

How To Study the Bible for Yourself

First Hand Truth

¹⁰ The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to **Berea**, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ Now these Jews were **more noble** than those in Thessalonica; they **received** the word with all eagerness, **examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.** ¹² Many of them **therefore believed**, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

Acts 17:10-12 ESV

Study it for Yourself

Noble / of noble birth / a willingness to learn

Received / receive readily information and regard it as true.

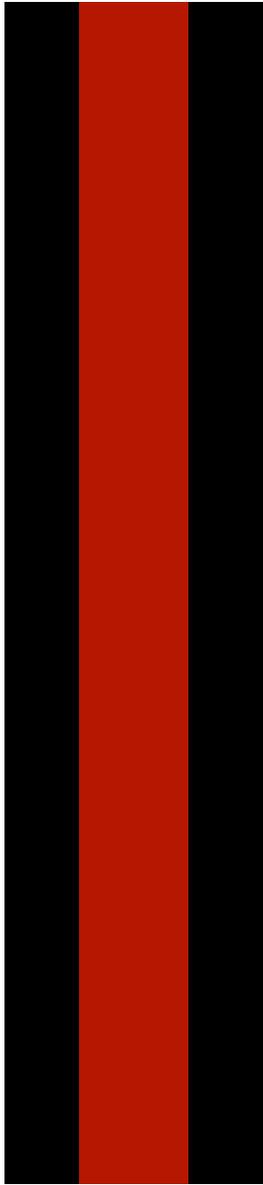
Eagerness / willingness, zeal, readiness

Examine / to engage in careful study of a question, to judge, to evaluate



FIRST HAND TRUTH

EQUIPPING PEOPLE TO STUDY GOD'S WORD



What is First Hand Truth?

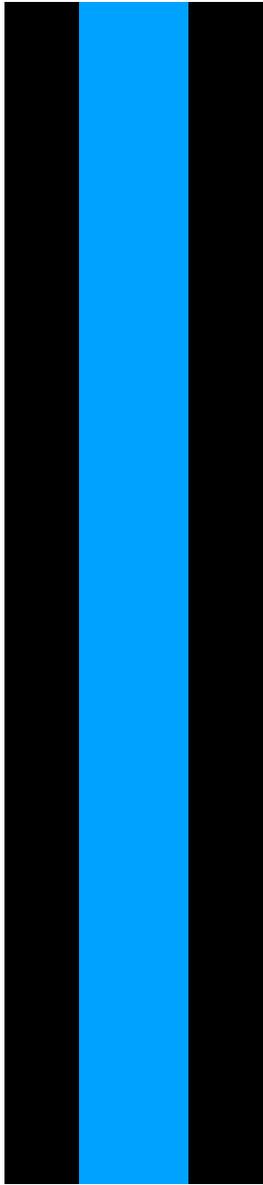
– *The Short Answer* –

Equipping people to study God's Word

– *A Little More Info* –

First Hand Truth exists to **equip** people to study God's Word. We attempt to both **encourage** greater desire to study the Word and to **educate** people to raise their confidence to study the Word for themselves.

We do this through **weekly local workshops** in Battle Creek, Michigan (called *Adventures in Bible Study*), and through speaking opportunities and workshops with individuals, families, churches, and schools both locally and distant.



The More Important Question is **Who is Jesus?**

– *The Short Answer* –

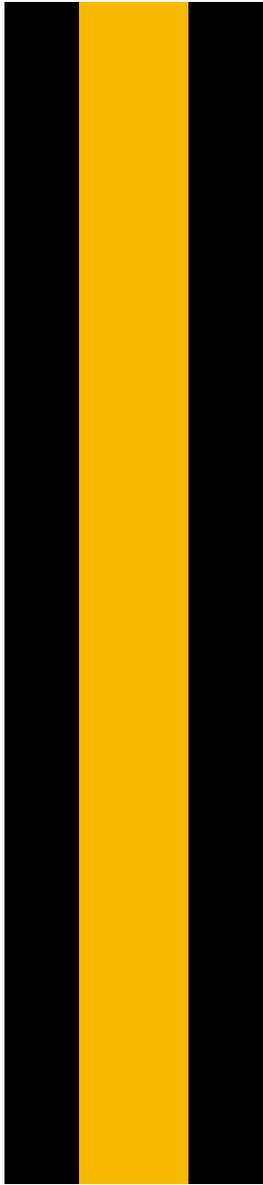
Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah spoken of in the Old Testament, come from God to save people from their sins and give them a new kind of life.

