

## **1023 Bible says how to study the Bible**

**(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)**

**First, we give a preface by talking about the fact that God loves everyone no matter if one can read or not, and also about His impartiality. For us, we know how to read. Therefore, we should read the Bible to understand what God wants to tell us through the Bible. Next, we mention that the Bible says clearly that the purpose of reading the Bible is to have life. We have to be conformed to the image of Jesus. Then we talk about why the Bible says that the method of reading the Bible is through revelation by Holy Spirit to lead us to study the Bible. We see also the principle to read the Bible is to read out in the aspect of God. To be able to do, we have to not only know what we need to do, but also actually put into practice what we can do to carry out the work. We explain this through two practical examples. In these two examples, we point out the mistakes many often encounter. Peter said that we had to not distort the Scriptures. If we don't want to distort the Bible for those who don't know the original languages such as Greek, Hebrews just like me, using reference books from time to time becomes very important since doing so enables one not affected too much by errors due to wrong translation. Thus, knowing more precisely what God wants to tell us through the Bible. After that, I mention the practical methods God taught me to use in the past and nowadays, and explain briefly what I think based upon what happened. Humans since Adam and Eve have free will, so you don't have to follow what I say. I am just sharing and recommending. We conclude by emphasizing that it is more important to be doers of the word than only hearers.**

**As John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." The salvation is not only for those who can read, but also for those who cannot read. Since God let us belong to those who can read, we should read the Bible to understand what God tells us through the Bible, receiving the heavenly food. For example, in the way of sanctification, we know through reading the Bible in Romans 8:29 that we need to be conformed to the image of Jesus, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." We can see the word 'conform' is using the passive tense, since God has the absolute authority. In the way of sanctification, God is active and we are passive. We can only be willing to do what we could do to work with God. We see in this point that the Bible is consistent.**

**The Bible always described truth as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:6, "For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; ..." If we don't understand, it is because our current science doesn't reach that point yet just like the case of Copernicus. He lost his life to advocate the truth that the earth moves around the sun since it was contradictory to the understanding of the science at that time. One truth Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:7 is, "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" Although I know that everything is received, there is no reason to be boasting. However, it is so easy to get proud. Hopefully, it is God's time to share this topic 'Bible says how to study the Bible'. I'll not be suffered by enemy's attack.**

**God is really fair. He asks more from those people who get more, as said in Luke 12:48, "...From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.", and "For there is no partiality with God."(Romans 2:11) For me, the grace is far exceeding my life. As I testified before, I cannot give when He asks. I believe that some verses can be experienced. Although not all verses such refer to history alone we really cannot go back to live in that exact time. We do not just put verses in series. If so, the individual verse may be correct but not the complete concept since the verses may be in wrong order when quoted. We have to make sure that they are consistent with the whole Bible.**

**Above all, we can see purpose of reading the Bible is to have life like what Jesus said in John 5:39-40, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." We know that life can only come from God as said in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." We have to believe that God has the absolute authority, "For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."" (Romans 9:15)**

**Next, we'll see why we conclude that the Bible says the only method is through revelation of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Bible. Let us first take a look at Luke 24:33-45, "And they (the two disciples on the way to Emmaus) got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, ...Now He (Jesus) said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." We can see that in order to have the disciples understand Scripture, Jesus had to open their mind. In the era of the New Testament, Jesus had gone to heaven and it is impossible to have Jesus Himself to open our mind. However, we have the abiding Holy Spirit, one of the Holy Trinity. Through His revelation, our mind can be opened so that we can understand the Bible. Therefore, if we want to truly understand the Bible, it has to be by revelation. That is the only way. This is not a theory but a reality. We need to believe that the Holy Spirit longs to reveal to us through our mind, the fellowship of others (not necessary brothers or sisters, but could be unbelievers), environments, miracles, signs, visions. But it is not limited to the listed since the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be restricted as is said clearly in Ephesians 3:20, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." Believe that some verses can be experienced, which I can testify on this. I hope that we can use what the Bible says as our absolute standard and not just say so without action.**

**The principle of reading the Bible is to read out in the aspect of God. If we ask how to read out, it is like what said in Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." If one person doesn't even know, how can he do what said? So, we need to at least know first before doing. If we find that we read in not carefully, don't be frustrated. This is a life-long lesson. Here, we share two situations where people could make mistakes.**

**To correct them is what we can do. If you don't make such mistakes, congratulations. If you do, just knowing them is useless. We have to be careful all the time. They should help us to understand the Bible and others.**

**The first example is to not automatically make two separate conditions the same. The Bible says sometimes sufficient condition, sometimes necessary condition, and sometimes necessary and sufficient condition. Only it is a necessary and sufficient condition, you can add equality sign. Often, people aren't careful enough when adding equality sign when reading the Bible. By noticing it all the time, it'll help us to understand the Bible and what others say. For this, we can illustrate it through an example. The whole Bible is inspired by God, thus viewing things from the Bible is to view things in the aspect of God. But the converse is not true. Basically, to view things in the aspect of God is more than viewing things from the Bible.**

**To explain this point, we see in John 20:30-31 how John chose the materials to present, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." There are things which have not enough space for them as described in John 21:25, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written." There are things not written on purpose such as those in Acts 16:6-7, "They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them." The Bible doesn't say the ways how the Holy Spirit forbade because the work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to a fixed format. Also, as we discussed before, there are things not written since God may think that they are not important, etc. We are humans and bound to think in the aspect of human. Here I tried to explain what viewing things in the aspect of God is. Hopefully, it will be clearer than what explained in the past. Also, hopefully you see the difference between viewing things in the aspect of human and in the aspect of God. If one doesn't distort the Bible, then the person can view things in the aspect of God.**

