

# HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

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**A Proper Expectation:** God wants the believer to benefit from his or her study of the Bible.

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## **Truth #4 — GOD HAS ENDOWED MAN WITH THE NATURAL ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE USED IN THE BIBLE.**

- A. God made us to worship, honor, serve, glorify and take pleasure in Him (Rev 4:11; Col 1:16; 3:17; Psa 16:11; 1 Cor 10:31).
- B. One of the most productive ways in which we glorify God is through language which God made us to use (Exod 4:10–11).
- C. The natural ability to communicate through language is part of man’s being created in the image of God.
- D. God has given mankind the natural ability to use language for three purposes:
  - 1. God has given mankind the natural ability to use language in order to communicate to us in special revelation.
  - 2. God has given mankind the natural ability to use language in order to communicate with Him in prayer.
  - 3. God has given mankind the natural ability to use language in order for us to communicate with each other for our benefit and His glory.

Thought: Since God has implanted within us the ability to use language for these three purposes, it stands to reason that He has also implanted within us the tools to understand language (hermeneutical tools). Many call this phenomenon... the implanting of the ability to use language and the tools necessary to understand language... the “received laws of language”... laws received by us from God at creation.

- E. Mankind has rebelled against God and has turned their God-given ability toward suppressing God’s truth (Rom 1:18).

Thought: Because mankind has rebelled against God and suppressed His truth, the God-given natural ability to understand language is not sufficient for mankind to welcome God's Word. God had to do something else, or no man or woman would ever be able to welcome His Word.

## Truth # 5 — GOD HAS GIVEN BELIEVERS SUPERNATURAL HELP THROUGH THE SPIRIT TO HEAR AND DO THE WORD.

The Spirit has caused believers to welcome the Word in two different ways:

- A. The Spirit illumines the mind of the one who is believing, so that he or she welcomes the Bible as God's authoritative Word. I call this the Spirit's work of enlightenment at regeneration.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13** *"For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."*

**1 Thessalonians 1:5-6** *"... <sup>5</sup>for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit."*

**1 Corinthians 2:14-15** *"<sup>14</sup>But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. <sup>15</sup>But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one."*

- B. The Spirit illumines the mind of the one who has believed, so that he or she continues to welcome the Bible's impact on their life. They study it to obey it and, in the process, are changed to become more like Christ. I call this the Spirit's work of enablement in the sanctification process of the believer.

1. The Spirit enables believers to welcome the Word in order to practice it.

**James 1:21-25** *"<sup>21</sup>Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup>But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. <sup>25</sup>But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."*

2. The Spirit enables believers to welcome the Word in order to help them discern between truth and error.

**1 John 2:20–27** <sup>20</sup>*But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. <sup>21</sup>I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. <sup>22</sup>Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup>Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. <sup>24</sup>As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. <sup>25</sup>This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. ¶ <sup>26</sup>These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. <sup>27</sup>As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.*

3. The Spirit enables believers to welcome the beauty of the Word so that they are delighted by it.

**Psalm 119:24** *“Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors.”*

**Psalm 119:47–48** <sup>47</sup>*I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love. <sup>48</sup>And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, Which I love; And I will meditate on Your statutes.”*

**Psalm 119:77** *“May Your compassion come to me that I may live, For Your law is my delight.”*

**Psalm 119:97** ¶ *“O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.”*

**Psalm 119:111** *“I have inherited Your testimonies forever, For they are the joy of my heart.”*

**Psalm 119:162–63** <sup>162</sup>*I rejoice at Your word, As one who finds great spoil. <sup>163</sup>I hate and despise falsehood, But I love Your law.”*

