

# Keys To Studying The Bible

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It is written:

ACTS 17:11-THESE WERE MORE FAIR-MINDED THAN THOSE IN THESSALONICA, IN THAT THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY *TO FIND OUT* WHETHER THESE THINGS WERE SO.

Studying the Bible is one of the most important things that we can engage ourselves in. Recently, a years long study made by The Center Of Bible Engagement (led by Arnold Cole & Pamela Caudill Ovwigho) investigated the effects of Bible study on the general population. They interviewed over 40, 000 people (ages 8 to 80). When a person read the Bible once a week, there was a negligible effect on that person's life. The same was true for opened the Bible two to three times a week.

However, when the persons polled opened their Bible and read from it at least four times a week, the results were staggering.

“The data collected by CBE attest to many of these effects. For example, statistical analyses reveal that,

controlling for other factors, such as age, gender, church attendance, and prayer, Christians who are engaged in scripture most days of the week have lower odds of participating in these behaviors: Getting drunk=57% lower odds; Sex outside marriage=68% lower odds; Pornography=61% lower odds; Gambling=74% lower odds; Any of these habits=57% lower odds. The ‘power of 4’ is evident when we consider that for some of these behaviors (getting drunk and sex outside marriage) examined there is no statistical difference between Christians who read or listen to the Bible two or three days a week and those who not engage scripture at all or only once a week. For those behaviors where there is an effect for engaging scripture two to three days a week, the effect is much smaller than for four or more days a week. More scripture engagement also produces a Christian who is more involved in spreading the Good News. Controlling for other factors, those who read or listen to the Bible at least four days a week have higher odds of participating in these behaviors: Sharing faith others=228% higher odds; Discipling others=231% higher odds; Memorizing scripture=407% higher odds.” (Arnold Cole, Ed.D. & Pamela Caudill Ovwigho, Ph.D., Understanding The Bible Engagement Challenge: Scientific Evidence For The Power Of 4, 68-82 (Kindle Edition): Center For Bible Engagement; [www.c4be.org](http://www.c4be.org))

Bottom Line: Bible study is good for us, it is good for the church, it is good for families, and it is good for non-Christians! Yet many people do not know how to study the Word of God.

Let's notice seven principles that we need to know and apply when we study the Word of God.

### *Study Prayerfully*

The first thing we need to notice is that when we study God's Word, we need to do so prayerfully.

MATTHEW 7:7-8-ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK, AND YOU WILL FIND; KNOCK, AND IT WILL BE OPENED TO YOU. 8 FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS RECEIVES, AND HE WHO SEEKS FINDS, AND TO HIM WHO KNOCKS IT WILL BE OPENED.

2 TIMOTHY 2:7-CONSIDER WHAT I SAY, AND MAY THE LORD GIVE YOU UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS.

This passage especially teaches us that we need to pray for understanding in what the Word of God is communicating.

“First, if we are to receive understanding from the Lord, we must consider what the apostle is saying. This is a good example of Paul’s self-conscious apostolic authority. He commands Timothy to ponder his teaching and promises that the Lord will grant him insight into all this if he does so. He sees nothing strange about claiming that his teaching as an apostle deserves careful study, or that it can be interpreted by the Lord alone, or that this is the way for Timothy to grow in understanding. It is clear evidence that Paul believed his teaching to be not his own but the Lord’s. Indeed, in the following verses, almost imperceptibly, he equates ‘my gospel’ (8) with ‘God’s word’ (9). Second, if we are to receive insight from the Lord, we must reflect on what the apostle is saying. Some Christians never get down to any serious Bible study. The reason may of course be that they are simply too lazy. Alternatively, it may be ‘spiritual’ (though I fear I would have to call it ‘pseudo-spiritual’), namely that they believe understanding will come to them from the Holy Spirit and not from their own studies (which is a totally false contrast). So all they do is skim through some Bible verses in a haphazard and random fashion, hoping (and even praying) that the Holy Spirit will show them what it all means. But they do not obey the apostle’s command, Reflect on what I am saying. Others are very good at Bible study. They are ‘hardworking farmers’, as it were. They use their minds and grapple with the text of Scripture. They compare versions, consult concordances

and pore over commentaries. But they forget that it is the Lord alone who imparts understanding, and that he imparts it as a gift. So we must not divorce what God has joined together. For the understanding of Scripture a balanced combination of thought and prayer is essential. We must do the reflecting, and the Lord will do the giving of insight.” (John Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy*, 42 (Kindle Edition); Downers Grove, IL; InterVarsity Press)

We must approach the study of God’s Word with prayer.