**The second example is to have ears that can hear as said in Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ..." We can see that the same words are used in all the seven churches. Having ears that can hear is so important, which is not easily attainable from what I can see. Let us use one example to illustrate this point. Someone who testified about forgiveness said that God wanted her to take action. However, she couldn't do it and prayed to God to enable her to do it. Then, she got enough strength to do it. Nevertheless, she didn't immediately do it and lost her strength. She prayed again and got her strength again and did it immediately.**

**My response at that time was about the event regarding Philip in Acts 8:26-27, "But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road. ); So he got up and went; ..." There is an 'and' in the last verse. So, he got up and immediately went even though it does not say so**

explicitly. To stress this point regarding following the guidance of the Holy Spirit immediately, I also gave a testimony by another person. Sometimes, obeying immediately is very important. Hence, I thought that I stressed the point clearly. To my surprise, her reaction was that we could see how God was merciful to her. Yes, the statement is correct, but not about what I said. Therefore, until today, I have no idea if she knows the importance of immediacy.

Reading the Bible is sometimes just like this. The Bible says one thing, but we think about different things. By this way, we certainly get different viewpoints. This is seeing things in the aspect of human. What we want to ask is what God wants to tell us through the Bible - this is to read out. When we think about what the verses mean in my way or from my experiences - this is to read in. When others have different opinions, think about them. If there is still disagreeing, put them aside. Generally, people want to be considered good people. If someone is willing to tell you something, it is already not easy. Thinking about Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many prophets, they spoke truth. But many verses are considered no good in the aspect of human.

Peter said that we had to not distort the Scriptures. Peter got Jesus Himself to open his mind to understand the Bible, so he is definitely qualified to say this in 2 Peter 3:15-16, "and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction." We really believe what Peter in the Bible said? And believe that God is not ambiguous but faithful?

If one doesn't want to distort the Bible just like me who don't understand the original languages used in the Bible, it is important to use references from time to time. Because by this way, we have a chance to not be influenced by wrong translations to know what God wants to tell us through the Bible. I'm not saying that using references cannot distort the Bible. Don't add the equality sign. God is infinite, and we are finite. We are bound to make mistakes. So, it is alright as long as knowing that repentance is necessary and do it. As stated in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Although the versions of the Bible in the original languages are many, it is better than not using the references at all. Someone told me that we could use the Strong's Concordance and the YLT version in literal translation.

Let me now share why I think God taught how to study the Bible practically. This is based upon what happened. Human since Adam and Eve has free will. So, this is only a sharing and recommendations. In the past, the person who led me told me to start with a short time like fifteen minutes to read the Bible, and gradually increase to one hour every day if possible. This is from Book Genesis to the end of Book Revelation page by page. For something that you don't understand well, do not try to understand that part and just read through it. Although he said that it was ok to read books in historical backgrounds and so, I didn't read them basically, maybe due to laziness or I believed what said in Ecclesiastes 12:12, "But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and

excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body." So, I read the Bible basically. Eventually I found out one major purpose of reading books is to know the others having the same or similar experiences. One time, I misunderstood what the person said when he told me to listen on the top of reading. I listened only and needed to restart the reading part, which was difficult. As a result, I could only sometimes tell if others' words were in the Bible or not. After brain surgery, God took away basically all about more than ten years knowledge from reading the Bible. Now, I believe that those are hay and straw works. Because the other told me to read the Bible, I read it and but didn't understand it. We have to read the Bible voluntarily by heart, since we need to "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life."(Proverbs 4:23)

What happens nowadays? During the third time I had depression, I could not read the Bible like before. As I testified before, I thought the Bible was our spiritual food. If I didn't read, I would starve to death spiritually. Before God took away my depression, I suddenly realize that I could read in a topic-wise way. Thus, I believed that God wanted me to use this method. God is merciful, I discovered that my previous reading the Bible is not in vain. Because God make me think of what was needed in a topic-wise Bible study. Apparently, those part of needed knowledge are returned to me. And also see and believe at least part of verses are recalled and experienced through revelation. In fact, my memory is not good and I recalled some key words not the complete verses. So, I count on software to find out verses through the whole Bible needed for topic-wise Bible study.

Finally, let us summarize what we shared. We can see that Jesus Himself says the objective of studying the Bible is to have life, which can only come from God. So, the way to sanctification is passive. The method described in the Bible is to have the Holy Spirit to lead the Bible study. The revelation can be asked in prayer like what Paul did in Ephesians 1:17, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him." The principle of reading the Bible is to read out in the aspect of God. We need to ask what God wants to tell us through the Bible. In other words, this is to view things in the aspect of God. Using how I think or feel to interpret what the Bible says is to view things in the aspect of human, which we should not do. I briefly explained why I thought God taught me how to read the Bible practically and the associated two methods. Human has free will. These methods are merely sharing and recommendations. If one doesn't want to distort the Bible, it is very important to use references from time to time for people like me who don't know the languages used in the Bible. Although we need to read the Bible to understand what God wants to tell us, our final emphasis is that doers are better than hearers as the Bible said clearly in James 1:22-24, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 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; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was."