– *A Little More Info* –

Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Tim. 2:5–6) who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, (John 1:14, Gal. 4:4) and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever. (Rom. 9:5, Luke 1:35, Col. 2:9, Heb. 7:24–25)

The Westminster Shorter Catechism: With Scripture Proofs



What is the Bible?

– *The Short Answer* –

The Word of God

– *A Little More Info* –

What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, (2 Tim. 3:16, Eph. 2:20) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. (1 John 1:3–4)

The Westminster Shorter Catechism: With Scripture Proofs

We believe God's word is Inspired:

Verbal Plenary Inspiration

Verbal = down to the words

Plenary = completely, fully

Inspiration = from the very breath of God

Bible Study is...

Not about knowledge acquisition

Not about finding evidence justifying your own
opinions / confirmation bias

The Word of God is God breathed / his very Words...

Inspired by God / written by men / they wrote real
words within the context of real **languages** in real
cultural contexts in a real **history** about real **things**

Your task in Bible Study is to determine as best you
can what the authors meant when they put the pen to
the paper — what was their intent?

Not, “what I get out of it”

**Bible Study can be dangerous to you and to others
around you if...**

...it is not combined with faith / hollow

...it is not empowered by the Spirit / flesh

...it is not measured with humility / arrogance

It has been used to put others down, not build them up

It has been used as a means of control

**It should change you into a person like Christ / not
a person who acts like they are God**

This morning...

A / Begin with encouragement / motivation to study

B / Move into a study of a passage of scripture and
work through a **study worksheet**

C / Finish with conclusions

Please ask questions
please feel free to add comments

Motivation

Why Study the Bible?

- _____?
- To Increase Your Faith



Motivation

The Purpose of the Parables

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¹² For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

“ ‘ “You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”

¹⁵ For this people’s heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.’

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Matthew
13:10-17

The Purpose of the Parables

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Allusion to [Is 6:9](#)

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Quotation of [Is 6:10](#)

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Matthew 13:14b-15

“ ‘ “You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”

A. For this people's **heart** has grown dull,

B. and with their **ears** they can barely hear,

C. and their **eyes** they have closed,

C. lest they should see with their **eyes**

B. and hear with their **ears**

A. and understand with their **heart** and turn, and I would heal them.’

X / Chiastic Structure

C / “ “ “You will indeed **hear** but **never understand**,
D / and you will indeed **see** but **never perceive.**”

Allusion to Isaiah 6:9

E / For this people’s **heart** has grown **dull**,

Quote of Isaiah 6:10

F / and with their **ears** they can barely **hear**,

G / and their **eyes** they have closed,

G / lest they should **see** with their eyes

F / and **hear** with their **ears**

E / and **understand** with their **heart** and turn, and I would heal them.’

A / This is why I speak to them in parables, because **seeing** they do not **see**, and **hearing** they do not **hear**, nor do they **understand**.

B / Indeed, in their case the **prophecy** of **Isaiah** is fulfilled that says:

C / “ “You will indeed **hear** but **never understand**,

Allusion to Isaiah 6:9

D / and you will indeed **see** but **never perceive**.”

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G / lest they should **see** with their eyes

F / and **hear** with their **ears**

E / and **understand** with their **heart** and turn, and I would heal them.’

D / But blessed are your **eyes**, for they **see**,

[understanding implied]

C / and your **ears**, for they **hear**.

[understanding implied]

B / For truly, I say to you, many **prophets** and **righteous** people

A / longed to **see** what you **see**, and did not **see** it,
and to **hear** what you **hear**, and did not **hear** it.

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Observation

What do we see?

- The role of a detective...
- Little things matter...
- Who, What, Where, When, Why, How Long, For what purpose?
- Structure
- Repeated Words
- Comparisons / Contrasts
- Key Words



— 3 Steps —

Observation

What do I see? What does it say?

Interpretation

What did they mean?
What should I Understand to Be True?

Application

What does it mean for my life? The Church?

The Purpose of the Parables

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13:10-17

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B / Indeed, in their case the **prophecy** of **Isaiah** is fulfilled that says:

C / “ “You will indeed **hear** but **never understand**,

D / and you will indeed **see** but **never perceive**.”

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G / and their **eyes** they have closed,

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F / and **hear** with their **ears**

E / and **understand** with their **heart** and turn, and I would heal them.’

