



2664 Willis Foreman Rd.  
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Sunday Worship  
1030 am  
www.foclc.org

## How to Study Your Bible – Teen Edition

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**Introduction:** The Bible is the #1 All-time best seller. More people have read it than any other book in history. What is the Bible? It’s a book of books. The Bible is a compilation of 66 books written by about 40 authors, over a period that spanned over 1500 years. Its not like any other book you have ever read. The last recorded words in the Bible were penned about 2000 years ago, but it can still make sense today and it can still change your life; if you read it, believe it, and apply it!

Its books were written by different people, in different times, for different reasons, but they have all come together as one work. Why? Because the Holy Spirit was the real author. They wrote the letters, but they did not manufacture the Words. They were the tools, but the Holy Spirit was the Mastermind. The Holy Spirit breathed and the Holy Spirit inspired the words in the Word! The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write this to Timothy about His Miraculous work: **(II Tim 3:16,17 NIV) 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.**

**Foundational Scripture: (II Timothy 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**

In this lesson we will look at three major areas in studying the Bible:

1. **Observe:** What DOES it say?
2. **Interpret:** What DID it mean back then?
3. **Apply:** What DOES it mean to YOU today?

Let me preface this by saying that this is not a comprehensive class, but rather an overview. In two lessons you will not learn everything there is to know about studying your Bible, but you will learn enough to start the process that will develop for the rest of your life.

First of all let me say that greatness is never achieved outside of great discipline. This is about YOU reading YOUR Bible to affect YOUR life forever. YOU must make the decision to study YOUR Bible and allow it to impact the way YOU think, speak, act, and live.

### ***Observe: What DOES it say?***

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- **Always begin with prayer:** Jesus said, **“The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. The Spirit doesn't speak on his own. He will tell you only what he has heard from me, and he will let you know what is going to happen. The Spirit will bring glory to me by taking my message and telling it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine. That is why I have said that the Spirit takes my message and tells it to you.”** (John 16:13-15 CEV). Invoke the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - **Bible study is a science** – you must be exact with words, context, and etc.
  - **Bible study is an art** – you must be creative and imaginative as you allow yourself to be drawn into the text, its time, culture, and etc.

- **Bible study is a spiritual act** – The Holy Spirit is the teacher and the author. The author of the book and the teacher of the class lives in you. Let Him impart into you by invoking His presence.
- **Identify the context.** Context always rules in interpretation.
- The word context means, “that which goes with the text.”
- Example. Let’s say I ask you to think of a dancer dancing. At this point you don’t know what kind of dancer and what type of setting the dancer is dancing in. But now let’s say, “Think of a ballet dancer dancing in a formal ballet.” Now you see the dancer and you see the setting. That is a lot different than me saying, “Think of a Hip-Hop dancer in the club.” It may even be the same dancer, but since the setting (context), is different, there will be different results.
- Context is the words, phrases and sentences that surround a word, phrase or sentence.
- Another Example: the word trunk. This one word could mean: a part of a car, a part of an elephant, a part of a tree, or a piece of luggage. So if you came across the word trunk in a sentence, you would have to look at the words around it to figure out which meaning would apply. That is context. The environment (surrounding the text) in which the word appears shows the possible meaning intended.
- **Observe the obvious.** Look for things in the text that are easy to see.
- In an attempt to be “deep,” many overlook the obvious.
- Who are the people in the text? What is their position?
- What are the places?
- What are the things or objects?
- At this point you simply make a note of what is in the text.
- Example: Jesus feeding 5,000.

**(Mat 14:15-21 KJV) And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.**

- Time: evening.
- Location: Desert place with surrounding villages.
- Persons: Jesus, disciples, 5,000 men + women and children; a little boy.
- The people are hungry.
- The boy has two fish and five loaves.
- 12 baskets left over.
- **Deal with the text objectively.** Let the text speak for itself.
- This is hard because we have a tendency to jump to conclusions early.
- We also have a tendency to make the text apply to today’s present context without first understanding what it meant back then.
- Another problem is that we have heard so much preaching that we immediately jump to Rev. so-and-so, or Bishop bubblegum’s sermon on the text.
- Force yourself to simply look at the text for what it is and what it is saying.

