

Principles of *Bible* Study

By Thomas Bentley

- Section 1** | Browsing A Book
- Section 2** | Charting A Chapter
- Section 3** | Pondering A Paragraph
- Section 4** | Viewing A Verse
- Section 5** | Weighing A Word

Section 1 | **Browsing A Book**

In this lesson we are to deal with four main issues relating to our subject.

1 Reading: Set your **Eyes:**

Open Thou mine eyes (PSALM 119:18)

2 Reflection: Stir your **Mind:** Let the meditation of my heart be acceptable.

3 Recording: Use your **Hand:**

What thou seest write in a book.

4 Response: Bow your **Heart:**

Teach me to do Thy will (PSALM 143:10)

1 READING

First Reading: Read quickly at one sitting aloud, if possible, do not write. Impressions can be set down after this reading.

Second Reading: Read slowly.

Making notes on a Survey Chart.

Noting chapter contents.

Subsequent Readings: Alternatively ... using another version e.g. R.V (1881), J.N.D. etc.

***Nothing can replace reading.
There is no shortcut to Bible study,
so Read and Read.***

2 REFLECTION

Regard Repetitions: By the observance of these, proper emphasis will be recognized.

- WORDS
- PLACES
- PERSONS
- SENTENCES
- PHRASES
- ACTIONS

Determine Divisions: By Decided Chapters
By Determining Expressions
By Developed Themes

Compare Contents:

- How does the Book Begin?
- Compare Chapter Contents
- How does the Book End?
- Compare Group Chapter Contents

Trace Themes about:

- GOD
- CHRIST
- PERSONS
- HOLY SPIRIT
- PRAYER
- PLACES
- GRACE
- KNOWLEDGE

3 RECORDING

Do not trust your memory, it may be good now, but like every other part of you, it will wear out and often let you down, so use your hand with pen and paper.

Study Note-Book: Specially assigned to the Book you are studying. The use of loose-leaf paper is also useful if properly filed.

Bible Marking: Not on the Bible you use for study, as you do well to keep the page free from any interruptions that might later affect your meditations. Good wide-margin Bibles are available for this purpose.

Making notes delivers from vagueness, indefiniteness and laziness, It also initiates new lines of inquiry.

4 RESPONSE

We have to **practice** what we read and reflect upon. Each particular Book in the Bible actually contributes to our Salvation, *so let us be truly saved!*

Section 2 | Charting A Chapter

The Chapter As A Study Unit

A chapter is a unit of thought. Chapter divisions of the various books are normally followed; however, some could have been more favorably located
E.G. ISA. 52/53.

1 THE PROCESS OF ANALYSIS

Discipline yourself to tarry long over a chapter. Three questions must be kept before the mind

- A What does the passage say?**
- B What does the passage mean?**
- C How can it apply today?**

Use outside help after personal study.

2 THE PLACING OF CONTEXT

One of the most important things to remember in Bible Study is interpretation. Consider where it is placed in relationship with what follows or goes before.

3 THE PROBING OF CONTENT

- Chapters will have Determined Termini, E.G. COL. 03
- Chapters will have Developed Themes.
- Chapters will have Devotional Texts.
- Chapters will have Doctrinal Teaching.
- Chapters will have Difficult Terms.

Section 3 | Pondering A Paragraph

1 DETERMINE ITS CONTEXT

The Context will usually be the chapter in which the paragraph is placed.

Use a chart-system so as to 'lay out' the paragraph. This is called textual re-creation.

The purpose is twofold:

A To show in visual form **what** the text is saying

B To show in visual form **how** it is saying it

Remember, to make a textual re-creation, demands that we 'see' before we record.

2 DISCOVER ITS CONTENT

What is the Core of the sentence? That is, what is its

- i. Main Subject
- ii. Main Verb
- iii. Main Object

There will be

- Progression of Thought
- Reference to Time
- Repetition of Truth
- Recurrence of Terms

Is the segment Narrative? E.G. MARK

How much of it is action?

How much of it is speech?

How much of it is conversation?

Is the segment Doctrinal? E.G. COLOSSIANS

How much of it is factual?

How much of it is command?

How much of it is exhortation?

Is the segment Prophetical? E.G. DANIEL

How much of it is Past?

How much of it is Present?

How much of it is Future?

3 DETECT THE CHALLENGE

A message must be received.

Section 4 | Viewing A Verse

1 ITS SETTING

It must be re-emphasized: If we take a text out of its context it becomes a pretext.

Recognition of context hinders a private interpretation, Note some texts that have been thus misinterpreted, due to out-of-context handling.

2 ITS STRUCTURE

In other words - Grammar! Not a pleasant subject, but very necessary when we come down to verse-unit study.

Ask what is the Core of the Verse?

Ask what is the Content of the Verse?

Note previous study, that there are various types of content.

3 ITS SENSE

- WHAT IS SPOKEN OR WRITTEN?
- OF WHOM? PERSONS
- TO WHOM? RECIPIENTS
- AT WHAT TIME? TIME
- WHAT PRECEDES?
- WHERE? PLACE
- TO WHAT PURPOSE?
- WHAT FOLLOWS?

4 ITS SECRET

The verse may hold something unique to it alone, which may not become recognizable until a comparative reading is made.

5 ITS SERMONIC VALUE

Outlines should be composed by the prospective preacher, for text preaching is a very effective means of reaching souls in the Gospel, E.G. JOHN 3:16, ETC.

Section 5 | **Weighing A Word**

Two approaches appeal in this study:

1 *CONTEXT APPROACH*

In Context Approach we study a word to learn its contribution and function in the context of a verse, chapter or paragraph.

Earlier principles enunciated apply.

Exercise: Faith (ROMANS 04 AND 1 THESS. 03)

- A** What would we understand by 'faith' if these were the only two chapters in the Bible that used the word?
- B** Could any other word have conveyed the same idea in the references?
- C** How much does each chapter contribute to the word 'faith'? Find various forms of illustration and description.

2 *COMPARATIVE APPROACH*

- Record the occurrence of the word
- Use a Concordance
- Root meaning
- Use a Lexicon
- Recognize its usage
- Use a Dictionary
- Comparative Usage
- Is it found in both Testaments?
- Lines of Application

Example: Redemption

First Occurrence
O.T. Corresponding word
Association of the word

Exercise: Blood

Answer these questions in your study:

- A** What is the Key Verse in which 'blood' is found?
- B** What is the Pivot Chapter on 'blood'?
- C** What is the Corresponding Truth?
- D** What is the Practical Application?
 - 1** Where is it first mentioned?
 - 2** What is the Embodying Book?
 - 3** What are the Relative Words?

Nothing can replace reading. There is no shortcut to Bible study, so Read and Read.

Questions? Contact: