

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP  
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

**Study Series: Keys to Understanding the Bible (Acts 8:30-31)**  
**Lesson 2 – How to Study the Bible**

**Wednesday, September 13, 2023**  
**Facilitator: Pastor Jide Lawore**

**About the Bible:** The word Bible comes from a Greek word, *biblia* which is plural and means "little books" or "booklets." The Bible contains 66 books broken down into two broad sections: The Old Testament (39 books) and The New Testament (27 books). Each of them can also be broken down into smaller sections based on genres or "ages". To become a good bible student, it is important to understand the layout of the Bible.

**Why should we study the Bible?**

The Bible was written for us to study and without studying the Bible, it is of no benefit to us. The Bible is the primary way God has revealed Himself (His thoughts, ways) to us. The study of the Bible is called Theology.

*Romans 15:4 "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**What is Theology?**

Theology is a widely used term. In the Christian context, it is to understand the God revealed in the Bible. So, the study of God is a study of God's revelation of Himself. Theology is essentially a study of scripture. Theology comes from combining two Greek words: Theos, meaning God, and Logos, meaning word or rational thought. So, theology is God-thought or rational reasoning about God. It is the human effort to understand the God of the scriptures. In general, there are four types of theology.

1. **Biblical Theology:** Biblical theology focuses on the teachings of the individual authors and books of the Bible and places each teaching in the Scriptures' historical development. It is a presentation of the Old and New Testament writers' theological teachings within their historical setting.
2. **Systematic Theology:** Systematic theology focuses on collecting and summarizing the teaching of all the biblical passages on a particular topic. The Systematic theologian may ask, "What does the entire Bible teach us today about heaven?" Systematic theology attempts to summarize the whole Bible's teaching on a particular subject with a concise statement or definition. It aims to develop a logically coherent and rationally defensible system of biblical teachings on theological topics such as the Trinity, the Church's doctrine, or spiritual gifts.
3. **Historical Theology:** As the name suggests, this is the study of how Christian theology has changed over time. How has it interacted, shaped and been influenced by historical events across the world. After all, Christianity has shaped a great deal of human civilization's recent history.
4. **Practical Theology:** How is Christian theology put into action? How does it engage with culture and society? Practical theology involves the theological examination of the practices of the church in its worship, pastoral ministry, fellowship, outreach, Christian education, and counseling.

**Bible Study Approach**

How does an individual approach the Bible? How does anyone start their study of the Bible to get something out of it. There are different study approaches, but we will look at three main ones:

**1. Book Study:** Book study is a form of biblical theology. This is probably the most beneficial and rewarding bible study approach. It is the only foundation upon which all other methods must be built on. It is simply selecting a book of the Bible and reading through it repeatedly to understand the central message.

- Read about the background of the book, author, audience, period, historical context etc.
- Read through the book chapter by chapter with the historical background in mind and underline keywords and phrases that jump at you.
- Identify the spiritual truths or principles in each chapter that are applicable to your life.
- Write down how you will act on the lessons learned in this passage.
- As you work through the book of the Bible, create an outline.

**2. Topical Study:** When you want to know what the Bible says about a certain topic, use a concordance to search what the Bible says about it. For example, when you look up the word courage in your concordance, you'll find several references.

- Select a topic and look it up in a concordance or simply use google search.
- Choose 10-20 verses on the subject and read the verses.
- Write down your observations.
- Identify how you can apply something you've read to your own life and also share it with others.

Topical study of the Bible can present risks. It is important to know those risks to avoid them.

- It can lead to a broad but shallow understanding of aspects of a topic.
- Including passages that prove your point when your understanding is not correct (finding our own blind spots and biases is challenging).
- Taking one or more passages out of context (this is huge and happens too easily and too often).

**3. Biographical or Character Study:** For this method, select a person from the Bible to study. Look at their strengths and weaknesses and consider what could be applicable to your own life. What about them encourages you? Inspires you? A few potential characters to study include Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Ruth, Rahab, Jesus, Mary, Elizabeth, and Paul. Here are the basic steps.

- Select a character. Read the passages of their story and create a timeline.
- Note their background, key events, relationships, and the challenges they faced.
- Identify their strengths and weaknesses. Try to imagine what it might have been like to be in their shoes.
- What Biblical truths do you discover while researching this person's life?
- Write out a personal application for your own life.

## What are Bible Study Methods?

It is simply a procedure or system that you can use in your daily devotion time with God to study and understand the Bible. There are dozens of Bible study methods out there which seek to help an individual get the most out of their study of the Bible regardless of the approach you use. Let's look at two examples.

**1. The Inductive Bible Study Method:** The Inductive Bible study Method consists of three main Bible study techniques: observation, interpretation, and application.

- **Observation:** The inductive Bible study method is not merely reading the Bible once and then putting it down. It requires careful observation of the passage by asking questions like, who wrote this book of the Bible? Who was it originally written for? Where did they live? What message was intended for those readers? When studying the Bible, we can write down our observations of what we notice in a notebook.
- **Interpretation:** After you have studied a Bible passage by writing down your observations, the next step in the inductive Bible study method is interpretation. Interpretation is just a fancy word for understanding. In this step we can ask questions like, what does this passage mean? What was the author trying to communicate through the Holy Spirit's leading? Our interpretation of the Bible is very important, because we want to use what we have observed in the passage to guide our interpretation.
- **Application:** Application is where we can use our understanding of the Bible and apply its meaning to our daily lives. When we seek to apply the Bible to our lives, we can ask questions like, what does this passage mean for me today? How can something that was written over 2,000 years ago truly apply to us in our current time and culture? When we carefully study Scripture in the context of the culture and time period it was written in, we can get a better understanding of what that passage means to us today.

**2. The SOAP Bible Study Method:** It uses the acronym SOAP to help us better understand the steps involved in this study process. The acronym stands for:

- The "S" stands for Scripture. – Read a short Bible passage out loud and/or write it out.
- The "O" is for observation. What do you notice about the verses? What do you think the main message is? What verses, words or ideas jump out to you?
- The "A" stands for application. Ask God how he wants you to apply the verse to your own life.
- The "P", stands for prayer. Pray for yourself and/or for others.