

Principles for a Better Bible Study

Principle #1: The Bible is a book about _____ .

The point of the Bible is God Himself. When we study the Bible, it's important that we keep the point of the Bible at the center of our study. Because the Bible is a book about God, everything in the Bible points to Him. Every book, every story, every character, every event - they all reveal information to us regarding the nature and character of God. As you read, you can keep this in mind by continually asking yourself questions such as these...

What does this book, chapter, event, character tell me about God?
How does God reveal who He is through this account?
What do I learn about God's unchanging nature through this story?

The Bible is the primary tool through which God reveals Himself to us, which makes God-centered Bible study one of the most powerful means through which we draw near to Him. Keeping the above questions in mind as you study the Bible will help you keep the point of the Bible at the center of your study. It will help you remember that the Bible is first and foremost, a book about God.

Principle #2: The Bible is not a book about _____ .

If God is the main point of the Bible, then that must mean that you and I are *not* the main point of the Bible. The Bible is not about us. It's about Him. However, many of us learned to read the Bible as if it really is all about us. For instance, think about how often questions such as these run through your mind as you approach Bible study:

How is this information going to help *me*?
Improve *my* relationships?
Help me steward *my* resources?
Shape the way *I* make decisions?

These are not bad questions to ask. But they mustn't be the primary questions we ask. A good rule of thumb for Bible study is this; the "He" has to come before the "me."

We will learn a lot about who we are as individuals, as well as human nature in general, through Bible study. However, that is not why we study the Bible. We study the Bible to learn about God. Only after we nail down what a particular book, verse, character, or story reveals to us about God, will we then ask ourselves, "In light of what this passage reveals to us about God, what do we learn about the nature of people in general or me in particular?"

Principle #3: The Bible tells one big _____ .

The Bible tells the most amazing story of all-time. The point of the entire Bible is to tell this *one* story. Even though the Bible is composed of 66 different books, written by over 40 different people (the majority of whom never knew each other), during a period of over 1600 years, the theme of this one story is unmistakable and there is one consistent message from God to man. Having a correct understanding of the grand-scale Biblical narrative is crucial to a proper understanding of each individual character, book, story, and event in the Bible. We have to study each portion of the Bible in light of the bigger story in which it is embedded. To do this, we will use the Bible to study the Bible.

Principle #4: The Bible is about real _____ and a living _____ who speaks to us _____ .

The stories we read in the Bible are true stories that happened to real people. These stories reveal to us information about an *actual, living* God. The heart of the Bible is that we would come to know God through our reading of it. And God chooses to reveal to us who He is through the stories of His people. His *real* people. And their *true* stories. As we read the Bible with this in mind we come to see that the people in the Bible are not so different from you and I, and their stories bear a striking resemblance to our stories. As we come to know them and their stories, we better recognize God in ours.

Principle #5: The Bible is a _____ book.

Although written by human hands, the words of the Bible are divinely inspired, with authorship of the book ultimately being attributed to God Himself. Because of this, the Bible is no ordinary book and we cannot fully understand it through ordinary means. We are dependent on the Holy Spirit in our study of God's Word. We use the minds God gave us to study, explore, and press into God's Word, and then we wholly depend on the Spirit to lead us to trust it, accept it and walk in it. Be prayerful in your attempts to study the Bible. Ask the Lord to meet you as you study and to reveal Himself to you as you read, then expect that He will!

Principle #6: _____ is crucial.

The single most important principle for studying the Bible correctly is this: Context determines *everything*. To understand the Bible correctly, you must seek a correct understanding of the context of whatever portion of the Bible you are reading.

The Bible was written as individual books by individual people, during certain historical times, within particular cultures, and to a specific person or group of people with a specific purpose. Understanding who wrote each book, to whom each book was written, and why it was written will help us understand how that book is relevant to the big picture story of the Bible as a whole (see Principle #3), as well as how it relates to us today.

Principle #7: _____ is key.

Make a commitment to be here every week and to do the assigned reading and homework questions. This 9-week journey is going to require a lot of effort on your part, but the pay-off of studying God's word with care and consistency is HUGE! The Lord makes beautiful promises regarding the effect His living Word will have on our souls. Let's chase those life-giving promises together this spring.

Week One

Introduction to 1 Peter

1 Peter 1:1

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia...

1. The book of 1 Peter is a _____, or an epistle.
2. 1 Peter was written by _____, who identifies himself as an _____ of Jesus Christ.
3. Peter was a man who grew slowly and steadily into full belief of his _____ of who Christ was.
4. Peter wrote this letter to a mixed group of Jew and Gentile _____ living in various regions of the _____ empire.

1 Peter 5:12-13

By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.

5. Peter wrote this letter from _____, which he symbolically refers to as "Babylon," in reference to any culture or society that stands in opposition to God and his people.
6. Peter wrote this letter around _____ AD, just prior to Nero's fierce persecution of Christians began.
7. Ultimately, 1 Peter is going to teach us how to be witnesses of _____ as we make our way _____.

