

GOD'S WORD



**CORE
CLASS**

Part of the *Bible Doctrine Series*

Table of Contents

– Session 1 –

Inspiration	3
Old Testament Transmission.	4
New Testament Transmission	6
Images: Greek text examples	9
Canonicity.	11
Bible Basics	13

– Session 2 –

Inerrant and True	16
Authoritative.	19

– Session 3 –

Sufficiency	21
Spiritual Growth	22
Gray Areas: The Cliff	24
Developing a Plan of Action	25
Read the Bible in a Year	25
Color-Coding your Old & New Testaments.	26
Single-Page Overview.	27
Advanced Overview of the Bible Study Methods.	28
A Book-a-Month Club	28
Surveys	29
Use your color-coded Bible	29
Add a Systematic Theology	29

Bibliography	30
-------------------------------	-----------

2019 Core Class Schedule	31
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Session 1: Inspiration, Transmission, Canonicity, and Bible Basics

Inspiration

- 2 Timothy 3:16 - The Bible is fully inspired by God, God-breathed.
- Matthew 5:17-18 - Jesus upholds the authority and eternal nature of the word as a whole and the nature and authority of each individual word.
- Galatians 3:16 - Even single letters from the Old Testament are the basis for the New Testament (seed and seeds).
- Hebrews 4:12 - They are more than words written on a page.
- 2 Peter 3:16 - Peter recognizes Paul's writings as Scripture.
- Isaiah 55:10-11 - God's uses His Word to accomplish His will.
- Zechariah 7:12 - "The words which the Lord of Hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets."

inspiration -

"God-Breathed." The verbal, plenary inspiration of original manuscripts.

Spirit-Led

- 2 Peter 1:21 - "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
- 1 Corinthians 3:13 - "Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."

Methods of Inspiration – God did not use mechanical dictation as his method in writing the Bible through men. He used different ways at different times to accomplish His purpose.

Hebrews 1:1 - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways."

"Instead of reducing the writers of Scripture to the level of machines or typewriters we have insisted that, while they wrote or spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit they nevertheless remained thinking, willing, self-conscious beings whose peculiar styles and mannerism are clearly traceable in their writings" (Boettner, 23).

- At times the Lord simply spoke and the author was to dictate, "Thus says the Lord..."
- At other times the author is called to compile, research, and determine what should be written (Luke 1:1-3, John 20:31), often with an intention and purpose in mind.
- The Lord may also have an author write what they see, like John in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:11).
- They also write as a witness to what they have seen, heard, and touched (1 John 1:1-3).

"To sum up: This variety of material demonstrates that God sometimes revealed things supernaturally and directly; sometimes He allowed the human writers to compose His message using their freedom of expression. But He breathed out the total product, carrying along the authors in various ways, to give us His message in the words of the Bible" (Ryrie, 71).

Old Testament Transmission

Much of this content was taken from *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, by Paul D. Wegner.

Recorded in Scripture

- Moses kept an ongoing written history (Exodus 17:4 "And the Lord said to Moses, write this for a memorial in the book")
- Oral transmission was also common and expected among the Jewish people according to Deuteronomy 4:9).
- Deuteronomy 31:9-13 - Moses would record God's Words, the priests would preserve them and they would be read aloud to the people.
- Deuteronomy 31:24-26 "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the

words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, 'Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.'"

- Joshua 24:26 - "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God"
- 1 Samuel 10:25 - records that Samuel wrote down the ordinances of the kingdom in a book.
- Prophetic oracles were also recorded (2 Chronicles 21:12, Isaiah 30:8, Jeremiah 25:13, 29:1 and in several other places).
- Histories are also recorded by the prophets (1 Chronicles 29:29, 2 Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22).
- Daniel 9:2 - At this point, there seems to be a collection of books available to Daniel. He reads from Jeremiah. There are many references in the OT to earlier biblical writings and the people are often rebuked for not following them (2 Kings 14:6, Ezra 5:1, 2 Chronicles 24:19, Jeremiah 7:25-26, Daniel 9:6...).

By the Scribes

- Originally, the OT was not written with vowel points. Jews began to speak Aramaic as their common language. Nehemiah had a hard time finding those who could even read Hebrew (Nehemiah 13:24).
- Rabbis kept the knowledge alive.
- Jesus and the Jews of his day spoke Aramaic, but Greek was soon to take over. Almost all of the New Testament is in Greek.
- Stone, clay tablets, papyrus, leather, parchment, wood tablets, and metals were used as materials to record words.
- Scribes would have been commissioned, starting about 500 B.C. with preserving Israel's sacred texts. Often using papyrus or leather scrolls, much like Jeremiah in 36:2. Again scrolls are referenced throughout the rest of Jeremiah 36.

- Masoretes (scribes) added vowel points, accents, and floating letters from about 500-800 A.D. in order to preserve pronunciation.
- The Masoretic Hebrew text was meticulously hand copied until the invention of the printing press.
- Present day chapters and verses were not added to the Vulgate until the 1200s by Stephen Langton and then later by Salomon Ben Ishmael in 1330 to the Hebrew text.
- Translations – Hebrew – Greek Septuagint – Latin Vulgate – Greek NT
- OT usage in the NT (80% of OT quotes come from the Septuagint, according to F. F. Bruce (Wegner, 87)).