- **Read with purpose.** Ask questions of the text. **Have fun with it!**
- **Who:**
  - Who wrote it? Who said it?
  - Who are the major characters in the text?
  - To whom is the author speaking?
  - About whom is the author speaking?
- **What:**
  - What are the main events?
  - What are the major ideas?
  - What are the major teachings?
  - What are these people like?
  - What does the author talk about the most?
  - What is the purpose of the author's writing?
- **When:**
  - When was it written?
  - When did the event take place?
  - When did he say it?
  - When did he do it?
- **Where:**
  - Where was this done?
  - Where was this said?
  - Where did it happen or where will it happen?
- **Why:**
  - Why was there a need for this to be written?
  - Why was there so much or so little writing devoted to his event or teaching?
  - Why was this reference mentioned?
  - Why is this in the Bible?
- **How:**
  - How is it done?
  - How did it happen?
  - What was used to bring it to pass?
- If you force yourself to do this you will be amazed at all you can learn.
- These are all building blocks for interpretation. Don't rush to interpretation quickly.
- **If you rush to interpretation without first doing a proper observation you will taint the scripture with your own presumptions.**
- Simple example: **(John 7:1 KJV) After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He did not desire to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.**
  - Who: Jesus
  - What: He was walking.
  - Where: Galilee, not Judea.
  - Why: Because the Jews wanted to kill him.
  - When: After these things.
    - What things? The things explained in the previous verses.
- The more you do this, to more of a habit it will become in your Bible study time.
- These are all building blocks for interpretation. Don't rush to interpretation quickly.
- **Get the Big picture of the book you are in.**
- Read and re-read the book.
- Know what kind of book it is:
  - Is it historical? Like Genesis, Exodus, Judges, Acts, etc.
  - Is it biographical? Like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

- Is it poetic? Like Psalms.
- Is it proverbial? Like proverbs.
- Is it prophetic? Like Daniel or Revelation.
- Is it an epistle (letter)? Like Ephesians, Galatians, 1<sup>st</sup> John, etc.
- Is it a combination? Like Daniel is both historical and prophetic.
- What is the theme or recurring submit of the book? For example, Paul used the word joy five times and the word rejoice eight times in the letter to the church at Phillipi; a book with only four chapters.
- These would be “Key Words.”
- Do the chapters have themes? Like 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 – the Love chapter or Hebrews 11 – the Hall of Faith!

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### ***Interpret: What DID it mean back then?***

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- Have you ever walked out of a class and heard someone ask, “Did the teacher do their homework?” This is where we must do ours. We all want to know what the text means to us today, but we should first know what it meant back then.
- **Principles of Interpretation:**
  - 1. **Context rules:** We have already covered this.
  - 2. **Check the Word with the Word:** Do not accept a teaching just because someone used one or two isolated verses from God’s Word. Ask yourself: how does this apply to the rest of the Bible?
  - 3. **Scripture will never contradict scripture:**
    - Know that God will never contradict Himself.
    - There are no contradictions in scripture, just misinterpretations.
  - 4. **Do not base your belief on a rare and isolated passage:** There are passages that are difficult to understand. For example, an excerpt from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:29 says, “**What will they do, those being baptized on behalf of the dead?**” Because of this one “excerpt,” there are people who baptize dead corpses and others who get baptized for dead corpses.
  - 5. **Interpret Scripture Literally:** Take the Word of God at face value; in its normal and natural sense. Look for the clear teaching of scripture, not some hidden meaning.
  - 6. **Look for the Author’s intended meaning:** What did they mean to say and why did they mean to say it? Understand what they had in mind. Don’t twist a verse to mean what you want it to mean. For example, in Judges 6 the author simply tells us what Gideon did when he was trying to make sure he was dealing with God. This passage is descriptive and not prescriptive. It describes the fact that Gideon put out a fleece, it does not prescribe any teaching for us to do the same.
- Use an exhaustive Concordance in:
  - **Book** form: like “Strong’s Concordance.”
  - **Electronic** form: like a software program like e-sword ([www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net)).
  - **Online:** like the one accessed at [www.blueletterBible.com](http://www.blueletterBible.com).
- A concordance will help you find all the verses in the Bible that have the word(s) you are studying.
- Cross reference scripture with scripture and see how they help support your interpretation. If it does not help support your interpretation, you may have made a mistake.