D / But blessed are your **eyes**, for they **see**,

C / and your **ears**, for they **hear**.

B / For truly, I say to you, many **prophets** and **righteous** people

A / longed to **see** what you **see**, and did not **see** it, and to **hear** what you **hear**, and did not **hear** it.



Bible Study Guide MACRO

Step 1 / Define your passage of study / typically use paragraph level divisions (pericopes).

Step 2

Step 3 / Consider Immediate Context / what is being talked about around your passage

Previous Passage / _____

Subject of Passage:

Compliment:

Your Study Passage / _____

Subject:

Compliment:

Following Passage / _____

Subject:

Compliment:

Terminology:

Subject / a subject is the main idea that a paragraph is talking about. One or two words to describe the main topic.

Compliment / what does the paragraph say about what is being talked about.

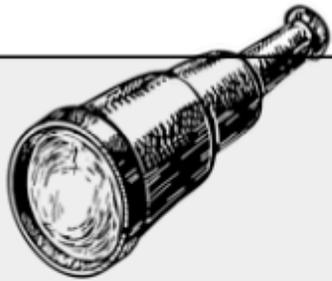
Example

Col 1:15-20

Subject / Jesus
Christ

Compliment / ...is first and foremost of all things.

We are going to skip this for later



Step 4 / Observation / "What does the passage say?" / Be the detective! / Try to write down as many things that you can about what you notice about your passage / here are some tips...



4

Ask Questions of the Passage:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How Much?
- Why?
- How?

Consider...

- Significant conjunctions
- Comparisons and contrasts
- Repeating words or ideas (keys)
- Anything out of the ordinary?
- Questions you have when you read the passage

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Words you want to define or research?

firshandtruth.org

God asks the prophet Isaiah to keep these conditions active in the hearts of Israel...|

“Hear by not **understand**”

- NT / Greek Word / [Matthew 13:14](#) / [syniēmi](#) / **to bring together thoughts**, understand, evaluate
- OT / Hebrew Word / [Isaiah 6:9](#) / [byn](#) / to distinguish, **to separate thoughts**, to discern

“See but never **perceive**”

- NT / Greek Word / [eidon](#) / [Matthew 13:14](#) / to come to understand as a result of perception
- OT / Hebrew Word / [Isaiah 6:10](#) / [yd'](#) / to hear of and learn / [yada](#) / [yada yada](#) means “I know, I know”

“This people’s heart has **become dull**”

- NT / [pachynō](#) / [Matthew 13:15](#) / [pachynō](#) / **thicken, make impervious**
- OT / Hebrew Word / [Isaiah 6:10](#) / [šmn](#) / cover with fat, too much flesh

“With their ears they can **barely hear**”

- NT / Greek Word / [Matthew 13:15](#) / [bareōs](#) / idiom = “to hear heavily with the ears”
- OT / Hebrew Word / [Isaiah 6:10](#) / [kbd](#) / abundance of weight, burdensome

“their eyes they have **closed.**”

- NT / Greek Word / [Matthew 13:15](#) / [kammyō](#) / idiom = “shut the eyes” = Refuse to learn
- OT / Hebrew Word / [Isaiah 6:10](#) / [š](#) / smeared over, covered over, blinded

Step 5a / Questions / think of at least two questions that your passage makes you consider / maybe things you don't understand, or things that you wish you knew more about.

Step 5b / Cross References / use concordances or other Bible study tools to determine similar passages that might help answer questions.

Study Bibles

Commentaries

Concordances

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge

Logos: Important Passages

**There is an obvious passage
we must take some more
time to consider...**

The prophet then asks... [Isaiah 6:11-13](#)

Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” (How long will they be unresponsive?)

And he said:

“Until cities lie waste without inhabitant,
and houses without people,
and the land is a desolate waste,
and the Lord removes people far away,
and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

And though a tenth remain in it,
it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak,
whose stump remains when it is felled.”

The holy seed is its stump.

- [Isaiah 6:13](#) / The holy seed is its stump
- [Isaiah 11:1-5](#) / The shoot from the stump of Jesse (David)
- [Isaiah 4:2](#) / The “branch or shoot will bring about a state of the washing away of sin, peace.

Step 6 / SUBJECT / determine the subject of your passage / put some time into this!

BRAINSTORM AREA >>>>

6

Step 7 / COMPLIMENT / determine what your passage says about your "subject" / try to limit this to 4-8 words or so...