New Testament Transmission

- 2 Peter 1:16-18 - The writers were eyewitnesses. They did not follow clever tales.
- 1 John 1:1-3 - John goes out of his way to communicate that he was an eyewitness. He testifies to what he has seen, heard, and touched concerning the Word of Life.
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 - Paul passes on a description of the Gospel that he received.
- 2 Timothy 2:15 - There was a commitment to handling the Word with accuracy.
- The Gospels would have been written several decades after Christ. The Jews of the day would have been used to memorizing large portions of Scripture through rhythmic and repetitive readings.
- Luke 1:1-3 - Luke compiled information that was handed down by eyewitnesses.
- It should be noted that Jesus taught in such a way to make his words memorable. His parables were beautifully orchestrated stories with powerful punchlines. Hyperbolic speech, metaphors, and illustrations were intended to stick with the listeners.

- There is shared material among the Synoptic Gospels.

Like the Old Testament, there are *no autographs* of the New Testament, though we have thousands of papyrus fragments that date back to the second century.

Synoptic Gospels–

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which describe events from a similar point of view, as contrasted with that of John.

- Distribution required copies to be made.
- The Gospels were circulated orally for a period of time, while Paul's letters were recorded at the outset as they were sent to their recipients.
- Speedy multiplications of these letters were made and sent out to churches.
- We have thousands of minuscule letter manuscripts and fragments.
- Verse divisions were made by Robert Stephanus in 1551 supposedly while riding horse-back from Paris to Lyons.
- Some copies are in uncial letters - block letters without spacing or punctuation.

Among all of the fragments there are variations.

- "The actual number of variants in the New Testament is small (approximately 10 percent), none of which calls into question any major doctrine" (Wegner, 215).
- The largest number of variants come from misspellings, such as "John" versus "Johnn."
- The second large group of variants arise from omissions of small Greek words or variations in word order - "Good man" versus "the man who is good".
- Texts and textual fragments usually fall into families; Alexandrian, Cesarean, Western, and Byzantine. Some families are trusted more than others.

- Critical Greek texts have been written to provide a textual apparatus to show possible variants located from different identified fragments (led by Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland, to name a few).
- The older the document or fragment, the closer to the original it will be.
- KJV - "The King James Version was translated from the combination of only about six or seven medieval manuscripts. By comparison, today we have available thousands of manuscripts, some dating to the second century, whose readings should at least be considered when attempting to determine the original text" (Wegner, 223).

Scholars must determine the best readings to use (this is called Textual Criticism). The following are the common rules applied:

1. Manuscripts must be weighed, not counted.
2. Determine the reading that would most likely give rise to the others.
3. The more distinctive reading is usually preferable.
4. The shorter reading is generally favored.
5. Determine which reading is more appropriate in its context (literary, grammatical or spelling errors, historical context).
6. Examine parallel passages for any differences and determine why they may appear.

516 517 ΠΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΗΣΙΟΥΣ 1,27-2,7

27 Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολι-
τεύεσθε, ἵνα εἴτε ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ὑμᾶς εἴτε ἀπὸν ἡκούω
τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν, ὅτι στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μιᾷ ψυχῇ
συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου 28 καὶ μὴ πτυ-
ρόμενοι ἐν μηδενὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων, ἥτις ἐστὶν αὐ-
τοῖς ἐνδειξις ἀπωλείας, ὑμῶν δὲ σωτηρίας, καὶ τοῦτο
ἀπὸ θεοῦ. 29 ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ
μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεῦν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ
πάσχειν, 30 τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, ὅσον εἶδετε ἐν
ἐμοὶ καὶ νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοί.

2 Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τις παραμύ-
θιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις
σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί, 2 πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν
ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμ-
ψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονούντες, 3 μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν ἢ μηδὲ
κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους
ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, 4 μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἑκα-
στος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων: ἑκάστοι.

5 Τοῦτο ἡγοροῦντες ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,
6 ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο
τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,
7 ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών,

1 Th 2,12!
1 K 16,13! E 4,3 ·
Act 4,32 ·
R 15,30!
1 K 16,9
2 Th 1,5 ss
Act 5,41!
Act 16,22 Kol 2,1
R 12,8!
2 K 13,13
1,18!
R 15,5!
G 5,26 · 1 P 5,5 ·
R 12,10
1 K 10,24,33; 13,5
R 15,5
J 1,18; 3,13! 17,5
J 5,18
2 K 8,9
Is 53,3.11

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Example of Textual Criticism from Philippians 1:29-2:2:

Philippians 1:29. A 1241s pc all use ημιν (to us) instead of ὑμιν (to you plural). This was done “presumably to include the apostle himself within the sphere of σωτηρίας, since he, too, was suffering” (O’Brien, 144).