### *Study Logically*

This last passage (2 Timothy 2:7) also teaches us about the need to study the Word of God logically.

“Logic” often gets a bad rep among some Christians. However, the word “logic” simply means “sound reasoning.” Jesus Himself displayed amazing examples of logical reasoning during His ministry!

“In addition to the miracles and healing, Jesus regularly put on display his intellect and wisdom, and people gathered and were often as astonished by this sort of display as they were by his miracles. The Bible records several places where the people were “astonished” by Jesus’s teaching. Matthew 7: 28–29 says, “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were

astonished at his teaching, because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes.” In fact, this was, in part, why the religious leaders desired to kill Jesus. Mark 11: 18 says, “They were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was astonished by his teaching.” At one point in Jesus’s ministry, he returned to his hometown of Nazareth. As he began to teach in the synagogue, the people were again astonished by his teaching. But they were confused because they knew Jesus and his family. There were likely people present who had watched Jesus grow up and knew his background. Jesus’s family were commoners, not educated and not brilliant thinkers. Consequently, the people responded, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, aren’t they all with us? So where does he get all these things?” (Matt 13: 54–56). At another point, having heard his teaching, the Jews asked in amazement, “How is this man so learned, since he hasn’t been trained?” (John 7: 15). We don’t know exactly what Jesus’s educational experience was as he grew up, but we can speculate a bit based on what we know a typical Jewish person would have experienced. Jesus was the son of a carpenter and likely apprenticed with his father, Joseph, to learn carpentry skills. Jesus also would have had some form of semiformal education in the local synagogue to learn about the Hebrew Scriptures.

But he clearly became a full-fledged rabbi in the eyes of the people. How did a carpenter's apprentice become a rabbi without extensive training? The people were astonished because he had all the skills of an extremely talented rabbi without ever having been disciplined under and trained by a rabbi. We get some insight into the intellectual development of Jesus in a short passage in Luke 2 when Jesus was only twelve years old. In fact, this is the first time the Gospels record people being astonished by Jesus's intellect was when he was twelve years old. Two verses mention the wisdom of Jesus as he grew. In v. 40, Luke says, "The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him." Then in v. 52, Luke concludes the chapter saying, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people." Jesus not only grew physically, but he grew in his wisdom and intellectual skill. The point is that Jesus, as the twelve-year-old incarnate God, had need to develop his intellectual potential and talents. What does it look like for an adolescent to be filled with wisdom? Sandwiched between these two statements of Jesus's wisdom is a story that helps answer this question. Having been in Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover festival, Jesus's family departed Jerusalem to head back to Nazareth. Much to his parents' surprise (and, likely, the horror that comes from having a missing child), Jesus wasn't with them. It took them three days to find "him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking

them questions” (Luke 2: 46). Let’s notice a few things about this passage. First, Jesus was sitting among the temple teachers. These were the elite Jewish scholars and likely some of the exact individuals Jesus would later confront. He was not sitting at their feet but sitting among these elite scholars as a twelve-year-old. Second, though he sat among them, Jesus had the posture of a learner. He listened and asked questions. Jesus developed and grew in his intellectual skill and knowledge as he grew physically.

3 Here in the temple, Jesus was the learner. A person who would become intellectually skilled must do a lot of listening, especially to those who are experts. Let’s just say twelve-year-olds are not well known for being good listeners, but Jesus was among these teachers listening. And he not only listened passively; he also asked questions. He sought understanding. In short, Jesus was seeking to be a critical thinker. The teachers, as Luke goes on to tell us, were “astounded at his understanding and his answers” (Luke 2: 47). Even his parents were “astonished” by the scene of their twelve-year-old sitting among the temple teachers when, in their minds, he was supposed to be on the way back to Nazareth (v. 48). These are the first of many times in the life of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, that people were astonished by Jesus. This passage is important because it is a window into Jesus’s formative years. Jesus was an eager and inquisitive learner who displayed significant intellectual skill in his understanding. In a way, if we want to know how to grow



to be like Jesus, this passage tells us how Jesus himself grew. We can't skip the process of being formed in our intellectual abilities. Jesus may not have had a rabbi under whom he apprenticed in an official capacity, but we do. We have Jesus himself as the perfect exemplar of fully formed intellectual skill, and we should strive to be like him in this." (Travis Dickinson, *Logic and the Way of Jesus: Thinking Critically and Christianly*, 33-35 (Kindle Edition(; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic)

Jesus Himself is the Word-the rational explanation-of God (John 1:1, 14).