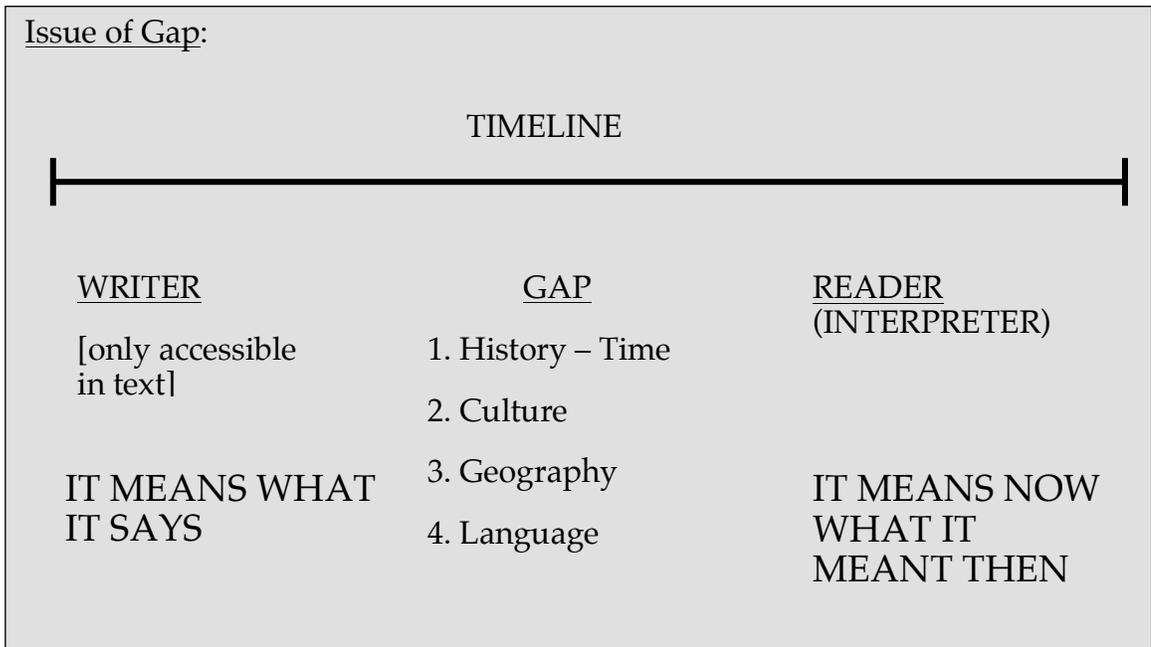
**Psalm 119:174** <sup>174</sup>*I long for Your salvation, O Lord, And Your law is my delight.”*

Thought: In summary, the Spirit enables the believer to:

- Welcome the Word’s demands – conscience, will (Jas 1:21–25).
- Welcome the Word’s truth – intellect (1 John 2:20–27).
- Welcome the Word’s beauty – affections (Psa 119:24, 47–48, 77, 97, 111, 162–63, 174).

**Truth #6 — BASED ON WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR THE BELIEVER, THE BELIEVING INTERPRETER SHOULD EXPECT CERTAIN GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE OPERATIVE AS HE OR SHE STUDIES THE BIBLE.**

- A. The interpreter should expect God to use language grammatically.
- B. The interpreter should expect God to use language historically.



- C. The interpreter should expect God to use language univocally.

Thought: “The true and full sense of any Scripture is not manifold but one”  
(*Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.9).

“We affirm that the meaning in each biblical text is single, definite, and fixed. We deny that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application”  
(*Summit II of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy*).

*ONE MEANING, MANY APPLICATIONS.*

- D. The interpreter should expect God to say what He means in the text and for that meaning to never change.
- E. The interpreter should expect God to use language truthfully.

F. The interpreter should expect God to use language harmoniously.

Thought: Scripture will not contradict itself. There may be paradoxes that we cannot solve entirely, but all paradoxes are ultimately solved in God. Therefore, the interpreter can rely on Scripture to interpret Scripture. Scripture coheres because God is coherent.

G. The interpreter should expect God to speak clearly.

H. In summation, the interpreter should expect to use a grammatical-historical-theological hermeneutic to get at the meaning of Scripture.

Thought:

<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Positive Perspective</b>	<b>Negative Perspective</b>
<b>Grammatical</b>	It means what it says.	Meaning is not hidden.
<b>Historical</b>	It means now what it meant when it was written (or, it means now what it meant then).	Meaning does not change over time.
<b>Theological</b>	It means in its parts what it means in its whole, and it means in its whole what it means in its parts (or, its meaning forms a cohesive whole).	Meaning is not contradictory.  Note: ➤ Paradox – Yes ➤ Contradiction – No