Philippians 1:30. 81 omit ἐν ἐμοί. This may have been done because it was regarded as “redundant” (O’Brien, 144) or “awkward” (Fee, 159).

Philippians 2:1. In this verse there are two instances where τις is changed to τι. The NA records it in brackets as bis τι Blass cj. Commentaries do not make much mention of this variant, but they do discuss the following variants found in verse one.

Variant	Alexandrian	West	Byzantine	Other
τις (txt τι) any	33 9th	D* ^c 6th	L 9th	2495 pc
τι (txt τις) any	81 1739 1881 1044 10 th 14 th		K 9 th	Ψ 323 365 614 630 945 1241 ^s vg st 9 th 10 th 12 th 13 th 1983
τινα (txt τις) any				Ambst spec pc vg ^{cl} it 336-384 5 th 1592
<i>Commentaries:</i> “The MS tradition is uncertain whether εἰ τις or εἰ τι should be read in each of the four instances. BDF, para. 137(2), claims that the latter was intended throughout, with τι being understood as the adverbial ‘in any way’. Cf. G. F. Hawthorne, 63” (O’Brien, 163).				

Philippians 2:2

Variant	Alexandrian	West	Byzantine	Other
txt εἷς one thing	81 ⁴⁶ Aleph ² B D 1739 1881 200 4 th 5 th 10 th 14 th	G F 9th	ⲁⲓ	075 0278 it vg ^{ms} Cl Hil Ambst 10 th 215 367 366-384
αὐτο one thing	Aleph* A C I 33 81 2464 4 th 5 th 9 th 1044			Ψ 1241 ^s pc f vg 9 th 10 th
<i>Commentaries:</i> According to O’Brien τοῦ εἷς, the more difficult reading, is original and it has strong external evidence (163).				

Canonicity

canonicity –

Canon means “rule of measure.” Today, it refers to a collection or list of books accepted as an authoritative rule of faith and practice.

A. Old Testament

Canonization is not the process of placing divine authority onto a text, but rather, to recognize where God has placed his divine authority on a text.

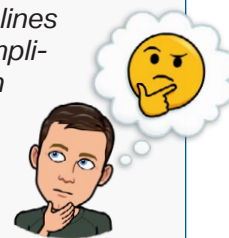
No record has been kept as to how the Old Testament Jews determined which books to include. Hints are given from Josephus:

- “There is no discrepancy in what is written; seeing that, on the contrary, the prophets alone had the privilege, obtaining their knowledge of the most remote and ancient history through the inspiration which they owed to God, and committing to writing a clear account of the events of their own time just as they occurred.”
- “For, although such long ages have now passed, no one had venture either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable; and it is an instinct with every Jew from the day of his birth, to regard them as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, to cheerfully die for them” (Contra Apion 1.7-8, 37-42 quoted in Wegner, 117)).
- This shows it did not contain contradictions, was written by a prophet or a person with divine authority, originated through inspiration from God, was accepted by the Jews as authoritative (Wegner, 117).

What Makes a Book Canon?

The following seemed to be the guidelines used to make the determination. By implication of the first guideline, the Canon is closed.

1. *Was the book written by an apostle, or at least someone as a recognized authority?*
2. *Did it agree with the canon of truth?*
3. *Did it enjoy universal acceptance?*
4. *Does it have a self-authenticating divine nature?*



Existence and role of other spiritual books of the day (similar to today): Early church Fathers and apocrypha

Josephus –

Born Yosef ben Matityahu, whose Greek name was Titus Flavius Josephus. Josephus was a first-century Roman-Jewish scholar, historian and biographer, who was born in Jerusalem to a father of priestly descent and a mother who claimed royal ancestry. He recorded Jewish history, with special emphasis on the first century CE, including the Siege of Masada. His works provide valuable insight into first century Judaism and the background of Early Christianity.

Summary:

1. No contradictions.
2. Written by a prophet or someone with divine authority.
3. Originated through inspiration from God.
4. Accepted by the Jews as authoritative.

The order of the OT books differs in the Hebrew Bible (Prophets before poetry), Septuagint (Major prophets at the end), Vulgate (same as English), and the English version.

Jewish tradition holds to the voice of God ceasing following the time of Malachi (Wegner, 106).

OT Canon was likely completed by 300 B.C.

Jesus stated that it was formed and authoritative in Matthew 5:17-18.

The Christian church recognized and used this same canon (Romans 1:2).

B. New Testament

- Early Church Fathers - Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr were already quoting from many of the New Testament books.
- Irenaeus identifies a large number of the books.
- Several books were under consideration - Didache, Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas, and 1 Clement.
- Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius added to the discussion.
- Athanasius (296-373 A.D.) bishop of Alexandria, was the first to include all 27 books in the New Testament.
- Synod of Laodicea (363 A.D.), the Council of Hippo (393 A.D.), and the Synod of Carthage (397 A.D.) agreed to the same 27.