BRAINSTORM AREA >>>

7

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3

Step 3 / Consider Immediate Context / what is being talked about around your passage

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Subject:

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Terminology:

Subject / a subject is the main idea that a paragraph is talking about. One or two words to describe the main topic.

Compliment / what does the paragraph say about what is being talked about.

Example

Col 1:15-20

Subject / Jesus Christ...

Compliment / ...is first and foremost of all things.

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. **2** And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. **3** And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. **5** Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, **6** but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. **7** Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. **8** Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. **9** He who has ears, let him hear.”

10 Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”

11 And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

12 For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. **13** This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **14** Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

“ ‘ “You will indeed hear but never understand,
and you will indeed see but never perceive.”

15 For this people’s heart has grown dull,
and with their ears they can barely hear,
and their eyes they have closed,
lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart
and turn, and I would heal them.’

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. **17** For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

18 “Hear then the parable of the sower:
19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. **20** As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, **21** yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. **22** As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. **23** As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Interpretation

What does this mean??

- The better we do “observation” the better the **results** and the easier the right **conclusions** will be made.
- This is where we are in danger of falling back on preconceived ideas or opinions.
- Think through this with a number of questions at the read.



Step 8 / Interpretation / what does it mean?

A few basic rules of interpretation...

(1) **Continuity of the message** / greater context of Bible / scripture best interprets scripture.

(2) **Context of the material.** What is the immediate context of the verse/passage?

(3) **Customary meaning.** What is the literal meaning of what is being said, don't spiritualize or modernize scripture. If it's symbolic, it will be obvious and state such.

Richards, Lawrence O., and Gary J. Bredfeldt. *Creative Bible Teaching*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2020.

Application

How does it effect my life?

- The truth of what you have learned can be synthesized into principles of life
- Be careful, sometimes the application is not a 1:1 passthrough because of culture, language, time, etc.





Step 9 / Application / what do I personally do about it?
How does this passage affect my thinking or my lifestyle?

All scripture is breathed out by God,
and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**,
for **correction** and for **training** in
righteousness. 2 Tim 3:16

+ Positive Things

— Corrective Things

Teaching / things
to believe, things
that are true

Reproof / things
that are not true, to
reject

Truth / Belief

All scripture is breathed out by God,
and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**,
for **correction** and for **training** in
righteousness. 2 Tim 3:16

— Corrective Things

Reproof / things
that are not true, to
reject

	Positive +	Negative -
Truth		
Lifestyle		

	Positive +	Negative -
Truth	TEACHING What is true!	
Lifestyle		

	Positive +	Negative -
Truth	TEACHING What is true!	REPROOF What is false!
Lifestyle		

	Positive +	Negative -
Truth	TEACHING What is true!	REPROOF What is false!
Lifestyle		CORRECTION What is wrong or bad behavior!

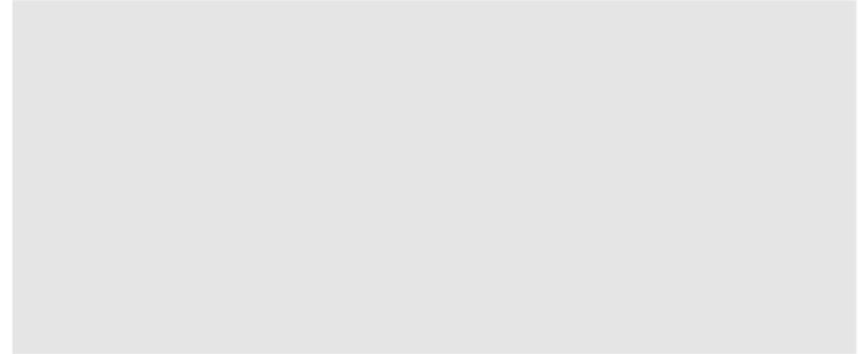
	Positive +	Negative -
Truth	TEACHING What is true!	REPROOF What is false!
Lifestyle	TRAINING What is right or good behavior!	CORRECTION What is wrong or bad behavior!

Step 10 / Prayerful Application /take some time to consider how **faith** in God and **humility** might make applying this passage more possible. What aspects of “trusting God” and being “teachable” might make application more possible?

Faith / Believing God More...

Humility

Step 11 / Quotes or Illustrations / find some quotes by people from the past or other leaders that help make sense of what you are learning. This is extra, but helpful.



What is your one takeaway?

Post Event Survey

- * Make it happen on paper
- * Make it happen online with qr code
- * Or not at all...

