

How To Study The Bible

by Robert F. Turner

BIBLE STUDIES, by G. Dallas Smith; or more recent “surveys” of the whole divine library will give subject matter, and will help you select a book for special attention. But to study that book, try **reading** it all the way through — then **reread**, then **reread**. Read rapidly, do not stop to study details, read for general content. NO SUCCESSFUL STUDY can be done without diligent reading and rereading.

After several readings, try making an analysis (on scrap paper). What is the main theme? Try putting the chief message on a postcard. Is the writer proving something, reproving for something, urging some action, warning of something? Written to whom? Why? At *this* stage **do not** try making application to yourself or today’s problems.

Now, compare your summary with the introduction summaries in a few good commentaries. These **introductions** are often far more valuable than verse-by-verse comments, yet are frequently ignored. Read them critically. Do your notes and those of the commentator agree? If not, reread the section under consideration and reevaluate it. Both of you may be wrong!

ONLY AFTER SUCH PREPARATION WORK should you begin to study details. Now read slowly, checking words you do not understand or that are critical to the argument: in *Vine’s N.T. Dictionary*, a *Greek Interlinear*, and *Word Study* books — *in this order*. Cross-reference to companion passages in other books can help, and eventually must be used to get the complete picture, but don’t rush off to other scripture until you have exhausted the immediate context. The same words in different context may have other meanings.

If you have access to a good religious library (church, school, or the preacher’s books) check for special studies on critical subjects, but do not swallow all you chew. **DO NOT MARK BORROWED BOOKS — RETURN THEM PROMPTLY.**

NOW, you are ready to re-outline the book in greater detail; and fit “hard’ passages into this context. If you think this is time-consuming hard work, you are certainly right. But **this** is Bible study. Add prayer, and self-application, and the rewards are great. WARNING! Do not become high-minded about your conclusions. You may have to revise that outline when you do this again some months later. But with diligent study and self-application, you can serve God with convictions, and acceptably.

Recommended “Tools’ For Study

1. *American Standard Version* with cross-reference. If you prefer *King James*, check New King James (NELSON PUBLISHERS) Avoid exotic one-man translations, or modern paraphrases, American idioms.
2. *Vine’s N.T. Dictionary*.
3. *Nestle Greek-English Interlinear*.
4. *Robertson’s Word Studies* (and his Grammar, if you are capable of using it).
5. *Expositor’s Greek N.T.* for critical exposition of passages, and concise introductions to books.

BUT MOST IMPORTANT: PLENTY OF TIME, SCRAP PAPER, AND PLAIN OLD GOOD COMMON SENSE.

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