# 1. Introduction to Bible Study

#### Introduction

We are about to embark on one of the most exciting journeys anyone can experience! No, I'm not talking about a trip up the Highlands Highway into the mountainous interior of Papua New Guinea (though that, too, is exciting ... trust me!), but a trip into the **heart** and **mind** of God as we learn to **explore His Word!** But, as in all journeys, before we begin our adventure, we must first make necessary preparations. These include the following:

# Having The Right Heart Attitude

- 1. A New Heart ~ In order to truly understand the Bible, a book of Spiritual Truths written by the Spirit of God, the Bible student must possess the Author (the Holy Spirit) in his heart to be his Guide and Teacher! He must be "born again" by God with a New Heart! (1 Corinthians 2:13-14)
- 2. A Hungry Heart ~ The main requirement to studying God's Word is not a seminary degree, but an intense desire to know God's Will. Studying God's Word is hard work! It requires patience and perseverance! Unless you really desire to know God's Will, you will find Bible Study laborious and, God forbid, boring! When you passionately desire to discover God's Will in His Word, the discipline that it requires will come (super) naturally!
- **3.** An Obedient Heart ~ Along with a strong desire to Know God's Will is the passion to Do God's Will. It is fairly easy to gain academic knowledge of Biblical facts and events, but only a desire to do God's Will turns that **knowledge** into **wisdom** (**John 7:17**). How badly do you want to do God's Will? That, more than most other things, will determine how much we will get out of God's Word!
- **4.** A Humble Heart ~ Discovering God's Truths requires humility, with a willingness to learn from others and to change our own thinking should it be found in error. Only God is infallible!

### Having The Right Conviction

- 1. The Bible is God's Word ~ The Bible is Inspired by God, both in its message and in its very words. By Inspiration, I mean more than that the authors themselves were inspired to write, but that God Himself sovereignly worked through the various human authors and their unique personalities to record exactly what He wanted to communicate to mankind. We can be assured that when we read the Bible, we are reading God's very Word to us! (2 Timothy 3:16)
- **2.** The Bible Conveys God's Message ~ The Bible consists of 66 books, written by approximately 40 different human authors, over a span of 1500 years and in varying places. And yet, it clearly communicates a single message without contradiction: God's Plan to Rescue Man from Sin and Transform Him into a Child of God!

Study the information on the next page to gain a better understanding of the books in the Bible.

Genesis Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt	Book	Author	Date	Summary	
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Exodus   Moses   1450-1410 BC   God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses   1450-1410 BC   Sumbers   Moses	Genesis	Moses	1450-1410 BC	The Beginning of the World, Man's Fall, Israel's origin.	
Numbers   Moses   1450-1410 BC   Israel's 40 years of Wandering in the Sinai.			1450-1410 BC	God Rescues His People from Slavery in Egypt thru Moses.	
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Chronicles   Ezra   450-425 BC   Reign of Kings Saúl and David.	1 Kings			Reign of King Solomon and the Divided Kingdom.	
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Songs fhat Express the Love Between a Man and His Bride.				A Collection of Wise Sayings of King Solomon and Others.	
Isalah   Isalah   Isalah   Isalah   Isaremiah   Isar				King Solomon Answers the Question of Meaning in Life.	
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#### Having The Right Tools

- 1. A Good Bible Translation: Few of us have the training and ability to read the Bible in its original languages (Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament). We must therefore depend on translators to bring the Bible into our own language. The question that is often raised is "Which translation is the best?" If you expect to receive an answer from me, you will be disappointed. I will not recommend nor endorse a specific translation, but it may help if you understand the various principles used in Bible translation work.
- a. Literal ~ Translators using this principle seek to translate each original word into the closest equivalent word in the reader's language. The strength of this method is that it is a word for word translation of the Bible giving the reader a close rendering of the literal words of the original writings. The weakness of this principle is that the translation can be stiff and difficult to read, and that words cannot always be found to translate the original words of the Biblical writings. For example, the one English word "love" is used to translate two Greek words in the New Testament. But unless you are acquainted with the Greek text, there is no way of telling which Greek word is being translated. This problem is seen in the conversation between Jesus and Simon Peter in John 21:15-17. (Examples include: The New American Standard Version, The King James Bible and the Revised Standard Version)
- **b. Dynamic Equivalence** ~ Translators using this principle seek to translate, not the literal words, but the *meaning* these words convey. The *strength* of this principle is that the translation is *more readable* in the reader's language. The *weakness* of this principle is that the Bible student who cannot understand the original languages, is now further distanced from the original words. An example of this is the Greek word "sarx" which translates as "flesh" in English. It is used repeatedly by Paul in Romans chapter 8. However, the translators of the New International Version, using the principle of Dynamic Equivalence, express what they believe is Paul's intended meaning with various English words and phrases such as "sinful nature" (verses 3, 5, 9, 12 & 13) and "sinful man" (verses 3 & 6). (Examples include: The New International Version & Today's English Version or Good News Bible)
- **c. Paraphrase** ~ Translators, taking the principle of **Dynamic Equivalence** further, seek to translate the original language into their *modern colloquial equivalent*. The *strength* of this principle is that the translation is *highly readable*. The *weakness* is that the Bible student is now further distanced from the original words by the translators' interpretation of the original writings. (*Example: The Living Bible*)

So which type of Bible translation is the best for Bible Study? The answer is *all three!* You should *use a Literal translation as your primary Study Bible*, and *other Bibles to compare Scripture* to gain a better understanding. Ask your **Pastor** or **Bible Teacher** which Bible they would recommend. The **Christian Bookstores** can also provide help in choosing a good Study Bible.

- 2. A Notebook ~ Studies should always be written out to reinforce what is learned as well as to keep a record for future reference.
- **3. Reference Materials** ~ There are many reference books that aid in a study of the Bible, including **Bible Dictionaries, Lexicons, Encyclopedias, Concordances and Commentaries.** These will be covered in subsequent lessons.

## Having the Right Method

**Finally, we come to the purpose of this Study.** You may have attended at one time a Bible Study where a Scripture passage is read and then each person in the group is asked to share what that passage means to them. What often happens is that there are as many interpretations of the passage as there are people in the group. Each person brings their own personal experiences and therefore sees the passage in their own subjective and biased way.

But the question must be asked. "Which interpretation is right?" Why? Because each Bible author had only one intended meaning when he wrote the Scripture. Our task as Bible students is not to discover what we think the Scripture means, but to discover what the original author meant when he wrote that Scripture many centuries ago! We accomplish this by following a logical, methodical, careful and objective system of study. Following a Method protects us from interpretations that are affected (or infected?) by our own biases and feelings, and allows us to share and compare our interpretations with others in an objective manner.

# The Three Steps of Bible Study:

#### 1. Observation:

In this step we discover What the Scripture SAYS. This requires more than a casual reading of the passage. The Truths of Scripture are sometimes like shells on a seashore that can be easily seen and collected. But more often, they are like precious gems hidden beneath the surface, requiring careful excavation and a determined excavator. The extra effort yields valuable lessons and precious truths. We will learn how to sift through the words of a passage in order to discover what the writer is saying.

#### 2. Interpretation:

Here, we will discover What the Scripture MEANS. It has been said, "There is only one interpretation but many applications." Our task will be to discover that one interpretation, and our primary tool will be an inquisitive mind asking relevant questions. It is imperative that we discover the correct interpretation, for if our interpretation is in error, so too will be our applications.

#### 3. Application:

**Finally we will discover** What the Scripture MEANS TO US. The Bible was not given to fulfill our curiosity, but to transform lives! God is in the business of changing lives, and He does it primarily through the ministry of His Spirit and His Word, transforming hearts, minds and wills, and conforming lives to the Living Word, Jesus Christ! We will learn how to apply the Scripture in practical ways to our lives.

With that said, let us begin our journey!