The Christian church did not canonize any book. Canonization was determined by God and recognized by the church. (Wegner, 146)

Bible Basics

Unifying Theme: God displays his glory through the progressive revelation of His character and redemptive plan.

Why would He need to do this progressively?

How has He revealed His character?

What has He taught us about Himself through His redemptive plan?

66 books - 39 / 27 - Isaiah

A. Old Testament - The Messiah is Coming!

39 Books of the Old Testament

17 Historical Narrative: 5 Torah + 12 Additional (Josh-Esther)

5 Poetic Literature

17 Prophetic Literature: 5 Major (Isaiah-Daniel) + 12 Minor Prophets (Hosea-Malachi)

TORAH – 5 Books (Genesis - Deuteronomy)		
Creation	Patriarchs	Exodus
Creation	Covenant	Deliverance
Fall	Growth	Law
Flood	Famine	Land
Tower		Wanderings
<i>Adam, Noah</i>	<i>Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph</i>	<i>Moses</i>

General History - 12 (Joshua - Esther)

Historical narratives – God reveals his nature and redemptive plan over time through people and events. God displays his power, wisdom, and immanence throughout. The nature and tendency of man is also recorded. Regardless of God's patience and kindness, man continually drifts into rebellion and idolatry. Every generation and stage of history points to the need for a Savior!

Conquest	Judges	Kings	Division	Exile	Return
Jordan	7 Cycles <i>Samson</i>	Rebellion	Israel	Destruction <i>Daniel</i>	Rebuild
Jericho		Renewal	Judah		Walls
<i>Joshua</i>		<i>Saul, David</i>	<i>Elijah</i>		<i>Ezra, Nehemiah</i>

Poetic Literature - 5 (Job - Song of Solomon)

We are given a picture and sample of the peoples' hearts as they experience an ebb and flow in their commitment to God. They explore the emotions and struggles of a faithless people serving a faithful God through blessing, rebellion, judgment, and renewal. The whole human experience is on display in poems and songs of lament, despair, joy, praise, and pleas for blessings and vengeance.

Prophetic Literature - 17 (Isaiah - Malachi)

The prophets function as covenant enforcers. They forth-tell (warnings and calls to repentance) and foretell (coming destruction and future renewal). God faithfully communicates, through his prophets, to his wayward covenant people.

Period of Silence

400 years go by without a prophetic voice or word from God. Israel ends the Old Testament in a dark place, distant from God, wondering when and if He will ever speak again.

Man's heart has been shown to wander in times of blessing and in times of judgment. God has shown his patience, discipline, and faithfulness to His people. No solution has been made to soften man's hard heart, to curb his rebellion, or to forgive his sin. Like their 400 years spent in slavery in Egypt, the people of God stand in desperation waiting for a Messiah.

It is in this darkest moment that Jesus the Messiah comes!

B. New Testament - The Messiah Has Come!

27 Books of the New Testament

4 Gospels - Recording the life, work, death, and resurrection of Christ - Jesus & Disciples

1 Acts - The start and growth of the church - Apostles, Paul and All Nations

10 Pauline epistles - The ordering, spiritual growth, and expansion of the church through the ministry of Paul and his co-laborers - Gospel & Practice

3 Pastoral epistles - Written by Paul to young pastors establishing churches - Polity & Offices

8 General epistles - Diverse authors writing to particular believers in various circumstances - Persecution & Faith.

1 Revelation - Apocalyptic - discussing the end of the age - The Coming Christ, Judgment & Restoration

Session 2: Inerrant, Authoritative, and Basic Interpretation Principles

Inerrant and True

"Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures, in their **original autographs** and **properly interpreted**, will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with social, physical or life sciences" (Feinberg, Chicago Statement on Biblical inerrancy).

original autographs –

Refers to the original documents written by the biblical authors themselves.

We have no original autographs. So, what are we holding in our hands if it is not the original?

- We must recognize God's hand in the process.
- Transmission was often sacred and central to God's people.
- Canonization was done with great care and diligence.
- Variations are known, considered, and clarified.
- You are holding a miraculous book—God-breathed, representing and teaching the person and work of God Almighty through the centuries.

Must I know Hebrew or Greek to really know the Bible?

What is the difference between our present-day translations?

Which one should I read?

Are commentaries helpful?

A. Properly interpreted

Our first core class was *How to Study Your Bible*. Interpretation is not an easy subject.

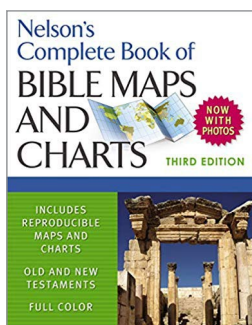


Without proper interpretation, the Bible will be misunderstood, misapplied, and even misused for personal gain. there is no authority, only the potential for non-biblical application, plays for power, and possible abuse. There are many historical and present-day examples.

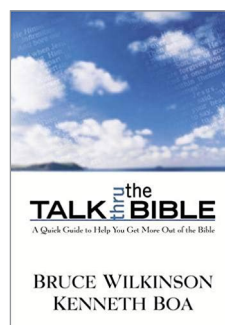
When understood and interpreted properly, the Bible is our ultimate authority.