- **Draw conclusions on what it meant:**
- After you are familiar with the author, the setting, and the context, ask the Holy Spirit to show you how this applied back then?
- How did this apply in the world of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. This is important, before you start trying to apply it to the world of Ray-Ray, Pookie, and Sally.
- Write down your conclusions and make sure you can understand them.
- Once you understand what it meant, you are one step closer to getting to what it means t you today.

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***Apply: What DOES it mean to YOU today?***

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- **This is the MOST important part! This is the part that can change your life!**
- **The transformed life:** Bible study is more than a classroom exercise, it is a life-transforming process. **The Bible is more than merely a textbook to study, it is a life-book to live.** Once you know what the passage meant and what it means today, you are responsible to LIVE it!
  - **No matter how much you know about God's Word, if you don't apply it to your life, it will never benefit you.**
  - If you are a hearer and not a doer you are deceiving your own self (James 1:22-25). Application takes you from hearing to doing.
- Applications answers the questions:
  - How does this passage apply to me? For real!
  - What do I need to change because of what I just read?
  - What did God just say to me?
  - What does God want me to change, because of that Word?
  - What is in it for me?
    - What truth?
    - What promise?
    - What Word can I stand on for my own life?
- **What does the passage teach?**
- Is it general or specific?
- Does it only apply to a specific people?
- Was it addressing a cultural problem of the day? Was it limited to that time in history?
- Has it been superseded?
- Is there a principle I can draw from it?
- **Does this passage expose an error in my beliefs or my behavior?**
- Are there any commandments that I have not obeyed?
- Are there any preconceived notions that I must change?
- Are there any wrong attitudes that I posses that I must now change?
- Is there something I was taught as a child that this passage exposes as wrong?
- Is there some religious practice that this passage exposes as unnecessary?
- **What is God's instruction to you as His child?**
- Are there any new truths (new to me) to be believed?
- Are there new insights to pursue?
- Is there revelation in this passage for me?
- Did God (The Holy Spirit) speak a living Word (Rhema) to me from this written Word?
- Are there any new promises to embrace?
- Are there any new principles to live by?



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- **Bottom Line: What does this mean to me, today?**
- How can I apply this to my life today?
- Do I understand it enough to make a change right now?
- What should I ask God to help me with based upon what I just studied?
- If I was at church and I went to the altar for prayer, after hearing this passage preached, what would I ask for prayer for?
- What need has this passage exposed?
  
- Paul said, “**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**” (2 Tim 3:16 NIV).
- **Teaching (doctrine):** This is what the Word of God says on a certain subject. God’s teaching on any given subject is always truth.
- **Reproof:** Exposes areas in your thinking that do not line up with the Word of God. Reproof is finding out **where you have thought wrongly** and **where you have not been doing what God’s Word teaches**. The only way to apply reproof is to accept God’s Word and to **make the correction** in your life.
- **Correction:** Many times you can see what is wrong, but you are reluctant to take the necessary steps to correct it. Sometimes accepting the truth and applying it to your life is **difficult**. Correction oftentimes requires an **open confession of sin** and reluctance to God; enabling Him to empower you to bring about the change.
- **Training in righteousness:** More than just a handbook for reproof and correction, but Bible is also a handbook what living; **for doing what is right**. The Bible teaches you how to live a long and prosperous life.
- *You will never know the truth found in the teaching, reap the benefits of making the proper changes (reproof, correction) or learn the principles to live by if you do not take the time to apply the scriptures to your life.*