

learn to **STUDY THE BIBLE**
Forty different step-by-step methods to help you
discover, apply, and enjoy God's Word.

Andy Deane



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Special thanks to my wife Shannon for all of your support during this writing project. Your handwritten examples make these methods understandable and attainable. You are such a blessing to me and you're a godly helpmate.

ENDORSEMENTS

Wow, Andy has shattered the cold stone ceiling of Bible study! No longer will the Bible remain mysterious, or reserved for theologians. Many Bible study methods morph into boring laborious monotony, but not this one. *Learn to Study the Bible* makes knowing the Bible adventurous, deeply personal, thought provoking, and just plain fun. No matter where you open this book you will discover great new methods of digging into the treasure of God's Word. Whether it is the chapter on Daily Devotions, the Rethink and Restate Method, or the Verse-by-Verse charting, you will find the next page is as helpful and enjoyable as the last. Anyone wishing to cultivate the same passion for God's Word that has transformed the author will love this book.

Pastor Lloyd Pulley

Senior Pastor of Calvary Chapel Old Bridge, in New Jersey

Andy has put together an amazing resource. We will definitely be using it as part of our training for all our leaders and School of Ministry students, as well as for our one-on-one discipleship sessions, and small group Bible studies.

Pastor Bob Caldwell

Senior Pastor of Calvary Chapel Boise, in Idaho

Bible study is overlooked and under-appreciated by many Christians. This book takes it from a scholar's level and helps people understand that ANYONE can study the Bible! It is very applicable, and since it presents so many different methods, there is sure to be one (or a few) that will fit every reader.

Pastor Kevin Miller

Jr. High Youth Pastor of Calvary Chapel Albuquerque, in New Mexico

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FOREWORD

Nothing could be worse than turning the living Bible into a boring and confusing tome. Yet, that is exactly what happens to so many, simply because they haven't been given the essential tools needed to unlock the rich character of God's Word for themselves.

As "people of the Book," we Christians have received a privilege that truly is above all else. And yet, so often I hear believers expressing frustration in their attempts to study and understand God's Word. Either they tell me they don't know how to get started, or they get bogged down in boring and monotonous study routines, or they don't know the basics of being able to observe, interpret, and apply biblical principles in their own lives.

That is why I am so excited about this book. Andy Deane has provided the church with an exceptional answer to this problem, by giving the reader all the tools needed to grow in their understanding and love for God and His Word. In this one resource, Andy has done an amazingly thorough job of compiling a wide variety of Bible study methods and describing them in a way that is useful, concise, and practical. Frankly, I am surprised that no one has done this before.

I believe *Learn to Study the Bible*, is a valuable resource for every Christian who wants to dig deeper into God's Word, and also for anyone who has the opportunity to teach the Bible to others. It is a book that can be opened randomly to almost any page, and on it you will find a new and exciting way to encounter the Word of God. I look forward to hearing how God uses it in the lives of His children.

Pastor Dave Rolph

Calvary Chapel Pacific Hills
Aliso Viejo, California

Dave Rolph has been involved in ministry at Calvary Chapel for over thirty years. Dave was an assistant pastor at Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa for 25 years, and is currently serving as senior pastor of Calvary Chapel Pacific Hills in Aliso Viejo, California. He is heard daily on his radio program, The Balanced Word, and was the general editor of The Word For Today Bible, by Pastor Chuck Smith.

The Foundations of Bible Study

Core Components of Every Bible Study

Every house needs to be constructed on a solid foundation, if it is going to stand strong during adverse conditions. So too, Christians who build their lives upon the solid rock of God's Word, will have the strength needed to weather all of life's storms. The following chapters contain useful helps and basic information that are the essential building blocks for Christians who desire to study God's Word. Spend some time reviewing these chapters before digging into the various methods.



introduction



The Joy of Bible Study

I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.

— Psalm 119:162

Imagine this hypothetical situation: You are asked to sift several tons of sand from one pile to another, by spooning it through a hand-held strainer. Without a doubt you would consider that kind of a task to be futile and boring. However, what if you were told that while doing this you were guaranteed to find a gold nugget every hour, and as you continued sifting through the pile you would begin finding them every minute. In addition, whatever treasure you found would be yours to keep. No longer would the task seem futile or boring. The pile of sand would take on a whole new meaning to you because of the value that was hidden within.

The same analogy can be made of Bible study. With very little effort, great riches are ours to discover and keep, as we carefully sift through the Word of God each day. With access to such great spiritual treasure, we can relate to the words the psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:162.

Gold, Diamonds, and Emeralds

Exactly what kind of treasure can we expect to find in the Bible? I've heard Psalm 19:7-10 rephrased by someone this way: "The revelation of God is whole and pulls our lives together. The signposts of God are clear

and point out the right road. The life-maps of God are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of God are plain and easy on the eyes. God's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of God are accurate down to the nth degree. God's Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds. You'll like it better than strawberries in spring, better than red, ripe strawberries."

That is my prayer for everyone who reads this book. May you become skilled at discovering God's great treasure, and be excited by the spiritual riches that are yours to keep, as you learn to study the Bible.

Eight Benefits of Studying the Word

1. <u>It assures us of salvation</u> 1 John 5:13	5. <u>It guides our decisions</u> Psalm 119:105
2. <u>It cleanses us from sin</u> John 15:3 / John 17:17	6. <u>It helps us in prayer</u> John 15:7
3. <u>It gives peace</u> John 16:33	7. <u>It strengthens</u> 1 John 2:14
4. <u>It brings joy</u> John 15:11	8. <u>It leads to success</u> Joshua 1:8

The Bible Answers Life's Biggest Questions

In addition to discovering the richness of our Creator, studying the Bible also helps us to learn more about ourselves, and the world in which we live. Answers to all of life's biggest questions are found in God's Word.