### *Study Consistently*

We have to be people who are willing to study the Bible on a consistent basis. Studying the Word of God needs to be one of our habits: one of our goals. We see this in Acts 17:11 with the Bereans, but there are many other examples of this also in God's Word:

PSALM 1:2-BUT HIS DELIGHT *IS* IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND IN HIS LAW HE MEDITATES DAY AND NIGHT.

PSALM 119:97-OH, HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW! IT *IS* MY MEDITATION ALL THE DAY.

PSALM 119:148-MY EYES ARE AWAKE THROUGH THE *NIGHT* WATCHES, THAT I MAY MEDITATE ON YOUR WORD.

JOHN 5:39-YOU SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, FOR IN THEM YOU THINK YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE; AND THESE ARE THEY WHICH TESTIFY OF ME.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15-BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD, A WORKER WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.

When I study with friends, I encourage them to download a Bible app (like E-Sword or Youversion) and try to read AT LEAST one chapter of the Bible when they wake up, and a chapter before they go to sleep at night.

Habits take time to form: are we willing to form good Bible study habits?

### *Study Linguistically*

We need to study the Bible from the standpoint of linguistics (or languages). The Old Testament was written in Hebrew (with parts in Aramaic), and the New Testament was written in koine Greek. One author tells us about the biblical languages:

“The Hebrew language has some distinctive characteristics that no other language on the planet Earth has. All the early languages were written without spaces between the words, and the Hebrew language is self-parsing. In Hebrew, there are five letters that have a slightly different shape when they’re used as the last letter of a word. Because of that, it’s possible to read Hebrew without spaces between the letters. There are only consonants in Hebrew, and no vowels. It’s what’s called a consonantal script. The meaning of a word derives from a root of three letters, and each three letter root word can be expanded to create all manner of other words. Prefixes and suffixes can be added to those three letters, forming different parts of speech or even entirely new words; the meaning is related to those three base letters. The particular meaning of the word depends on how it’s pronounced when vowel sounds are added. For instance, the three letters sfr create the word for “book” and it’s pronounced “sapher.” A writer, on the other hand, somebody who makes books, would be called a “sopher”—same letters. The plural form requires a “ym” ending—sfrym—“sefarim.” The pronunciations are therefore very important. It’s not difficult for a native speaker to vocally add the appropriate vowels. We often use the consonants “bldg” for “building” and we understand the word even with the vowels (and one consonant) removed. Native speakers would naturally read the words correctly. The

root consonants are designed to give Hebrew a semantic backbone and stability not characteristic of Western languages. It also leads to word play. Verb usage is dependent on the context, and the language lends itself to puns. There's often far more meaning implied in the Hebrew sentence than there would be in a Greek sentence....One of the peculiarities of the Hebrew language is that the alphabet is not just phonetic, but also symbolic. The alphabet of most languages are phonetic. Words can be sounded out if the letter sounds are known. Hebrew is phonetic, but it is a special language, because it is also symbolic. Individual letters can have their own meanings. Early in Hebrew writing, the letters were also pictographs. Aleph, for instance, was shaped like the head of an ox and represented strength and leadership. The letter kaf was originally shaped like a hand, and "kaf" means "palm of the hand" or "to coerce." The Hebrew language is astonishingly vivid, concise and simple. It is also so dense that it makes it difficult to translate fully. While the Greek language is precise, each word holding a specific intended meaning, Hebrew leaves many ideas to be "understood." It requires the reader to fill in the blanks. It often takes two or three times as much space to translate the Hebrew into English because the words carry so much significance on their own....The Greek language is a beautiful language, rich and harmonious. It's a fitting tool for vigorous thought and argumentation, because Greek is very, very precise. It can penetrate and clarify

phenomena using exact words in an exact order so that there is no confusion. Classic Greek is sometimes called the Attic Greek or High Greek because the syntax is so subtle and expressive in its use of participles. It's sometimes difficult to translate the words into English and capture the full nuances of their meaning. Attic Greek (which was spoken in Attica and Athens) was used when the culture was at its zenith. Koine Greek, or common Greek, was the result of Alexander the Great's effort to encourage the spread of the Greek culture. All throughout the world, the regional dialects were replaced by common Greek. It's simpler and less elegant than High Greek but it nevertheless retains most of the strength, beauty, clarity and logical rhetorical power of the Attic Greek. The New Testament is written in Koine Greek. Greek is a very precise language. Every Greek verb has five aspects-person, number, tense, mood, and voice. From just the verb itself, we can understand who is performing the action (I, you, they), whether one or more persons are doing it, when it's done, whether it is a single event or a process, and how it's done. Was there an action? Was there a command or merely a wish? The verb usage will tell us. We have active and passive voices in English, "I hit the ball" versus "the ball was hit by me." The Greek also has a third voice that's "optative"-indicating a wish or desire. We do not have a true optative mood in English, but we understand it in certain constructions, like, "May you be truly happy," or "Have a good day!" It is that

“optative” voice that causes many people to misunderstand some of the statements in Paul’s epistles because of a lack of sensitivity to the Greek syntax. Greek is incredibly precise and expressive, with few blanks to fill in-and therefore Greek and Hebrew are very different.” (Chuck Missler, How We Got Our Bible, 445-491 (Kindle Edition); Coeur d’Alene, ID; Koinonia House)

Let me give you a couple of examples of how the original Bible languages can be helpful in clearing up misunderstanding. The first relates to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

ACTS 9:7-AND THE MEN WHO JOURNEYED WITH HIM STOOD SPEECHLESS, HEARING A VOICE BUT SEEING NO ONE.

Yet later we are told:

ACTS 22:9-9 "AND THOSE WHO WERE WITH ME INDEED SAW THE LIGHT AND WERE AFRAID, BUT THEY DID NOT HEAR THE VOICE OF HIM WHO SPOKE TO ME.

How can the people who were with Saul have "heard" and yet "not heard" the voice that spoke to him?

The answer lies in studying the original languages of the Bible:

"In the original Greek, however, there is no real contradiction between these two statements. Greek makes a distinction between hearing a sound as a noise (in which case the verb "to hear" takes the genitive case) and hearing a voice as a thought-conveying message (in which case it takes the accusative). Therefore, as we put the two statements together, we find that Paul's companions heard the Voice as a sound (somewhat like the crowd who heard the sound of the Father talking to the Son in John 12: 28, but perceived it only as thunder); but they did not (like Paul) hear the message that it articulated. Paul alone heard it intelligibly (Acts 9: 4 says Paul *ēkousen phōnēn* — accusative case); though he, of course, perceived it also as a startling sound at first (Acts 22: 7: "I fell to the ground and heard a voice [*ēkousa phōnēs*] saying to me," NASB). But in neither account is it stated that his companions ever heard that Voice in the accusative case." (Gleason Archer, *The New International Encyclopedia Of Bible Difficulties*, 10056-10068 (Kindle Edition): Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan)

Another example deals with salvation by faith.

Repeatedly we are told in the Bible that we are not saved by faith and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:3-8;

Romans 4:1-4), yet a host of other Scripture make it clear that we are saved by faith and by works (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 1:5; 2:3-12; James 2:14-26; Hebrews 5:8-9).

So, which is it? Are we saved by faith, or by works?

Is there a contradiction here?

Not at all!

When we go back and study the original languages of the Bible, we quickly learn that the entire concept of "belief" and "faith" in Scripture carried the idea of obedience. For example:

"Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament gives this definition of pisteuo when used of the faith by which a man embraces Jesus: "A conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah-the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, CONJOINED WITH OBEDIENCE to Christ."... James M. Whiton abridged Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, and under pisteuo gives these possible meanings: "To believe, trust in, put faith in, confide in, rely on a person or thing.-2. To believe, COMPLY, OBEY." Bultmann has the article on pisteuo in Kittel's Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament. After



giving a history of the use of the word in the Old Testament, he outlines its use in the New Testament. "II. General Usage: 1. The Continuation of the Old Testament and Jewish Tradition: a. pisteuo as to Believe; b. as to OBEY; C. as to Trust; d. as to Hope; e. as Faithfulness."... The Lexicons reflect the idea advanced earlier in this study that any of the elements of pisteuo (knowledge, assent, confidence, obedience) may be emphasized, and that the context or the construction (certain prepositional phrases) in which it appears will often determine the exact meaning." (Gareth Reese, *Acts: New Testament History*, 600-601 (emphasis added, M.T.); Joplin, Missouri; College Press)

The famous Bible scholar and linguist, William Barclay, pointed out:

"But belief goes even further than that. We believe that God is Father and that God is love, because we believe that Jesus, being the Son of God, has told us the truth about God—and then we act on the belief. We live life in the certainty that we can do nothing other than render a perfect trust and a perfect obedience to God." (William Barclay, *New Testament Words*, 545 (Kindle Edition); Louisville, KY; Westminster John Knox Press)

We are saved by works of faith, but not by works of merit. Studying the original languages of the Bible helps us to understand this.

One of the best ways to study the original languages of a passage is to invest in different translations of the Bible.

“First, no matter how wonderful a translation is, it has limitations. The Bible was originally written using 11,280 Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words, but the typical English translation uses only around 6,000 words. Obviously, nuances and shades of meaning can be missed, so it is always helpful to compare translations.” (Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?*, 405 (Kindle Edition) Zondervan)

Don't be afraid to study from different Bible translations.

### *Study Contextually*

The word “context” has reference to the verses of a passage of Scripture surrounding a text that you are surrounding.

The study of context will include asking questions such as:

*Who is writing this passage?*

*To whom is this passage being written?*

*Are there are any clues in the passage that suggest something is being discussed that is limited to this area?*

*Could there be a cultural custom in this passage that has relevance?*

*What principles from this passage are applicable to me?*

An understanding of context is very helpful. I learned this recently in our church jail ministry. A gentleman asked me to explain an alleged Bible contradictions that he had found years earlier and that had not been able to explained to him. He asked me, “Why would Jesus say that we should give an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and then turn around and say to turn the other cheek?” The passage he was referencing was in the Sermon On The Mount:

MATTHEW 5:38-39-"YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' 39 BUT I TELL YOU NOT TO RESIST AN EVIL PERSON. BUT WHOEVER SLAPS YOU ON YOUR RIGHT CHEEK, TURN THE OTHER TO HIM ALSO.

This passage could seem contradictory, unless the context is consulted carefully. The statement “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” was found in the Old Testament:

EXODUS 21:22-27-"IF MEN FIGHT, AND HURT A WOMAN WITH CHILD, SO THAT SHE GIVES BIRTH PREMATURELY, YET NO HARM FOLLOWS, HE SHALL SURELY BE PUNISHED ACCORDINGLY AS THE WOMAN'S HUSBAND IMPOSES ON HIM; AND HE SHALL PAY AS THE JUDGES *DETERMINE*. **23** BUT IF *ANY* HARM FOLLOWS, THEN YOU SHALL GIVE LIFE FOR LIFE, **24** EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH, HAND FOR HAND, FOOT FOR FOOT, **25** BURN FOR BURN, WOUND FOR WOUND, STRIPE FOR STRIPE. **26** "IF A MAN STRIKES THE EYE OF HIS MALE OR FEMALE SERVANT, AND DESTROYS IT, HE SHALL LET HIM GO FREE FOR THE SAKE OF HIS EYE. **27** AND IF HE KNOCKS OUT THE TOOTH OF HIS MALE OR FEMALE SERVANT, HE SHALL LET HIM GO FREE FOR THE SAKE OF HIS TOOTH.

LEVITICUS 24:19-20-'IF A MAN CAUSES DISFIGUREMENT OF HIS NEIGHBOR, AS HE HAS DONE, SO SHALL IT BE DONE TO HIM—**20** FRACTURE FOR FRACTURE, EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH; AS HE HAS CAUSED

DISFIGUREMENT OF A MAN, SO SHALL IT BE DONE TO HIM.

DEUTERONOMY 19:18-21-AND THE JUDGES SHALL MAKE CAREFUL INQUIRY, AND INDEED, *IF* THE WITNESS *IS* A FALSE WITNESS, WHO HAS TESTIFIED FALSELY AGAINST HIS BROTHER, **19** THEN YOU SHALL DO TO HIM AS HE THOUGHT TO HAVE DONE TO HIS BROTHER; SO YOU SHALL PUT AWAY THE EVIL FROM AMONG YOU. **20** AND THOSE WHO REMAIN SHALL HEAR AND FEAR, AND HEREAFTER THEY SHALL NOT AGAIN COMMIT SUCH EVIL AMONG YOU. **21** YOUR EYE SHALL NOT PITY: LIFE *SHALL BE* FOR LIFE, EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH, HAND FOR HAND, FOOT FOR FOOT.

In all of these passages, judges are being admonished to make sure that their judgments are fair and not overly harsh. This was to encourage victims from engaging in personal retribution. By the time of Jesus, the Pharisees had completely taken this Scripture out of context to justify personal retaliation! In other words, the religious denominations of Christ's day were taking a passage which was designed to prevent personal retaliation, and then using them to justify personal retaliation!

“But perhaps the most important thing is that this enactment was not given to the individual, but rather to the judges who were responsible for law and order amongst the individuals. The system of judges was set up amongst the children of Israel, and when disputes and matters arose the people had to take them to these responsible authorities for judgment. It was the judges who were to see to it that it was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and no more. The legislation was for them, not for the private individuals-as in the law of our land at this moment. The law is carried out by the magistrate or the judge, by the one who is appointed in the nation to do this. That was the principle; and it is a true picture of the Mosaic legislation itself. Its main object was to introduce this element of justice and of righteousness into a chaotic condition and to take from man the tendency to take the law into his own hands and to do anything he likes. As far as the teaching of the Pharisees and scribes is concerned, their main trouble was that they tended to ignore entirely the fact that this teaching was for the judges only. They made it a matter for personal application. Not only that, they regarded it, in their typical legalistic manner, as a matter of right and duty to have ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’. To them it was something to be insisted upon rather than something which should be restrained. It was a legalistic outlook which thought only of its rights-a kind of Shylock attitude. They were therefore fore guilty of two main

errors at that point. They were turning a negative injunction into a positive one and, furthermore, were interpreting it and carrying it out themselves, and teaching others to do so, instead of seeing that it was something that was to be carried out only by the appointed judges who were responsible for law and order.” (David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 4074-4087 (Kindle Version); Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company)

The study of the context of this passage helped this young man with a struggle of faith that he had had for years.

We need to study the context of the passage of Scripture that we are reading.

### *Study Messianically*

Remember that everything in the Bible revolves around Jesus. Ask yourself what this passage teaches you about Him.

ACTS 10:43-TO HIM ALL THE PROPHETS WITNESS THAT, THROUGH HIS NAME, WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL RECEIVE REMISSION OF SINS."

One author has noted:

“The cross is the hinge upon which the door of all human history turns. Its immediate impact on Jesus’ followers was total despair, defeat, even doubt. The Scriptures pointedly proclaim that “all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matthew 26: 56). Two of those dejected disciples on the way home to Emmaus lamented, “We had hoped that he was the one” (Luke 24: 21 ESV). But they left that hope buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea outside the city walls of Jerusalem. While they were in the depths of discouragement, those words had just escaped their lips when they noticed someone walking alongside them on the road. It was the Lord! He was alive. “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (v. 27). Yes, Jesus declared from the very beginning of the Bible with the first five books of Moses and continuing “in all the Scriptures” that He was there on every page. He was that ram on Abraham’s altar in Genesis. He was the Passover lamb in Exodus. He was the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that led the Israelites in the book of Numbers. He was the fourth man in the midst of the burning fiery furnace in the book of Daniel. He was there in every book of the Bible, sometimes in type, sometimes in shadow, sometimes in prophecy. Jesus—this scarlet thread of redemption—can be found woven through every book in sacred Scripture.” (O. S. Hawkins, *The Bible Code: Finding Jesus in Every Book in the Bible*, 1-2 (Kindle Edition); Nashville, TN; Thomas Nelson)



We need to learn how the Scripture applies to Jesus.

### *Study Obediently*

Finally, study with a view to put into practice what you are reading and learning.

JAMES 1:21-22-THEREFORE LAY ASIDE ALL FILTHINESS AND OVERFLOW OF WICKEDNESS, AND RECEIVE WITH MEEKNESS THE IMPLANTED WORD, WHICH IS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOULS. 22 BUT BE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOURSELVES.

Let us apply ourselves to be diligent students of God's Word.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

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*www.keavychurchofChrist.com. We assemble Sunday mornings at 10:00 for Bible Study, 11:00 (Morning Worship), 5:00 (Evening Worship), and Wednesday evenings @ 5:00 (Bible Study). Please come be with us: you will be our honored and welcomed guest!*