The first step in interpreting Scripture is ***not*** to ask, "What does this mean to me?" The first questions that must be asked are:

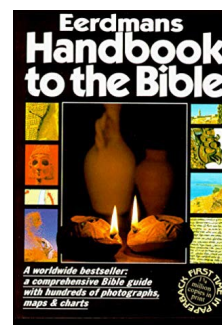
- What did the author intend to say? What is his point?
 - >You should know the author.
 - >You should know his stated or implied purpose.
 - >You should know his personal situation and context.
- How would the audience of that day understand this point?
 - >What is the situation of the recipients?
 - >Is there an issue, struggle, or misunderstanding taking place?
 - >What is their relationship with the author?
- Helpful tools



Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts



Talk Thru the Bible
Wilkinson & Boa



Eerdmans' Handbook to the Bible
and most other study Bibles

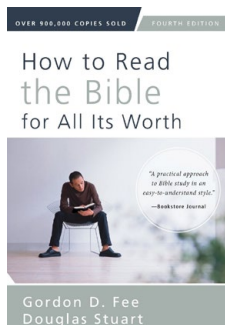
B. Genre

Each book of the Bible is written in a particular literary genre that carries rules and interpretive expectations.

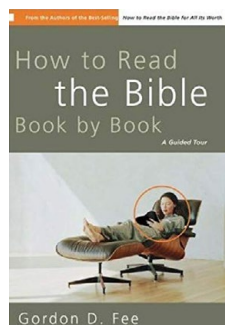
genre –

A class or category of artistic endeavor having a particular form, content, technique, or the like. Genus, kind, sort, style.

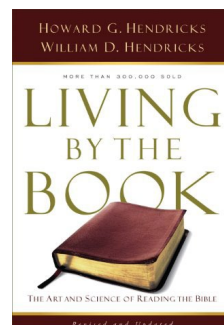
- A text can never mean what was never originally meant.
- Biblical principles can be formed when there are present day comparables to the Biblical text and situation.
- Words have meaning in sentences, sentences in paragraphs, and paragraphs in sections. Verses should not be taken out of their context. They are best understood in their historical context, genre, and literary context.
- Helpful tools



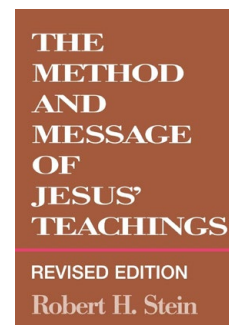
How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth
Fee & Stuart



How to Read the Bible Book by Book
Fee & Stuart



Living by the Book
Hendricks



The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings, Stein
and any other solid commentary

Things to Remember

- The Bible itself has interesting uses of interpretation. Several things should be acknowledged and understood.
- The Bible uses ordinary, not technical speech.
- Loose quotations: OT was paraphrased, summarized, and alluded to in the NT (Heb 3:2 alludes to Num. 12:7).
- Translations of Jesus' sayings: He spoke in Aramaic and was recorded in Greek.

- Different ordering of events: Regarding the chronology of Christ, some are time-oriented others are topic-oriented.
- The NT was often quoted from the Septuagint, not the Hebrew.
- Divergent, parallel accounts: Four perspectives with four intents, audiences, and goals (Example: a car accident observed and recorded by four people standing at four different locations).
- Apparent errors: 60 possible known, usually a result of lack of knowledge, but often understood in light of other passages.
- "Infallible" and "inerrant" no longer mean the same thing.

Authoritative

Jesus proclaims the written word as God's Word (Matthew 5:17-19)

- Matthew 19:3-6 – Adam and Eve
- Matthew 24:36-39 – Flood
- John 5:45-47 – Authorship of Moses
- Matthew 12:40 – Jonah and the fish

Statements from NT authors

- 2 Timothy 3:16
- Hebrews 4:12
- 1 Corinthians 14:37
- 2 Thessalonians 3:14

If the Bible comes from God then it holds His authority. What about God talking directly to me?

Shouldn't I rely upon an internal sense of right and wrong?

How is it possible that the Bible has been used to abuse and enslave people?

Proper Response

We live under this authority. What if we don't like what it says or what it tells us to do?

What if God's Word disagrees with cultural norms or standards? When do we adopt, challenge, or confront culture? (Why aren't we all Amish?)

We devote ourselves to knowing the Word. How do we improve this commitment?

What do we learn from Ezra 7:10?

How should this affect our prayer life?

We yield our desires for His desires as His desires become our desires. God has called us to purity in actions and intent. What if our motivations or intentions do not match our actions? Should we obey even if we know we don't want to (possible wrong intentions)?

Does the OT have authority over the NT believer? In what way "yes" and in what way "no?"

What happens when we expect people to live under OT standards that are not repeated or required in the NT?

What do these verses teach us about the relationship between our outward actions and our inward intentions?

