

How to Study the Bible

by Samuel Logan Brengle

The key to understanding and loving the Bible is to read and study it with the love and enthusiasm of a young lover, meditating on it day and night, and reading it over again and again.

Scripture: Joshua 1:8, Job 23:12, Psalm 119:11, Psalm 119:97, Jeremiah 15:16, Luke 24:27, Luke 24:45, John 5:39, Acts 17:11, Ephesians 4:32 - 5:1

Topics: "Bible Study", "Relationship with God"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the importance of studying the Bible with the same passion and dedication as a young lover cherishes letters from their beloved. He encourages readers to approach the Scriptures with an open mind, searching diligently for truth and understanding, much like the Bereans who examined the Scriptures daily. Brengle highlights that the goal of Bible study should not be mere accumulation of knowledge, but rather the cultivation of love and a deeper relationship with God. He advises readers to follow the flow of thought in the Scriptures and to persist in their study, trusting that understanding will come with time and prayer. Ultimately, he calls for a heartfelt engagement with God's Word, leading to transformation and a life reflective of Christ's love.

Transcript

The other day I received a letter from a young Officer asking for a few suggestions as to how to read and study the Bible. Here they are:

I. Read and study it as two young lovers read and study each other's letters. As soon as the mail brings a letter from his sweetheart, the young man grabs it and without waiting to see if there is not another letter for him, runs off to a corner and reads and laughs and rejoices over it and almost devours it. If he is a particularly desperate and demonstrative lover -- (the Lord make us desperate and demonstrative lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ!) -- he will probably kiss it and carry it next to his heart till the next one comes.

He meditates on it day and night, and reads it over again and then again. He carries it down town with him, and on the street car appears very quiet and thoughtful, till all at once a twinkle comes into his eye, out comes the letter and choice portions are read over again. He delights in that letter. If any part is hard to understand, a letter is sent off post haste for explanations, and the explanation and letter will be most carefully compared, and possibly also previous letters will be studiously compared with this one. I knew a young man whose fate was hanging in the balance. He wanted assurance, but the young woman was coy, and she veiled her true feelings and left him in uncertainty, and he studied her letters and weighed every

word and phrase and brought them to me, and had me compare letter with letter, as we should compare Scripture with Scripture, in order, if possible, to discover the state of her mind and heart and his prospects. In due time he was abundantly rewarded.

Now, that is the way to read the Bible. It is God's will and testament. It is His own carefully written instructions as to what manner of people He would have us be; as to how we shall behave ourselves; what we shall do and not do; what our rights and privileges in Jesus are; what are our peculiar dangers; how we shall know our enemies and conquer them; how we shall enter into and constantly enjoy his favor and escape Hell and get safely home to Heaven.

II. Read in Acts xvii. 11, what the disciples in Berea did.

'They received the word with all readiness of mind.' A frank and noble mind is open to the truth, and wants it more than gold or pleasure or fame or power.

'They searched the Scriptures.' They wanted to know for themselves, and not by mere hearsay. They searched. Precious things are deeply hidden. Pebbles and stones and autumn leaves abound everywhere, but gold and silver and precious stones are hidden deep in the bowels and rocky ribs of the earth; shells cover the sea-shore, but pearls are hidden in its depths. And so with truth. Some truth may lie on the surface of the Bible, but those that will altogether satisfy and distinguish us and make us wise unto salvation are found only after diligent search, even as for hid treasure. 'Search the Scriptures;' said Jesus, 'for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me' (John v. 39). If you would know Jesus, search the Scriptures, and you will come to know Him and see His face, and be like Him.

'They searched daily.' Daily, not spasmodically, by fits and starts, but daily, habitually, they dug into the word of God, to find out if the things Paul preached were so. And just so must you do. 'Thou shalt meditate therein day and night' (Joshua ii. 8), was God's instruction to Joshua. And once this habit is formed the delight in God's word will become unspeakable.

'Thy words were found, and I did eat them;' said Jeremiah, 'and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart' (Jer. xiii. 16). 'O how love I Thy law!' cried the Psalmist. 'It is my meditation all the day' (Ps. cxix. 97).

In forming the habit of Bible study we may have to begin and follow it up for a time from a sense of duty, but once the habit is formed, if we are not only hearers but doers of the word, we shall follow it up for very joy, until we can say with Job, 'I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food' (Job xxiii. 12).

III. Read and study the word not to get a mass of knowledge in the head, but a flame of love in the heart. 'Knowledge puffeth up' (I Cor. viii. 1), but love buildeth up. Read it to find fuel for affection, food for reflection, direction for judgment, guidance for conscience.

Read it not that you may know, but that you may do.

IV. Follow carefully the line of thought from verse to verse and chapter to chapter. Often the first part of one chapter belongs to the last part of the preceding chapter. For instance, in the last verse of the fourth chapter of Ephesians, we read, 'And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you,' and in the first verse of the fifth chapter we read, 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.'

Those two verses belong together. We are to follow God in what? Why, in the spirit of kindness and tender-heartedness and forgiveness.

Again, in John vii. 53, we read, 'And every man went unto his own house,' and in viii. 1, 'Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.'

These two verses belong together. Jesus had no house. Bless Him! So when they went each to his own house for the night, Jesus went to the cold, dark mount!

Finally, do not be discouraged if progress in the knowledge of the word seems slow as first. It is like learning to play an instrument or master a trade; for the first few days or weeks it appears impossible, but it is not so. Some glad day a brain-cell will expand or a veil drop from your face and scales from your eyes and you will find yourself doing the impossible with ease.

So it will be in acquainting yourself with the word of God. Keep at it, keep at it, keep at it! Cry to God with David, 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law' (Ps. cxix. 18).

Pray for an understanding heart. You will only love and understand the word as Jesus reveals it to you. So walk with Him, take up your cross and follow Him through evil as well as good report.

After His resurrection, He came to His trembling, heart-broken, disappointed disciples, and Luke tells us that 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself' (Luke xxiv. 27), and later Luke says, 'Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures' (Luke xxiv. 45).

There are things in the Bible hard to be understood, and we may not know them till we stand by the crystal sea, but we can learn those things that will make us meek and lowly in heart as was Jesus, watchful, patient, loving, kind, forgiving, and utterly zealous and self-sacrificing for the salvation of men. Hallelujah!

Happy shall we be, if; like David, we can say, 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee' (Ps. cxix. 11).

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