

Agape Chapel Ministries Discipleship Study

From the Sermon Notes of Pastor Nick Bibile.

Edited and modified, *with additional text*, and formatted for inter-active Bible-study.

How to Read the Bible.

By Nick Bibile



Read 2 Timothy 3:15



What does this verse mean?

In the original language, it means to “cut straight” the word of truth. It means to know the difference between the true Word of God, and the false teachings that we see; to know truth from error. We must be diligent in studying God’s Word so that we can answer any false claims against it and against our faith. We must be able to spot errors in doctrine which could damn someone to hell, so we can correct the error and a soul may be saved. Also, we do not want to stand before God having no excuse for why we did not study His Word!

Today we can see the state of the church, and it is a pathetic picture as the church has gone astray from believing sound doctrine. In reality, there seems to be no difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism anymore. They all seem to agree in major doctrines and the gospel appears to be a common gospel for everyone. However, if we look at History, we see that the reformers brought the purity of the only true gospel back to the church, as there is only one gospel. Even if an angel comes and gives another gospel, according to the book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul says let a divine curse fall upon that person!

The gospel cannot be compromised. Today people just believe whatever comes from the pulpit. Just because there are people falling all over the place or someone has a lot of credentials as a teacher or a pastor, it does not mean anything to the Lord if the Word of God is compromised. We need to cut the true line and separate the truth from error. Today there is no longer any personal Bible reading and Bible studies on the part of the church members, as the people who come to church depend on the pastors’ sermon for the entire week.

Almost all Christians have a Bible at home. Some of your Bibles look neatly bound and have beautiful covers, do not look worn out, but still look new. And, some of you keep the Bible in a safe place at home and only on Sundays you open the Bible. There is no reading the precious Word of God, no searching the scriptures and studying! And then, circumstances arise when you go through a

trial or some hardship, you easily get paranoid, emotionally hurt, and get angry as you cannot find the scriptures for your comfort.

People are not reading their Bibles as they come only on Sunday mornings to hear the word of God.

But, some do read the Bible, and still they live worldly lives, there is no sanctification, holiness, or Christ-like behavior.



Examine your own heart here. Which category below do you think you fall into?

- **Many read the Bible as a tradition.** “I did my part to God by reading and praying, and now I am free for the rest of the day to do my own business,” they say. God is not looking for a sacrifice, He is looking for obedience. If you have read the Bible and did not understand what it meant, in short, you just wasted your time. It becomes a superstition. We condemn the early Roman Catholic Church as the priest read the Bible to the people in Latin language and the people were kept in darkness. It was more like a superstition and a sacrifice.
- **Some read the Bible as an accomplishment.** “I have read the whole Bible; I have done something that people do not do,” they say. It is an experience; a past event and it is history. “I have done it in my life.”
- **Some** not only read the Bible but **study it and get puffed up** from what they have learned as it breeds pride for their own destruction.
- **Some study, as they have to teach others.** “I am studying, because I have to teach a Bible study,” they say. It becomes a work and not a joy. They teach others what to do and they do not do it themselves. It leaves a bad example, as they do not become sanctified before the Lord.
- **Some read the Bible to critique God and Christianity,** with a critical eye to find faults.
- **Some read only their favorite parts of the Bible.** Some like only the end times like the rapture, the anti-Christ, and some like only the parts on election. Their body grows only in one part, and it looks abnormal. We need to grow in all aspects knowing the whole council of God.

READING THE BIBLE WITH UNDERSTANDING.

It is the same with the person who reads the Bible daily and does not understand. It is like a bird flying over the land and not finding a resting place or a nest. For example, there is such a thing as praying in prayer - praying from

your most interior part; not only praying from the mouth but from the soul. Likewise in praising with song that is inward, intense devotion, and also in fasting that is inward fasting in your heart. The same goes with reading the Word, not as a mechanical type of reading which does not profit anything, but interior heart and soul reading. We must pray when we study God's Word, that he may open our eyes to know the truth of it.

Reading with clarity



Read Nehemiah 8:8.

Read Matthew 12:3-5; 19:4; 21:16; 21:42; 22:31

“Have you not read?” Jesus is speaking to the Scribes and the Pharisees. The Scribes and the Pharisees studied the Word of God daily. They even knew how many times a certain word was written, and where. They were the intense readers of the Word. They were prideful of their knowledge in the Word as they were the masters in it. Our Lord met them on their own court, their own camp as he said to them, “Have you not read”? He is basically saying, in effect: Your eyes have gone over the letters and counted the letters, you know the position of each letter but you have not read because you did not understand.

It is good to read a lot of books of great Biblical authors, but the best food is the word of God. The truth is sweetest where it breaks from the smitten Rock. Most people drink their water most of the time from the tank, always depending on the sermons of the pastor and reading Biblical books, but not finding the truth for themselves. It is always best to drink from the well.



Read Psalm 36:9; and Psalm 119:16.

Make a serious effort to understand what you are reading. Take the time to not just skim over it, but rather, think about what you are reading and pray also. Our faith is also an intelligent faith, not an ignorant or superstitious faith. We need to know what we believe.

Illumination of the mind.