- Isaiah 29:13 -
- Amos 5:21-24 -
- Revelation 2:2-5 -

What does God think of worship with a non-worshipping heart?

What does He think about obedience that does not include helping the weak?

Session 3: Sufficiency, Spiritual Growth, Negotiating Gray Areas, and Developing a Plan of Action

Sufficiency

sufficiency –

"The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contains all the words of God that he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly" (Grudem, 127) (2 Tim. 3:17).

But what about... A broken bone? A broken relationship?
Math homework? A hormonal imbalance?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 -

2 Peter 1:4 -

2 Peter 3:14-18 -

What is the balance between God's special revelation and His general revelation?

No Final Conflict

The relationship between God's Word and God's World should be complementary in every way. To see inconsistency with Scripture is to recognize misinterpretation or insufficient data of God's World.

Cautions

- *Be careful to not let the secular sciences rob us of biblical language, biblical answers, biblical primacy, biblical relationships, and biblical categories.*
- *The answer to sin is not "self-help."*
- *The answer to sin is never to ease our guilt, shame or fear. We can't fix our situation or hide from it (like Adam did in the garden). We must run to Jesus! Only the cross deals with our greatest needs. We live a life of repentance and faith for spiritual growth.*
- *With the primacy of Scripture in mind, the secular study of people can give us examples of how God works, human tendencies, some cause-and-effect relationships, and some physiological-psychological connections of living with broken bodies in a broken world of suffering.*
- *Recognize the worth of advising people who suffer from mental and bodily illnesses to go see a doctor.*
- *Even with the intercession of a doctor, pursue a biblical understanding of an individual's heart with compassion, and perspective for spiritual growth, health, and renewal.*



Spiritual Growth (and the Centrality of Scripture)

God uses **His Word**, **His Spirit**, and **His people** to grow the believer.

Hebrews 4:12 - How does the Word function in the life of the believer?

John 14:15, 21, 23 - How do we connect love and obedience? How is the Word a part of this process?

How does knowing God's Word increase our love for the Lord?

Titus 2:12-14 - How do we connect grace and obedience? How is the Word connected to this process?

How do we learn about the grace of God?

Romans 2:4 - How do we connect God's character to a life of repentance, faith, and obedience?

How do we learn about the character of God? How does the Old Testament contribute to our understanding?

The Spirit and the Word

John 16:13 - **The Spirit** is called the "Spirit of Truth." He will never lead a believer in a way that contradicts the written Word. In fact, He will support the Word by illuminating the believer and convicting their heart to believe and obey.

"Of course, the **doctrine of illumination** does not mean that believers can unlock every theological secret (Deuteronomy 29:29), or that we do not need godly teachers (Ephesians 4:11-12). It also does not preclude us from disciplining ourselves for the purpose of godliness (1 Timothy 4:8) or from doing the hard work of careful Bible study (2 Timothy 2:15). Yet we can approach our study of God's Word with joy and eagerness—knowing that as we investigate the Scriptures with prayerfulness and diligence, the Holy Spirit will illuminate our hearts to comprehend, embrace, and apply the truths we are studying" (MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 226).

illumination –

A belief whereby the Holy Spirit helps the believer understand and apply God's Word.

How does this understanding of the Holy Spirit impact our prayer life as we study the Word?

The Christian Community and the Word

The people of God encourage (Hebrews 3:13), spur one another on (Hebrews 10:22-24), comfort one another (2 Corinthians 1:3-4), and speak and sing God's Word (Eph. 5:19). What happens when the people of God center their words and encouragement around something other than the Word?

How can we (you) make God's Word central in our church community? In your circle of friends?

Can you think of an example of when someone used God's Word to comfort or encourage you?

What would be the benefit to memorizing Scripture?

How does Scripture prepare us (as individuals and as a community) for **suffering**? When should we have conversations about suffering?

Gray Areas: The Cliff

(How do we live in unity while honoring Christian freedom?)

- The edge
- Negotiating personal moral decisions
- Understanding influences
- Recognizing view of God
- Romans 14 - who is mature, judging, and stumbling
- Realizing the second edge of the cliff
- Non-negotiable commitments - Unity & Peace / Community / Humility

Developing a Plan of Action

Scripture is not learned by accident. Typically, a plan needs to be put in place. Progress needs to be measured and it helps to have accountability.

What is your next step?

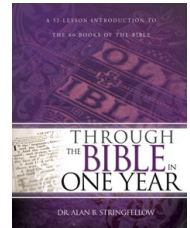
Overview of Bible Study Methods

Simply reading through the Bible. There are several options:

1. *Through the Bible in One Year*

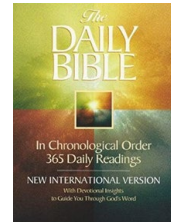
This is fast paced and you'll get overrun quickly if you miss a couple days.

The Bible must be viewed as a single book. The knowledge found in each book is intimately integrated with the truths found in the other books. Having a strong overall knowledge of the Bible gives one the ability to study a single book more in-depth with accuracy and correct understanding.



2. *A Chronological Reading of the Bible*

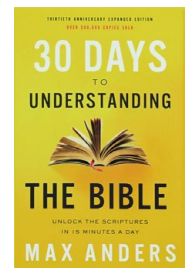
Harvest House puts out *The Daily Bible, In Chronological Order 365 Daily Readings*. This would be an excellent tool to combine a chronological approach along with a one year plan or read it at any pace you wish.



3. *30 Days to Understanding the Bible* by Max Anders

A great tool to give us a quick, broad, and helpful understanding of the Bible as a whole.

Thoughtfully reading means that we slow down and make sure we have a basic understanding of the meaning of the text. There are several ways to proceed:



Color-Coding

Read through the Bible with your colored pens and underline, bracket, and take notes as you go. A single column Bible with large margins (with thick pages) is usually the easiest to use. You can read books in any order you like. Nothing below is inspired, figure out what works best for you and change anything that helps you learn and grow. I have note cards printed out with the below information in my Bible as a bookmark.

COLOR-CODING YOUR OLD TESTAMENT

NOTES IN BLUE	Comments • Teaching / Counseling Notes • Application (HERMENEUTICS)
BLUE CIRCLE	Around the verse numbers you want to memorize
UNDERLINE IN GREEN	What I learn about God
BRACKETS IN GREEN	Covenants • Covenant blessings
UNDERLINE IN PURPLE	Context • Historical Markers • People (EXEGESIS)
NOTES IN PURPLE	Outline • Structure • Historical Flow
UNDERLINE IN RED	Doctrine
UNDERLINE IN BLACK	Sin • Idolatry • Wickedness
PENCIL	Questions about the text

COLOR-CODING YOUR NEW TESTAMENT

NOTES IN BLUE	Comments • Teaching / Counseling Notes • Application (HERMENEUTICS)
BLUE CIRCLE	Around the verse numbers you want to memorize
UNDERLINE IN GREEN	What I learn about God
BRACKETS IN GREEN	God's promises
UNDERLINE IN PURPLE	Context • Historical Markers • People (EXEGESIS)
NOTES IN PURPLE	Outline • Structure • Historical Flow
UNDERLINE IN RED	Doctrine
NOTES IN RED	Notes on doctrines in the margins
UNDERLINE IN BLACK	Things we learn about the Church and its ministry
NOTES IN BLACK	Ministry (EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, SERVICE...)
PENCIL	Questions about the text

Single-Page Overviews

Take a sheet of paper and divide it into 4-6 sections (I often use a legal pad). Label each section as shown. Don't fill up more than the portion of paper given to each subject. This method will provide you with *brief* overviews and will also give you a resource to refer to in order to quickly refresh your memory.

It may be helpful to add a second page to write down application points.

These summaries will be incredibly helpful for you in the future. They can be used as a resource for teaching, reminders, or deeper study.

Go deeper by completing a summary page for each chapter of a book after the book summary is finished.

Always walk away with a **nugget** to hold on to, process, or memorize to help you meditate on God throughout the day and be reminded of His presence, character, and love.

<p><u>GOSPEL</u></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Brief Outline</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Descriptions of Jesus</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Key Verses</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"> <u>Parables</u> <u>Miracles</u> </td> </tr> </table>	<u>Brief Outline</u>	<u>Descriptions of Jesus</u>	<u>Key Verses</u>	<u>Parables</u> <u>Miracles</u>	<p><u>EPISTLE</u></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Brief Outline</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Context (author & historic context)</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Key Verses</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Doctrines</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Overall Theme</u></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Brief Outline</u>	<u>Context (author & historic context)</u>	<u>Key Verses</u>	<u>Doctrines</u>	<u>Overall Theme</u>			
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<p><u>GENESIS</u></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Brief Outline</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Main Characters</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Key Verses</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Descriptions of God</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Overall Theme</u></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Brief Outline</u>	<u>Main Characters</u>	<u>Key Verses</u>	<u>Descriptions of God</u>	<u>Overall Theme</u>		<p><u>PSALM</u></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Brief Outline</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Descriptions of God</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Descriptions of Man</u></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Key Verses</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;"><u>Overall Theme</u></td> </tr> </table>	<u>Brief Outline</u>	<u>Descriptions of God</u>	<u>Descriptions of Man</u>	<u>Key Verses</u>		<u>Overall Theme</u>
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Recommended Resources

- » *Any good study Bible*
- » *A Bible dictionary, such as **The New Unger's Bible Dictionary**. Merrill F. Unger*
- » **How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth** by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart
- » **Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts**, 3rd ed. by Thomas Nelson
- » *A Bible handbook, such as **The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible** by Gordon D. Fee; or **Holman Illustrated Bible Handbook** by B&H Editorial Staff*

Advanced Overview of the Bible Study Methods

A. A Book-a-Month Club

Pick a book of the Bible each month and analyze it systematically:

Week 1:

