

Let us look at Step 11, Lesson 1, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 11 – Prayer – We seek through prayer and meditation to know God’s Word and grow in Christ, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.

Tonight, in Step 11 – we will begin looking at the life-long pursuit of this four-fold objective...through prayer and meditation, seeking to know God’s Word and grow in Christ *and* continue in prayer for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry that out. **We all desire the fruit of that growing, vibrant relationship with a holy, all-powerful God.**

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

We recommend a four-part process to studying your Bible:

- 1. Preparation**
- 2. Observation**
- 3. Interpretation**
- 4. Application**

- 1. Preparation –** When you take your Bible in hand to spend time growing your relationship with God you would do well to acknowledge the purity, inspiration, and power of the Scriptures you are about to encounter – more so than information from any person or any other written word.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The second need in preparation is to pray thoroughly. Confess your sin; for sin will drastically impair your ability to understand, concentrate, or commit the time necessary.

I John 3:8a, “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.”

Then request the Holy Spirit’s assistance, for the Holy Spirit teaches you truth which originates with Him.

John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

- 2. Observation –** Generally, it is best to approach God’s Word systematically. The Bible is a collection of 66 books, with over 40 authors, written over thousands of years and yet God has orchestrated an integrated message of redemption and His provision of a Savior. Picking a book of the Bible to study gives you a structure and context. Another useful approach is to study major doctrines of the Bible. When you have your text, read only the Bible, no notes, commentaries, nor summaries. **Read carefully**, sometimes gems are just under the surface. **Read thoroughly**, taking the necessary time to understand and digest every word. **Read systematically**, from beginning to end. Sometimes we get distracted by a thought provoked during the reading, but that distraction can be Satan’s strategy of getting us away from the lesson God intends to teach us that day. Finally, **read closely** because this is God’s communication to those whom He loves, including you.

Psalm 119:105, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

3. **Interpretation** – This is the most involved step in Bible study because this is where we take what we have read to find out what it says, and we research to determine what it means. Remember, the Bible was written in a different era, a different location than ours, a different culture from what we know, in a different language than what we speak, with different phrases, slang, or expressions than what we use, and was inspired by a Holy God whose perfection we cannot understand. In order to bridge these gaps, we have many tools available, in either book format, or online. It is worth investing in good commentaries, Bible encyclopedias, Bible dictionaries, Bible atlases, systematic theologies, concordances, or even Bible surveys. Your pastor is a good resource for any questions you have on a passage of Scripture, or tools to use in research. As you encounter questions, consider keeping a journal to track questions and points you do not understand – also track the answers the Holy Spirit provides along the way. One word of caution is that you will not learn everything about any given passage. That is ok. Just mine the truths you need for today. Be patient in your growth process.

2 Timothy 2:15, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

4. **Application** – Though last in the study process, this step is what separates the mature from the adolescent Christian. We can study and come to know all kinds of wonders from God’s Word, but if we do not put those truths into practice, we’ve fallen short of the goal.

James 1:22, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Every passage is beneficial in some capacity. Some good questions to ask yourself for the sake of application are: Does this passage provide an example to follow? Does it give me a command to obey? Does it point out an error to avoid? Does it expose a sin in my life that needs to be forsaken? Does it give me a promise to claim? Does it provide a new truth about God that will deepen my worship of Him? Does it reveal a principle that will provide me a better life?

Consider and Confess:

1. Are you nervous about studying the Bible? Why, why not?
2. Have you ever committed time to studying God’s Word? How did it go? Or why not?
3. Do you have any study tools? If so, what are they? If not, which ones would you like to start with in your collection?
4. Do you have someone with whom you can discuss God’s Word? Can you ask them Bible questions? (If not, our leaders are a good place to start. Our pastor is very willing to help however he can as well.)
5. Have you ever seen blessing from Bible study? What was it like? Or would you like to?

Looking Forward:

In our next lesson of Step 11 we will discuss Bible meditation as a means of feeding your soul, as well as the concept of *growing in Christ*. Many a Christian has struggled with the question – how do I measure my spiritual growth? Just because it is hard to measure, does not mean that you are not making real progress! Maturity in our faith is not the goal, it is a result.

Hebrews 4:12

Word of God...comforting/nourishing to those who believe...a tool of judgement and execution to those who have not committed themselves to Jesus Christ. Some of the Hebrews were just going through the motions...God's Word would expose their shallow beliefs and false intentions.

1 John 3:8a

Devil...accuser, slanderer, opposes God. Originator/instigator of sin. Children of God are righteous and the children of Satan are sinful. Makes a practice of sinning – habitual sin or a lifestyle of sin.

John 14:26

The Holy Spirit energizes the hearts and minds of the Apostles...They came to an inerrant/accurate understanding of the Lord and His work as recorded in the Gospels.

Psalms 119:105

God's Word provides illumination to walk without stumbling.

2 Timothy 2:15

Do your best...be diligent, maximum effort. Rightly handling...dividing or cutting it straight. Precision/Accuracy.

James 1:22

Doers of the Word...be doers, not just "to do". Our entire personality should be characterized by doing. Deceiving yourselves...miscalculation in mathematics.