Questions such as:

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- Where did I come from?
- Where am I going?
- What should I do with my life?
- What's my relationship to God?

The Bible answers all of these questions and many more. From cover to cover, the Bible is God's revelation to us.

Who Should Study the Bible?

Every Christian should study the Bible. We all need God's wisdom no matter what season of life we are in. This little poem, written by a Baptist church in Indiana, answers the question well:

The young—to learn how to live; the old—to know how to die

The ignorant—for wisdom; the learned—for humility

The rich—for compassion; the poor—for comfort

The dreamer—for enchantment; the practical—for counsel

The weak—for strength; the strong—for direction

The haughty—for warning; the humble—for exaltation

The troubled—for peace; the sinner—for salvation

The doubting—for assurance; all Christians—for guidance

Why I Wrote This Book

This project came about after, what I thought was going to be a fairly simple task of teaching a group of junior high students a few basic inductive Bible study principles that would help them dig into the Word on a daily basis. The class wasn't forced upon them; they wanted to learn how to study the Bible for themselves. So, I agreed to share some of what I have learned about studying the Scriptures with them. I even threw in some clever (or at least I thought so) illustrations and examples that teenage minds could relate to, in an attempt to make the class fun and memorable. But to my surprise, after forty minutes they were actually worse off than when we began; all I had to show for my effort was a room full of frustrated and confused teenagers. The collective look of bewilderment on their faces was one of the scariest moments I've ever experienced as a youth pastor. I had accomplished the exact opposite of what I had set out to do: instead of getting them excited about studying the Bible, they left feeling as though it was totally out of their reach.

What a disaster! I quickly realized that the biggest mistakes I made were 1) trying to teach them a method of Bible study that was too complicated for them to grasp, and 2) presenting it to them as if it was the only way to study Scripture. I was determined to right this wrong, but first I needed to

do a little research. So, I began to look for the perfect Bible study method—one that would open their young minds to the richness of God’s Word.

A personal quest began to grow out of my utter failure. Every day I searched for new study methods. I read over thirty books (many out of print) and visited countless websites looking for the best Bible study methods. None of the ones I found were perfect, but many of them had interesting points of view and seemed like they would be fun to try. So I did. That is when I began to realize that I was onto something more than I anticipated at the start. My search resulted in not one, but numerous inspiring and challenging Bible study methods suitable for any Christian, young or old, who desires to draw nearer to the Lord through studying His Word.

In the end, I had compiled a list of forty different step-by-step Bible study methods. I tested each of them myself, modifying some in order to make them a little more efficient and to the point. As I was doing this, a desire to share my discoveries with others began to intensify in my heart. I wished that everyone could read the books and visit the websites for themselves, but I knew that wasn’t realistic. So I did the next best thing. I decided to bring it all together in this one book, *Learn to Study the Bible*.

No other resource provides the large variety of Bible study methods, hand-written examples, and study aids that are available in this one book. The hundreds of hours spent researching and experimenting with these forty methods will enable you to find one or more that will fit your goals and begin enhancing your understanding of God’s Word, today. Whether you are a teenager or a mature Bible student, a Sunday school teacher or a pastor, a stay-at-home mom or a busy executive, you will find in the pages of this book, a number of Bible study methods that will add excitement and enjoyment to your study of God’s Word. In addition, you will have resources at your fingertips that will help you to train and encourage others who want to learn how to dig into the Scriptures for themselves.

Why Use a Method to Study the Bible?

It has been rightly said, if we fail to plan, we plan to fail. This is true when it comes to Bible study too. If you have a desire to study the Bible but don’t have a plan, you will fail. But the good news is: You now have many plans to choose from! When it comes to methods for studying the Bible, variety is the spice of life. Unfortunately, Christians don’t always realize this. Instead, many leave the study of Scripture to their pastor or Bible study teacher simply because they never learned how to study the Bible,

or the Bible study method that they were taught was too complicated for them to work into their daily lives.

Each of the forty methods compiled in this book have been tested and enjoyed in my own personal study time and shared with many of my students and friends. They all offer unique perspectives that will inspire every Christian to dig deeper into God's Word, no matter how long he or she has been a believer. Although diverse in style, one element common to them all is that they cause you to think through the Scriptures and get the most from your reading of God's Word. I recommend that you try each of these methods. They will help you:

- Stay fresh in your approach to God and His Word.
- Draw out great spiritual truths from the Scripture passage that you may have missed otherwise.
- Avoid the dryness that can sometimes creep into routines.

In addition, I want to make this one last point. As nice as it is to dine at a fine restaurant, nothing beats sitting down to a delicious home cooked meal. The same can be said of feasting on the Word. In the body of Christ we have been gifted with many wonderful Bible teachers who serve up hearty meals that help us come to a better understanding of certain passages. However, the real meat and potatoes of growing in truth comes when we roll up our own sleeves and learn how to prepare those meals for ourselves. Learning to study the Bible is as easy—and diverse—as learning how to cook your favorite foods. Don't let anything rob you of experiencing the best God has for you, personally, in His Word today.

The forty methods we will be looking at in this book are sure to satisfy every appetite. Yes, it will take some work and a little planning, but in the end, I guarantee it will be well worth the effort. One verse of Scripture well chewed, digested, and assimilated into your life will strengthen and satisfy your hungry soul more than anything else this world has to offer. So get your Bible and a notebook, and let's dig in!