

Why Study The Bible?

Before we begin our study, I want to ask, “Why do you want to learn how to study the Bible?” People study the Bible for many different reasons. Some people study the Bible to find a reason to support their unbelief. That is why atheists typically read the Bible. They hope to find unfulfilled prophecies, factual errors, or contradictions. Some unbelievers study the Bible in order to teach it at a university or even in a heretical seminary. This is occurring more often than many believers understand. Others study the Bible in order to become an expert in the Bible. Others open their Bibles on Sunday morning, if they bring it. Others read and study the Bible for a variety of reasons.

Two Important Assumptions. Whatever your reason for reading this study and the following studies, it is important to know that this study series contains two assumptions. The first assumption is that you are a Christian, or a believer in Jesus Christ. John 3:3 records these words from Jesus Christ,

Truly, truly,
I say to you,
unless one is
born again,
he cannot see
the kingdom
of God. John
3:3 (NASB)

Here Jesus declared that a person cannot see the kingdom of God, that is, go to heaven, unless they have been born again. The Greek words that are translated as “born again,” literally mean “born from above.” That is, God gives us spiritual life. A person is born from above when they believe in Jesus. As a result of believing in

Him, he repents of his sins and submits to Christ. That all happens in a moment in time. So, unless one is born from above, he cannot go to heaven. It is also true that unless the person is born from above, he cannot understand the Bible. That is the message of 1 Corinthians 2:14. This means that if you are not a Christian, you will have trouble understanding parts of this study and the Bible. So, the first assumption for this study to be meaningful to you and to be understood is that you are a Christian.

The second assumption is that you long to know the Bible. Psalm 19:10 reveals the desire of King David’s heart toward the Bible. He said the Bible is,

... more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold.
Psalm 19:10 (NASB)

King David loved the Word of God more than gold. He would give away gold to know the Bible. In the book of Job,

the ancient patriarch Job wrote these words,

I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.
Job 23:12 (NASB)

Have you ever been passionate about studying

the Bible that you skipped a meal? Have you ever fasted while studying the Bible? He treasured the Bible more than the food he needed for life. The prophet Jeremiah said this in Jeremiah 15:16.



Your words were found and I ate them,
And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of
my heart. Jeremiah 23:14 (NASB)

The common passion of the hearts of these men was that they longed for the Word of God more than anything else. Is that true of you? If not, then you need to evaluate your relationship with God. The well-known preacher R. A. Torrey wrote this wise statement,

Where there is life, there is likely to be appetite. A dead man never hungers.¹

That is, unbelievers will not have an appetite for the Bible, because they are spiritually dead and not alive. They have not been born from above. So, the first assumption of this study is that you are a Christian. The second is that you long to know the Bible. Both of these must be true, in order for you to enjoy this series.

Why Study the Bible — Know the Truth. Now there are two joys of Bible study. The first joy is that you will begin to know more of the truth. I was in my twenties when I realized that I did not know the Bible. I could not tell someone how to become a Christian. If someone had asked me how to be saved from hell, I could not tell them. I would have sent them to my pastor.

Then I realized that meant I did not know for sure what I had to do, if anything, in order to go to heaven. What was worse was that I realized my pastor might be wrong about how to be saved. If he was wrong, then I was going to hell! I concluded that I did not want to trust my own pastor. In fact, I finally admitted to myself that I knew little about the Bible, except for John 3:16 and a few other passages. I did not know where the Scripture verses were located. I did not know how to understand them. I had not been studying the Bible. I attended church and heard the pastor preach. I sang the hymns on Sunday morning. I called Jesus my Savior and Lord. But when the church service was over, I was eager to go home.

Also, I was a leader in my church. Then a man and his

wife started attending our young marrieds group. I quickly discovered this young man had a strong grasp of the Bible. He knew much more than I did, and he was not a pastor. I realized that I could know the truth of Scripture too! I just had to make it a priority. God was speaking to me. From that moment, I wanted to study the Bible so I could know the truth. Since then, I have been constantly studying the Bible and learning the truth.

Discovery #1 – The Bible Is Truth. My first discovery about the Bible was that it is truth. Recently, I was talking to a man who told me that he believed his religion was true. He was part of a cult. The reason he believed his cult was true was God answered his prayers. Did you know that the Bible never tells us that answered prayers are proof the Bible is true? Instead, the Bible tells us that fulfilled prophecies are the proof the Bible is truth (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). The Bible has many fulfilled prophecies. The Bible is truth. It is not full of myths, mistakes, and errors. God, who cannot lie, wrote the book by His Holy Spirit. We will learn more about this in our next study. In John 17:17 we are told that Jesus was praying to the Father and he said this,

Your word is truth. John 17:17 (NASB)

In Colossians 1:5 and 2 Timothy 2:15, the Bible is called the Word of Truth. I love that name for the Bible. The Bible is truth.

Discovery #2 – Salvation Is By Faith In Christ. My second discovery was that a person is saved from hell by faith in Jesus Christ, and nothing else is required. The Bible explains how to go to heaven, or how to have eternal life. For example, 2 Timothy 3:15 says,

From childhood you have known the sacred writings
which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to
salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim-
othy 3:15 (NASB)

Today the sacred writings include both the Old and New Testaments. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, Abraham told the rich man that a person could learn how

1. R. A. Torrey. How to Study the Bible. Whitaker House. 1986., p. 10.

New Testament Passages About Believing, Repenting, Confessing and Being Baptized

Passage	Believe	Repent	Confess	Baptized	New Testament Passages (NASB)
Mark 1:15	X	X			Repent and believe in the gospel.
Mark 16:16	X			X	He who believes and is baptized will be saved . . .
Luke 8:12	X				So that they may not believe and be saved.
John 1:12	X				The right to become children of God, to those who believe . . .
John 3:5				X	Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
John 3:15	X				So that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.
John 3:16	X				Whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
John 3:18	X				He who believes in Him is not judged . . .
John 3:36	X				He who believes in the Son has eternal life . . .
John 5:24	X				He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life . . .
John 6:40	X				Everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life . . .
John 6:47	X				Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.
John 11:25-26	X				He who believes in Me shall live even if he dies
John 20:31	X				But these have been written that . . . believing you may have life in His name
Acts 2:37-38		X		X	Repent, and let each of you be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of your sins . . .*
Acts 3:19		X			Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away . . .*
Acts 8:36-37		Not In Best MSS			What prevents me from being baptized?" . . . Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart.
Acts 10:43	X				Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.
Acts 16:31	X				Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved . . .
Acts 19:4	X			X	John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him . . .
Acts 22:16				X	Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.
Acts 26:18	X				Receive forgiveness of sins and . . . have been sanctified by faith in Me.
Romans 1:16	X				For salvation to everyone who believes , to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
Romans 3:22	X				The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe . . .
Romans 4:3	X				ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . .
Romans 6:4				X	Buried with Him through baptism into death . . . Christ was raised from the dead
Romans 10:9	X		X		Confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart . . .
Galatians 3:6	X				Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . .
Galatians 3:22	X				The promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe . . .
Galatians 3:26-27	X	Not About Baptism			All sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ . . . t
Ephesians 2:8-9	X				For by grace you have been saved through faith . . . not as a result of works . . .
1 Timothy 1:16	X				As an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life . . .
Titus 3:5		Not About Baptism			He saved us . . . by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit . . .
James 2:23	X				AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . .
1 Peter 1:9	X				Obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls . . .
1 Peter 3:21				X	Now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh . . .
1 John 3:23	X				And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ . . .

to have eternal life by reading Moses and the prophets (Luke 16:30-31). Romans 15:4 says,




For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4 (NASB)

That is, both the Old and New Testaments tell us how to have eternal life, if we will just search. So, I searched every New Testament verse I could find about how to be saved. I found thirty-seven primary passages that referred to faith or believing, baptism, and works in connection with being saved, or gaining eternal life. I discovered that out of those thirty-seven verses, faith is mentioned thirty-one times. Bap-

is the verse,
For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)

The verse teaches us that we are saved by God's grace and through faith. No other thing or efforts will save me. Salvation is by faith, not baptism or anything else.

Discovery #3 - Bible Study Is A Must For Spiritual Growth. My third discovery, as the result of Bible study, was that a knowledge of the Bible was essential for my spiritual growth, but it is not alone the goal for Christians. God used 1 John 2:12-14 to teach me this very important lesson. The

		
Little Children	Young Man	Father
"Sins forgiven" 1 John 2:12	"Strong, Word of God abides in you, overcomes the evil one" 1 John 2:14	"Known Him Who is from the beginning" 1 John 2:13

tism is mentioned only four times. It was obvious that faith alone is required for salvation.

Romans 4:4-5 reveals that if I try to do good works in order to go to heaven, then I will send myself to hell. Why? The passage says that if I do good works in order to have eternal life, then God would owe me a reward. Since salvation is a free gift, I would not go to heaven. By doing good works in an attempt to gain eternal life, I would earn hell. Romans 6:23 declares that God only gives eternal life as a free gift. Since I cannot earn a free gift, my works are useless.

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that we are spiritually born by God's grace, through faith. I must believe that Jesus did everything that is necessary for me to gain eternal life. Here

passage says,
I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. 1 John 2:12-14 (NASB)

As I thought about this passage, I realized that I was not a spiritual father. I was a baby Christian. This was very convicting. The passage reveals that little children have had their sins forgiven. That is where every believer starts. That is the baby Christian. The young man describes the next step in spiritual growth. Verse 14 says he is strong. I believe that means his faith is strong (Romans 4:20). The next mark of a spiritual young man is that the Word of God abides in Him. That means he knows the Bible well and is obeying it. This means more than he is just obeying it, since he must know the Bible in order to obey it. Then we are told he has overcome Satan. He is wearing the armor of God and is victorious (Ephesians 6:10-18). We will talk more about this in another study. The final step in spiritual growth is to know the Father. Notice that the only thing that is said of the spiritual father is that he knows Him who has been from the beginning.

Some Christians think that knowing the Bible is the goal in the Christian life. But that is not what this passage teaches us. Other Christians want to skip becoming a young man and jump to being a father of the faith. So, they read a book about how to know God. Now that can be good and meaningful. But the sad truth is that it is an attempt to shortcut the spiritual growth process described in 1 John 21:12-14. Just as a fourteen-year-old teenager cannot decide to become a seventy-two-year-old, it does not work in spiritual life either. A believer cannot become a father of the faith, without first becoming a young man who knows the Bible well.

Discovery #4 – God Wants Me To Seek Him. Then I realized that the ultimate goal for a Christian is to seek and search to know God. He wants every Christian to seek Him. Exodus 33:18-19 tells us that Moses had asked to see God's glory. Then Exodus 33:20 records God's answer.

You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live! Exodus 33:18-20 (NASB)

Since no man can see God and live, God does not allow men to see Him. A man once told me that he saw Jesus every morning and talked with Him in the mirror. Immediately, we know that he never saw Jesus. If he had, he would have died. We do not know why we cannot see God. But there is

something about us that prevents us from seeing God. That is why John 1:18 and 1 John 4:12 say no man has seen God at any time. Colossians 1:15 and 1 Timothy 1:17 say that God is invisible. Yet, God drops hints that He exists. Romans 1:20 says,

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:20 (NASB)

Since we cannot see God and live, He drops hints that He exists. That is the message of Job 26:7-14 which says that the works of God are the very hints He exists. The verse says,

Behold, these are the fringes of His ways . . . Job 26:14 (NASB)

Now I have a question. Have you ever asked yourself, "Why does God not tell us more in the Bible?" Why has He not written a book that reveals more about Himself? For example, Proverbs 25:2 says it is the glory of God to hide things from us!

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. Proverbs 25:2 (NASB)

The verse contrasts God to kings. God conceals, but kings search out. The implication is that God wants us to search and seek. Hebrews 11:6 gives us the same message.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NASB)

Jeremiah 29:13-14 also leaves us the same message. It says,

And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for

[Me with all your heart. I will let Myself be found by you . . . Jeremiah 29:13-14 \(NASB\)](#)

God gave Israel a principle that is also true for us. If we will seek Him and search for Him with all our heart, then He will let us find Him. This is true in salvation and after we are given eternal life.

The mark of a spiritual father is that he seeks and searches for God. You see, the ultimate goal of a believer's life is to seek and search out the truths about God. That was true of the apostle Paul. Paul wrote these words in Philippians 3:8,

[More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ . . . Philippians 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

Paul said that he wanted to know Christ so much that he considered everything else to be rubbish or cow manure. Now Paul was not an unbeliever. When Paul wrote these words, he was an apostle. The words reveal that Paul wanted to know more about Christ. He was a father of the faith who was seeking to know more about Christ. You see, the ultimate goal of a believer is to search to know more about God. God wants us to be searching to know Him. I think that is one reason God hides Himself and has left us hints of His existence. The ultimate goal of Bible study is to become a father of the faith who knows Him who is from the beginning. As a believer does this, he will become holy as He is Holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Why Study the Bible — Receive Blessings.

That was the first joy. The first joy of Bible study is to know truth. The next joy is that we receive blessings as we study the Word of God. We will look at five promises of blessing that are given to believers. The first one is in 1 John 1:4. It says,

[These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. 1 John 1:4 \(NASB\)](#)

The verse reveals that receiving joy was the result of studying what the apostle John wrote. John also wrote these words in

Revelation 1:3,

[Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy . . . Revelation 1:3 \(NASB\)](#)

These are wonderful promises. Two more promises of blessings are found in the gospel of John. The first one is John 14:27. It says,

[Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. John 14:27 \(NASB\)](#)

Then in John 15:11, Jesus gives us this promise of blessing for those who are abiding in Him.

[These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. John 15:11 \(NASB\)](#)

These are wonderful promises for every believer as the result of abiding in His Word.

The fifth passage about blessing is from Acts 17:11. In verse 10, we are told that Paul and Silas had arrived in the city of Berea and entered a synagogue. Then verse 11 says,

[Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Acts 17:11 \(NASB\)](#)

Why were the Bereans more noble than those in Thessalonica? The answer is those in Berea studied the Scriptures to check out the apostle Paul. They were more noble because they were seekers for truth. Scripture praised them. That reveals God was pleased with them.

Conclusion. Why should we study the Bible? We have discovered there are two primary reasons. First, to know the truth. As you search and dig, you will learn why the Bible is truth. You will learn more about salvation, and how to grow spiritually. The ultimate goal is to seek and search in order to know more about God. It is a lifelong adventure. The apostle

Paul was constantly seeking to know more about Him. He said that he considered everything he owned to be nothing more important than “cow manure” next to the joy of knowing Him.

The second joy of Bible study is the blessings we receive as a result of studying the Word of God. Blessings are given to us because we study. God rewards our heart’s desire to read what He wrote.

King David was correct. The Word of God is,

... more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold.

Psalm 19:10 (NASB)