UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE
How to Read and Study the Bible

This a companion study for the Discipleship Development lesson, “The Disciple & God’s Word.” You will need to purchase the book, “Understanding Scripture - How to Read and Study the Bible” by A. Berkeley Mickelsen and Alvera M. Mickelsen, from any book retailer (i.e. Amazon, Barnes & Noble). This course will teach us basic principles to help guide our study and correctly interpret the Bible.

Directions - Print a copy of this PDF. As you read each chapter of the book, fill in the appropriate questions with more than one word answers (unless otherwise directed). Included on page 19-20 is a basic Bible Study worksheet for future use.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Here are the chapters and basic topics of Understanding Scripture.

1  What Can We Expect From Bible Study?
2  How Can We Know What The Bible Means?
3  What Makes The Bible Different?
4  What To Look For In Bible Translations
5  How The Bible Was Written And Compiled
6  The Life And Times Of Bible People
7  What Is This Passage Talking About?
8  The Bible Is Rich In Figurative Language
9  Parables And Allegories
10 What Were The Prophets Saying?
CHAPTER 1  What Can We Expect From Bible Study?

1. What does the author mean when he says the Bible is not a book of magic?

2. List nine things we can expect to gain from a conscientious study of the Bible?
   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.
   6.
   7.
3. What are five approaches to Bible study we should be aware of that work against our gaining all we can from Bible study? Give a brief definition of each.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

4. What is a result of Christians practicing “selective literalism?”

5. What occurs when we approach the Bible with a “fortress mentality?”

6. What two questions are asked of Bible passages in order to follow sound interpretation?

1.

2.
CHAPTER 2  How Can We Know What The Bible Means?

7. List and define two categories that many of the Bible’s teachings fall into.
   1.
   2.

8. How can we distinguish between the highest norms and regulations?

9. What part of the Old Testament Law is relevant for us today?

10. Read 1 Timothy 5. Which aspects represent highest standards found in the Old and New Testament and which were regulations for the people of Paul’s day?

CHAPTER 3  What Makes The Bible Different?

11. How is the Bible similar to other books that have been written? How is it different?

12. From whom does the Bible claim its authority? Why?

13. Briefly define the basic Hebrew words or phrases which are used in the Old Testament to declare that God is speaking.
   1. Neum:
2. Amar:

3. Davar:

14. How would you account for the differences in detail about the account of the life of Christ?

15. Briefly explain the important basic themes which unify the books of the Bible.
   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.

16. What areas of diversity are there within the framework of the books of the Bible?
   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.

17. Why is the book of Esther, which does not mention the Name of God, included in the progressive revelation of God?
CHAPTER 4  What To Look For In Bible Translations

18. What must a good translator be the master of?

19. Name the three languages in which the Bible was written?
   1.
   2.
   3.

20. How are Aramaic and Hebrew related to each other?

21. In what particular passages was the Aramaic language used?

22. What is relationship of the Aramaic language to Hebrew?

23. Biblical languages were more ___________ than _________________.

24. How were the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic written, and how was the exact word determined?

25. When were the divisions of the Bible into chapters and verses added?

26. What was the Septuagint and why was it so important?

27. What language did Jesus speak?

28. Name the two major types of Bible translations. Briefly explain their strengths and weaknesses and give examples of each.
1.

2.

CHAPTER 5  How The Bible Was Written And Compiled

29. When were the books of the New Testament probably written?

30. When were the writings of the Apostle Paul collected as group?

31. What Church Father quotes the writings of Paul in his letters between A.D. 95 and 110? Why is this significant?

32. Who was Marcion? Describe what he believed, and what “positive” influence he had on the early church.

33. What factors influenced the early church to recognize a writing as canonical?

   1.

   2.

   3.

34. What four Church Fathers were important in recognizing the New Testament writings as authoritative? Give dates.

   1.

   2.
3. Describe the society in which this process took place.

36. When was the list of New Testament books established? How do we know this?

37. Who were the Samaritans and what books of the Old Testament did they recognize as authoritative?

38. Define the following:
   1. Canon
   2. The Septuagint
   3. The Talmud
   4. The Apocrypha

CHAPTER 6  The Life And Times Of Bible People

39. How does the Christian view history?

40. What does the German expression, “Sitz im Leben,” mean and what does it include?
41. What does the German expression, “Sitz im Glauben,” mean and what does it include?

42. What does a good Bible atlas provide? What does a good commentary provide?
   1.
   2.

43. What six factors must be kept in mind when studying any passage of Scripture?
   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.
   6.

CHAPTER 7  What Is This Passage Talking About?

44. True or false _____ Context determines the meaning of a Biblical word.

45. Name and describe the three types of context.
   1.
   2.
   3.
46. What are the three aspects of context?
   1.
   2.
   3.

