

NOW LET'S "STUDY TO SHEW (OURSELVES) APPROVED UNTO GOD..."



PROFITABLE WAYS TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

WORD STUDIES:

Method: Locate the first reference in the Bible pertaining to your chosen word and proceed to look up every reference you can find. Some study bibles will have a subject index in the back along with a concordance and other helps. Some better editions of the Old Scofield Reference Bible contain a subject index which is tremendously helpful for this type of study. *(From Abomination to Zealous)* Also some editions will have an index of proper names which makes it easy to study Bible characters. *(From Aaron to Zuzims)*

DOCTRINAL STUDIES:

Method: Decide which doctrine you want to study and locate the first mention of that doctrine or subject in the Bible and proceed to the next reference to that subject until you have exhausted every reference from Genesis to Revelation. (For example if you want to study the doctrine of the Holy Spirit you would begin with Genesis 1:2 and continue to Revelation 22:17.) This is the only sure way to determine what the Scripture teaches concerning that doctrine. Once again the Old Scofield Reference Bible is extremely helpful with this type of study and even includes a link system where each doctrine is identified including the first reference, the next reference and the last reference.

Some categories might include:

- The Doctrine of the Scriptures (Bibliology)
- The Doctrine of God (Theology Proper)
- The Doctrine of Christ (Christology)
- The Doctrine of Man (Anthropology)
- The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)
- The Doctrine of Sin (Harmartiology)
- The Doctrines of Salvation (Sotierology)
- The Doctrine of Angels (Angelology)
- The Doctrine of Satan (Satanology)
- The Doctrine of Devils (Demonology)
- The Doctrine of Israel (Israelology)
- The Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)
- The Doctrine of Last Things (Eschatology)

TOPICAL STUDIES:

Method: Perhaps you want to study a topic in a given passage in the Bible, e.g. God's love in John 3:16. Helpful tools will include a good concordance, a study Bible, a reliable commentary on that passage of Scripture along with a study of the original language words, using whatever resources are available to you. What about a study of the "Baptist Distinctives" (The authority of Scripture, the Autonomy of the Local Church, the Priesthood of the Believer, Two Offices – pastor & deacons, Two Ordinances – baptism & the Lord's supper, Individual Soul Liberty, the Priesthood of the Believer, the Security of the Believer, the Separation of Church and State, A Regenerate, Baptized Church Membership)? How about a study on subjects such as heaven, hell, the rapture, the trinity, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, prayer, soul-winning, resurrection, substitution, imputation, regeneration, justification, salvation, etc., etc.

CHAPTER STUDIES:

Method: It is always safer and best to study a given subject within the context of the whole Bible, the book of the Bible, and the chapter and individual verses, to gain the best insight. But perhaps you have studied the particular book of the Bible you are examining, so you are familiar with who wrote it, to whom it was written, why it was written, etc., but now you wish to home in on a specific chapter. Be sure to saturate yourself with the contents of the chapter by repeated readings. Then you will be equipped to more thoroughly study that chapter in depth.

BOOK STUDIES:

Method: In order to study a book of the Bible, you need to know something about its human author, why it was written, to whom it was written, the approximate date in history, the culture, background, and circumstances and of course its main subject(s). After several (or many) readings of the book to help you get comfortable with its contents and get a "feel" for the author's style, his vocabulary, his approach and the purpose for the writing of the book, you can finally begin to delve into its contents and put together an intelligent outline and decipher its meaning and mine its truths.

PROPHETIC STUDIES:

Method: The study of prophecy is often neglected because of the abuse that has taken place over the years (for example, attempting to identify the Antichrist or setting a date for the rapture). However the topic of prophecy is a legitimate pursuit and since the Bible contains so much prophetic information it is obvious that the Lord desired that we look into these events. To study prophecy is a rewarding pursuit in that it acknowledges the omniscience of God and His foreknowledge of all things as well as His sovereignty over His creation. Great care must be taken not to read into the Scriptures too much, while on the other hand the prophetic passages of God's Word must not be ignored and God expects His people to be aware of the "signs of the times" and know where they stand chronologically. God's great plan for man unfolds in the Bible with great detail and the proper study of prophecy imparts a balance to the believer's life.

You will find that preachers and writers of the distant past seemed to ignore these great truths and rarely preached on prophetic topics (the rapture, the tribulation, the millennium, Armageddon, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Great White Throne Judgment, etc.), but as these events grow closer there seems to be a greater interest and much is being written and preached along these lines now. Every generation, including first century Christians, have looked forward to the rapture of the church and of course, we are much closer to that event with every day that passes. The Savior Himself spoke of prophetic events and gave us clues which give insight into historical events which are obviously taking place today. There seem to be two extremes: 1) ignore prophecy and 2) over-emphasize prophecy (Jack VanImpe, John Hagee, etc.). As with all subjects there must be a balance or the danger is fanaticism or heresy.

Some of the practical benefits of the study of prophecy are:

Prophecy gives hope in an otherwise hopeless world.

Romans 15:4 *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Prophecy gives understanding in the midst of confusion. Daniel 9:1,2

Prophecy gives comfort to surviving believers. 1 Thes. 4 re: the rapture *"wherefore comfort one another with these words..."*

Prophecy gives patience in the midst of trials

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Prophecy places time and life into proper perspective with eternity

Psalms 73:1-3 *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

Prophecy gives confidence in the God Who reveals it

Luke 24:25-27 *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Prophecy has a purifying effect on those who are knowledgeable of future events

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ...*

The issue is not so much "Why study prophecy?" but why does the average believer know so little about the large body of prophetic scripture. Obviously God didn't just include all the prophetic topics in His Word to be ignored or just to fill in space in His inspired Word.

