rule, try putting into practice at least

one thing you read everyday. Commit your chosen attitude or action to God then look for an opportunity to fulfill your decision. Also, review your actions from the previous day. James 1:22, 25

C. Variety

There are several different ways we can approach the Bible to make sure our study remains fresh, practical and exciting. Here are a few:

1. **Pray through the Scriptures.** For example, read Colossians and use it as a prayer guide. Go through each verse and turn it into a form of prayer for yourself and others.
2. **Choose a Character.** Select a person or persons and examine their lives in order to imitate the good, avoid the bad and in general to be inspired by flesh and blood examples.
3. **Select a Topic or Theme.** Try focusing on a specific subject such as joy, giving, discipline, the Holy Spirit or prayer. This can be a short two or three day study or a more exhaustive one.
4. **Master a Book.** Why not set out to become an "expert" in one book, like James, Luke, or Deuteronomy? Make it a goal to thoroughly understand the contents, characters, and main points. If you are really ambitious, try memorizing large portions or even the whole book!
5. **Different Translations.** Reading the Bible in a different version is both refreshing and rewarding. Try the Living Bible, New King James, Jerusalem or the J.B. Phillips' version. By comparing various English versions we can better appreciate the sense of the original Hebrew or Greek.
6. **Devotional.** Use the Scriptures to guide you in your praise and worship of God. Try singing and clapping to the Psalms or praying through the prayers of other great men and women of God.
7. **Write a Paraphrase.** Why not write your own paraphrase version of a chapter or book? Make your own expanded translation and chapter headings. This is for personal use and private encouragement, not publication!

D. Final thoughts

1. Stay close to the Gospels. Always go back to the gospels and the life of Christ.
2. Study how Jesus himself viewed and used the Scriptures. Awesome!
3. Share your thoughts with someone else.
4. Learn to use Bible study tools effectively.