47. What normally controls the exact meaning of a specific passage of Scripture?
   1.
   2.

48. What are the advantages of studying parallel writings in the Bible?

49. What sections of the Old Testament and New Testament give no context?
   1.
   2.

CHAPTER 8 The Bible Is Rich In Figurative Language

50. Define the terms “figurative” and “literal.”
   1.
   2.

51. Define the following and give Scriptural examples (try to give examples not given in the book).
   1. Similes

   2. Metaphors
3. Anthropomorphism

4. Anthropopathism

5. Words of association

6. Personification

7. Euphemism

8. Hyperbole

9. Irony

CHAPTER 9  Parables And Allegories

52. What is a parable?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

53. What is an allegory?

1.
2.

3.

4.

5. What is allegorizing?

54. What is allegorizing?

55. What did many of Jesus’ parables focus? Give examples.

56. Give examples of allegories from the Old Testament.

57. Give examples of allegories from the New Testament.

**CHAPTER 10 What Were The Prophets Saying?**

58. Define “Prophets.”

59. What was the one basic aim the Biblical Prophet had in mind as he/she prophesied?

60. What was the purpose of predictive prophecy and what was it never intended to do?
61. Explain the two erroneous views of predictive prophecy.
   1.
   2.

62. Give three ways God revealed His message to His Prophets.
   1.
   2.
   3.

63. What does the phrase, “The Prophets were not outsiders looking in.” mean?

64. What are three common methods interpreters use to handle prophetic language? Which is the view held by the authors?
   1.
   2.
   3.

65. Briefly state the five principles in understanding prophecy.
   1.
   2.
66. What type of descriptive language is deeply woven into the fabric of Jewish thought?

67. Why did God not allow the Bible to be written in the scientific language of our day?

68. What three issues affected the writers of Genesis or Revelation?
   1.
   2.
   3.

69. What number signified fullness or totality to the Hebrew people?

70. What philosophical and theological errors does Genesis correct?
   1.
   2.
   3.
71. Why is the use of anthropomorphisms effective in Revelation?

72. Why is figurative language used in the accounts of creation and climax?

CHAPTER 12  Understanding The Poetry Of The Bible

73. How many Old Testament books are all or nearly all poetry?

74. How does Hebrew poetry differ from Western poetry?

75. Define “synonymous parallelism.”

76. Define “acrostic” in Hebrew poetry and give an example.

77. What five guidelines are there to help us understand poetry in the Psalms?
   1.
   2.
78. What four guidelines are there to help us understand poetry in the Proverbs?
1.
2.
3.
4.

79. Which book do the authors consider to contain the greatest poetry in the Old Testament? Why?

CHAPTER 13  How Do We Build Doctrine And Theology

80. Define “doctrine” and “theology.”
1.
2.
81. What is the one main purpose of doctrine and theology?

82. What needs to be emphasized and reemphasized about doctrinal truth?

83. Describe the two basic differences between Biblical and systematic theology?
   1. 
   2. 

84. What are the three areas in which Biblical theologians center their study?
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

85. What does proper “proof-texting” never do?

CHAPTER 14 Bringing It All Together

86. Why is it important for a Christian to have a solid knowledge and understanding of the Bible and how to interpret it?

87. What two important principles do the authors leave the reader with? Briefly explain each one.
   1. 

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88. How will this course in “Understanding Scripture” help you in reading the Bible?

Let us know how this has encouraged you and enabled you to understand the Bible a little better. Email us at discipleshipdevelopment@gmail.com.
BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET FOR ________________________________

☐ I prayed for revelation and understanding.

1. IDENTIFY THE TYPE OF LITERATURE (Narrative, psalm, prophecy, proverb, poetry, and epistle, etc.?)

2. CONTEXT
   A. Who wrote the text? And to whom was it written?
   B. When was it written and why was it written?
   D. What is the location of the writer, readers, or events?
   E. What geographic, political, or cultural aspects are relevant to the passage?
   F. What is the literary context? What are the verses preceding and following the text?

3. OBSERVATION – LOOK! What does it say?
   A. Who are the characters involved?
B. Describe what is happening – where, when, why, and how do the events happen?

4. **INTERPRETATION – LEARN!** What does it mean?
   
   A. Why did the writer say what he did? What did he mean?
   
   B. What is the significance?
   
   C. What is the implication?
   
   D. Define key words

5. **CORRELATION – LINK!** How does it relate?
   
   A. How and where does this passage relate to major Biblical themes and doctrines?

6. **APPLICATION – LIVE!** How does it apply?
   
   A. State the commands to obey.
   
   B. Are there errors to avoid? Are there sins to forsake?
   
   C. Are there promises to claim?
   
   D. Are there new thoughts about God?
   
   E. State the important eternally applicable truths I learned from this passage.
   
   F. What does this passage suggest I should be or do as a believer?