

How to Study the Bible for Spiritual Growth

Salvation in Scripture is described as...

Past Tense <i>We have been saved</i>	Justification	Completed
Present Tense <i>We are being saved</i>	Sanctification	Continuing
Future Tense <i>We will be saved</i>	Glorification	Future

Discipleship:

- The process by which we enter into a student-master relationship with Jesus
- whereby we examine his life and his Word
- and through the application of that Word and
- God's transformational work of/in our lives
- begin to take upon ourselves attributes of The Teacher
- and lose some of our own flaws (sin)
- yet maintaining our own identity – shaped by His.

Possible Breakdown Potentials

We may never choose to do this
We may never truly study
We may never apply that Word
...limited transformation...

2 Cor 3:18

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)

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with unveiled face,
beholding the glory of the Lord,
are being transformed
into the same image
from one degree of glory
to another.
For this comes from the Lord
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—
Jews or Gentiles / all / not just apostles
Can see God because of Jesus
Seeing his **glory** / a clear look
Changed from one thing to another
Into the image of Jesus (the Lord)
Therefore **glorious**, from one point of
growth, to the next, to the next
This originates and is powered by
God, who is the Spirit — freedom

2 Peter 1:5-7

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- This happens through the knowledge of Jesus
- He is calling us to his own glory and excellence
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epicharēgeō / to provide something in addition to what already exists / to add to / to provide at your own expense / active imperative verb = you are commanded to do this thing yourself

spoudē / try as hard as possible, do your very best, put in much effort

The Qualities of 2 Peter 1:5-7

For this very reason,
make every effort to supplement your **faith**
with **virtue**
And your virtue with **knowledge**
And your knowledge with **self-control**
And your self-control with **steadfastness**
And your steadfastness with **godliness**
And your godliness with **brotherly affection**
And your brotherly affection with **love**

Qualities in ...

Macro / do we possess these things at all,
are you rejecting them?

Micro / growth in these qualities,
more and more + little by little

We are going to look at them in the **micro sense**.
How to we come to the place of growing in these
qualities?

Through intentional life!

Bible Study is a part of this list!

Make every effort to Add Knowledge to Virtue

1 *faith* (trust in God)

Faith is always the beginning point with God. It is so in our salvation, and it is in our “sanctification.” Faith is our ability to trust God – faith does not lose significance after justification; our journey of **faith** has just begun. **Our obedience shows our faith** (check out James).

Think through the following ideas:

- Do we trust God when he says he will and can help us grow in any area we trust him for?
- How about for the area you are working on?
- Talk to God about your trust in his wisdom over yours. Talk about your fears of this.

2 + *virtue* (a desire for excellence)

Add virtue! Rather than “living good,” this word means a desire for excellence. It is a bit like “a desire to do better” or even “hero worship,” desiring to be *like* the object of our respect – which is Jesus. Not ourselves. Killing our arrogance is part of this, admitting our sin the other. Some can never get beyond this point.

Think through the following ideas:

- Do you desire to be like your “hero” Jesus?
- Do you see that you lack many things – and need to enter into a discipleship relationship with Jesus?
- In the area that you chose, do you desire to grow and improve? There could be some confession here: I have room for growth – “I don’t tell the truth fully.”
- Give some thought to the area of life you chose.

3 + *knowledge* (more than just info)

Add knowledge. OK, this is where the first “real action” needs to take place. It is not enough to have a “desire to be better” in some way – we need God’s Word – the Truth – to help us in our desire – to give us truth, to provide us with the power to combat our sin and ignorance. The writer of Psalm 119 understood this deeply.

Think through the following:

- Take some time and find significant passages in scripture that are related to your idea / example – lying. Develop a list.
- Take some time to find related ideas (different words, opposite ideas) and add them to your list to consider.
- Do a study of all these ideas – immerse yourself with scripture on the idea in question. Take some time. Come to some conclusions from God’s word. **This step is basically a topical study.**
- Perhaps find a “key passage” and memorize a section of it.

4 + *self-control* (tell yourself “no”)

Add self-control. Now, it takes more than just a desire to improve, the right knowledge to know how or know why – it takes the self-abasing ability to “do” the Word – the Epistle of James majors in this idea. Self-control is the ability to tell yourself “no” or tell yourself “yes you will” in the realm of obedience to God. Not an easy step.

Think through the following:

- Our sin nature is alive and well – and needs to be killed – and we alone can do it – and it needs to happen in small and big ways.
- Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit / Gal 5:22-23. How can we rely on his ministry?
- Think through the knowledge you have gained and begin to enact specific change.
- Once again confession is a part of this project. Confession to God, sometimes to our fellow man. If something you have done affects someone else, perhaps you should confess it to them. This will help you obey knowing this is the Godly thing to do.
- Make a list of application points from the study you did in step 3 above.

5 + *steadfastness* (keep it up!)

Add steadfastness. In other words keep the self-control application over time and against opposition, (1) from within [self sin, the flesh] and (2) from without [others sin, the world, the devil].

- What is keeping you from long term obedience? *trials?*
- What strategies do you need to implement to keep going?
- What roll will prayer and scripture have?

6 + godliness (results appear)

Add godliness. This is the idea of devout practices of obligations. I believe that this means we begin to “do” what we desire to do not because we have to, but because we want to – for God. This is a change of heart toward a godly attitude. This is a result of the earlier steps. It is all through Christ and his Spirit.

- Do we see any evidence of a change of heart? How long will it take?
- Ask God for this change in character.

7 + brotherly love (not for just self)

Add brotherly love. This is the equivalent of “familial love.” Affection. It is a powerful love that recognizes the importance of others. Your actions should never intend to hurt those around you – particularly your family.

- How does your “sin” or weakness effect others, not just yourself? Write a list of possible effects. *Pray. Confess.*
- Consider how the positive growth of not doing this thing would have on others. Write down some of the potential results. *Pray. Confess.*

8 + love / agape (the God-kind of love)

Add love. Moving from a familial love to a Godlike love where we (1) seek other people’s good to the extent that (2) we are willing to sacrifice ourself to help meet that good for them – our time, our goods, our self. Sacrificial servanthood.

- Will we begin to factor in other people’s good in our obedience and judge our behavior by that standard?
- Answer the questions from 7 with this change of the level of love – cranked to “10.”
- Confess how you fall short / to God, to others.