How can you love God if you do not have knowledge of God? We can kiss the Bible and will have no love devotions to the contents of the Bible. We can reverence the letters in the Bible and will not have true devotion to the Lord. When you read the Bible, your motive is to know God, to come closer to him, and to become like our Lord Jesus. The high priest in the Old Testament before he put the incense upon the brazen altar, he always lit the candlestick first. It shows that the mind should be lighted before we can worship the Lord. We need to have knowledge of God before we can love him, and worship him.



Read Colossians 1:9-11 (Filled with knowledge of God's will)

Awakening the mind.



Read Exodus 3:5

The Lord spoke to Moses from the burning bush and said, "Take off your sandals, for the place you are standing is holy ground." Moses had passed this way many times always wearing his sandals, and now when the Lord appeared it became sacred ground. In the same way, like Moses, we come from our work or from the store or another activity in the world. We cannot immediately study the Bible to see the heavenly mysteries. We need to understand that in the Bible is the Lord and we need, like Moses took off his sandals, to take our worldly thoughts away as we are entering into heavenly thoughts. Just like the priest in the Old Testament washed his feet before he did his holy work in the temple, we need to wash our mind, and our eyes, with prayer before we enter into his holy word. We are reading his holy word and we need to do it in a holy fashion, as we are not reading just another newspaper, magazine, or even fine poetry. This is our spiritual meal. We need to pray before we partake our spiritual meal so we can fully enjoy the contents and give glory to God.

Meditation.



What does meditation mean? Does it mean sitting in the 'Lotus' position and contemplating nothing? Does it involve chanting or anything like that?

No. It means prayerfully thinking deeply about what you are studying to try to understand it.

There are passages in the Bible which are easy to understand, like sheep eating grass in a flat field. But sometimes there are deep valleys we have to go through in some passages, and these scriptures are difficult to understand. God put them there purposely so we will labor, pray, and meditate to understand. When we come to these difficult scriptures we have to think. Our heavenly Father educates us for heaven. There is no easy short cut to understand these difficult scriptures. We need to labor, and meditate. There is the pain, of devoting our selves and our time, involved in understanding some of the difficult scriptures. Grapes cannot yield wine until we press them with our feet to get the juice out. The olives must be put under a wheel and pressed again and again to get the oil out. Sometimes when you open the shell of a peanut or a cashew nut, we see the nut has been eaten by a worm. This worm has made a hole with all his strength to get into the nut. Then he lives inside the shell slowly eating the nut. In the same way we need to labor to get into the Word of God and live in it to understand the deep truths of the Word. And the Word of God is always most precious when we live upon it. We need to labor to understand these truths; which means we need to get down to our knees and cry out before God for direction. We must ask the author of the book for understanding. Call upon the

author himself; call upon the Holy Spirit to unlock the secret mysteries. Once you understand, oh how sweet it can be to your soul.



Read Psalm 119:25-28

Read 1 Corinthians 2:10–11.

Historical accounts In the Bible.



Read Matthew 12:1-4, and look at verses 3-4.

This was a historical event. If they read it carefully they would understand. But many of us, when it comes to history in the Bible, we give less priority. Beloved there are greater depths of spirituality in the historical parts of the Bible and it becomes more precious to your soul. The historical teachings really bring the Word home to your soul. For example the Lord went to history for us to understand the meaning of the brazen serpent.



□ What about reading Exodus, Leviticus Numbers?

These books have become very boring to some of us. All you find is the wilderness, the tabernacle, the furniture, bowls, boards, sockets, doors, knobs, scarlet, linen, precious stones, candlesticks, etc., Why did God put them in the Bible? Look for the inner meaning, do a thorough search. The best treasure is found in the most closely locked up place. Do a thorough search and unlock the meaning of these words and you will be blessed.



Read Proverbs 2:1-6

Jesus is the Word.

Read John 5:39.

From Genesis to Revelation the center is Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath. He is the proof the Bible. From every little town in California there is a road to Los Angeles. You who are in the island of Cebu, Philippines, from every little village in the island of Cebu there is a road to the city of Cebu. In the same way from every page and text in the Bible there is a road to Jesus Christ. Remember He is called 'the Word'. And His word is called life.



Read John 6:63

Read1 John 1:1-3

Here we see how John's purpose is that we may have true fellowship with the Father and Jesus Christ. For us to have true fellowship with the Father we need to know the Son. We need see him in every page of the Bible. We need to know him personally, by looking upon Him with our eyes, seeing Him in the scripture, and then He will be revealed to us, He becomes part of our life. Reading the Bible will make you become like Him. We will love Him and adore Him, as John said, we have seen with our eyes and our hands have handled concerning the Word of life. The Lord be with you.



Discussion

- How important is the Bible?
- Can there be such a thing as a Christian without the Bible?
- Do we get our beliefs from any other books?
- Is it o.k. to simply “read” the Bible quickly?
- It *is* good to read through the Bible, to get an over-view of it, but what about in-depth study?
- How should you approach the Bible, the holy Word of God?
- Is it necessary to pray when you study?
- In light of the fact that we are to study God's Word, is our faith an intelligent faith, or a “blind” faith?
- What will you do this week and every week to study the Bible?

Use a concordance and find some scriptures which encourage the study of God's Word.