

Self-Led Bible Study

Principles for Studying God's Word on Your Own

When embarking on a path of self-study, as opposed to guided study, these are the key elements you will want to research to ensure you are not making your time in God's word about you or how you feel. Instead, you want to understand the context and meaning of God's word as He intended for you to understand them. To better understand God's Word, collect the following pieces of information throughout your time studying God's Word:

1. A good study bible will provide the following information at the beginning of each book. I strongly suggest the MacArthur Study Bible:
 - Book of the Bible
 - Author
 - Year it was Written
 - Audience (to whom it was written)
 - Basic Outline
 - Key Themes
2. When reading actual passages of Scripture, collect the following data for each verse you read (biblehub.com is an excellent resource) :
 - Word translations in their original languages
 - Cross-references (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)
 - Geographical and chronological insights (such as maps and timelines)
 - Culturally relevant insights (Haley's Bible Handbook)
3. A few quick notes and admonitions:
 - The translation you read is very important. We want to stick to the most literal translations to protect against errant interpretation of God's Word. Reliable translations are the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB), English Standard Version (ESV), and the New American Standard Bible (NASB).
 - Likewise, the preachers and teachers you choose to listen to should be vetted for theological soundness before you use their commentaries to guide your understanding of God's word. Reliable preachers/teachers are: John MacArthur, Matthew Henry, and Charles Spurgeon. As with all man-made works, pray for discernment and test everything you hear to make sure it confirms to the Truth in God's word. Only the Bible is infallible, so make sure you are approaching all sermons and commentaries with a heart of wisdom and discernment.
 - The point of studying God's Word is to know Him better so that you can live a life of worship for His glory. Reading and studying God's word is an end in and of itself. When engaging in Self-Paced Study, don't let yourself lose the joy of knowing God by getting bogged down in a to-do list. Study God's word at a pace that makes sense for your life and rely on the Holy Spirit to sanctify you according to His will and timing.