Overview—let it wash over you

- Read it several times.
- Figure out the context (author, recipients, historical situation)
- Jot down the main points or events covered in a particular chapter or group of chapters.
- Note what the text teaches about God, Jesus or the Spirit.
- Note References to time, repetitions, lists, contrasts, etc...
- It might be very helpful to write in your Bible

Week 2:

Synthesize and organize what you are learning

- Create a book chart (similar to one page overview)
- Include themes & outline, info. on author, chronological placement, setting, purpose, major characters, key verses, major doctrines, recipients

Weeks 3 & 4:

Respond—time to apply what you are learning

- Continue to read through the book
- Spend a lot of time in reflection
- In a notebook, journal, or on a computer write down personal application from the book
- Possibly do a more in-depth study on a particular paragraph, chapter, or subject of interest.
- Do a final summary of the purpose and flow of the book. You should be able to verbally communicate this to someone else if they ask you what the book is about.

In 5 years, you will have studied every book in the Bible.

It is always helpful to take on this method with one or more friends.

Varying back and forth through the different genres of books may keep this study fresh.

B. Surveys

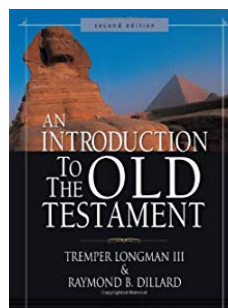
Pick up a good OT & NT survey and work through them as you read through each book of the Bible. Place relevant notes into your text to help you better understand the setting, context, and meaning of the text.

- Surveys will give you a more in-depth look at context and historical setting.
- OT as the author teaches how each prophetic and poetic book fits into the history of Israel found in the first 14 books of the OT.
- New Testament surveys will also help readers understand how the epistles fit into the historical context of Acts.

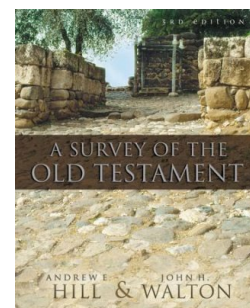
Quality Surveys

C. Use Your Color-Coded Bible

- If you did color-code your Bible, you can use it to study all of your verses in green, particular doctrines in red, or whatever color or topic.
- You can put them in a notebook or on a computer and write out your observations from each verse.
- You can then sum up your conclusions you found on a particular doctrine or topic.
- Create studies that will increase your understanding and ability to communicate what you have learned to others.



An Introduction to the Old Testament
Dillard and Longman

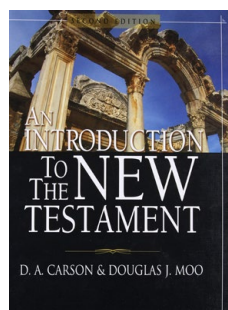


A Survey of the Old Testament
Hill and Walton

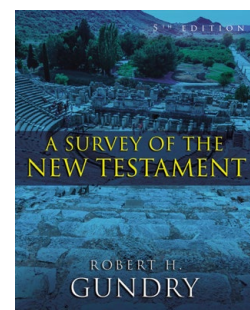
D. Add a Systematic Theology to read while compiling verses on particular doctrines.

Quality Systematics

- Dispensational – Thiessen, Ryrie
- Baptist – Erickson, Allison (*50 Core Doctrines*)
- Conservative Evangelical – Grudem, Hodge
- Standard Reformed – Berkof, Reymond
- Historical Theology – Allison, Olson



An Introduction to the New Testament
Carson and Moo



A Survey of the New Testament
Gundry

Theology is for everyone, it is the study of God himself and his redemptive plan for man.

It gives you a mental grid which will help protect you from false teaching.

Disorganized theology can lead to misinterpretation, while systematic theology leads to correct understanding.

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Ryrie, Charles. *Basic Theology*. Colorado Springs: CO, 1986.

Wegner, Paul. *The Journey from Texts to Translations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000.

2019 Core Class Schedule

GOD ALMIGHTY

- Mar 14 Knowability, Nature
- Mar 21 Incommunicable Attributes
- Mar 28 Communicable Attributes

GOD'S CREATION 1-DAY, CORE CLASS INTENSIVE

- Apr 5 Angels, Demons, The World, Man (Dignity and Depravity)

JESUS, THE MESSIAH

- Apr 25 The Person of Christ
- May 2 The Offices of Christ
- May 9 The Work of Christ
- May 16 The Work and Glory of Christ

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

- Sept 5 The Person of the Holy Spirit
- Sept 12 The Work and Gifts of the Spirit
- Sept 19 Nature, Purpose, and Marks of The Church
- Sept 26 Discipline, Offices, Sacraments

SALVATION

- Oct 17 Redemptive Old Testament Historical Narrative, Prophecy
- Oct 24 The Work of the Cross
- Oct 31 Applications of the Cross
- Nov 7 Life at the Foot of the Cross

THE END TIMES 1-DAY, CORE CLASS INTENSIVE

- Nov 15 Personal Eschatology – Death, Intermediate State
Cosmic Eschatology – Return of Christ, Resurrection, Judgment,
New Creation



BIBLE CENTER
CHURCH

Glorifying God by producing more maturing followers of Jesus