

**God's Word – Study Aids (#9)****Text : II Timothy 3: 1-7, 10-17****INTRODUCTION :****A. Our priorities and values are reflected in our family budgets.**

*( We value that which we think about, spend our time on, and spend our money for. )*

1. How much did we spend for our televisions ?
  - a. Cable -or- satellite ?
  - b. VCR ?
2. How much do we spend on hobbies and recreation ?
  - a. Shot gun -or- golf clubs ?
  - b. Boat -or- Motorcycle ?
3. In the last 15 years, what's the least we've spent on a second car?
  - a. We have come to view a car for each adult as a necessity.
  - b. They get us from here to there and we don't want to wait on someone else.

*\* None of these are wrong in themselves, but we are discussing relative values.*

**B. How much have you spent on bible study aides in the past 15 years ?**

1. Comparing values - Have you spent more than you spent entertainment.
  - a. The average TV is about \$380 and cable goes up from \$30 per month
  - b. How many of us spend \$30 per month on religious materials or study helps ?
2. Hobbyists think nothing of dropping \$50 here and there.
  - a. *Before Christ, I once spent \$1600 on a shotgun.*
  - b. Most people spend more on gasoline for pleasure than for bible helps.
3. We spend more to insure our cars than to learn about how to go to Heaven.

**C. This lesson will discuss some reference materials that will aide bible study.**

1. In previous lessons we have seen :
  - a. The bible is word from God to reveal Himself to us.
  - b. The bible tells us everything we need to know to go to Heaven.
  - c. The bible was written by God in a way that everyone *can* understand it.
2. We will consider 10 different reference books.
  - a. Most are not books to just set down and read, but rather books to facilitate study.
  - b. All of these books are easily understood by the novice.
  - c. And, all can be purchased for a total in the \$300 range.

## I. What is the proper view of books ?

### A. No human author can write a book that carries the weight of religious authority.

1. Only the bible is inspired of God.
2. Therefore :
  - a. Only the bible is without error. (*Like eating fish, one must spit out the bones.*)
  - b. Only the bible carries the authority of God.
3. When we remain aware of their limitations, books can be of great value to us.

### B. Reading a book is comparable to setting at the feet of a teacher.

\* *When I set in my library, I feel as if I am setting in the company of great scholars.*

1. However, even great scholars write through the prism of :
  - a. Their training and experiences
  - b. Their world view (*their opinions -and- their character*)
  - c. Their prejudices and biases (*including their preconceived ideas*)
2. Few authors are recognized by their peers as notable scholars.
  - a. The writings of true scholars endure over time.
  - b. Their writings are valued by people outside their parochial fellowship.
  - c. Their writings are rooted in scholarship rather than religious dogma.
3. But being human, even the very finest teachers make mistakes.
  - a. Only God does not make mistakes.
  - b. Some have an agenda which they place above their scholarship. (*dishonest*)
  - c. That is why we are instructed not to place our trust in human teachers.

**Acts 17: 11- 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.**

### C. Learn about the author before you allow him to become your teacher.

1. Read the author's bio-data that is often found in the dust-cover of the book.
2. Read about what known scholars say about your author.

\* *Check bibliographies and footnotes to see which authors are quoted by known scholars.*

3. Learn the doctrinal stances of the schools the author attended and churches he served.

## II. Choosing which books to read or to purchase.

- A. The bible student chooses books in the same way a carpenter chooses a hammer.**
1. No one buys a \$50 hammer when a \$10 hammer will do the job.
  2. Buy the book that will do the job for you. (*That which does all does nothing well.*)
  3. Everyone needs a devotional life, but devotional books do not facilitate study.
- B. Do not seek books to do your work for you. (*Books assist study, not replace it.*)**
1. Study takes time and effort. There is no substitute for diligence.
  2. Do not seek out “*answer*” books. (i.e., *commentaries to tell you what to believe.*)
  3. Find books that will be tools to assist in the digging out of God’s wisdom.
- C. Buy books that you will use.**
1. Some people buy books solely for the purpose of buying books.
    - a. Man bought a box of books at a garage sale because he had empty bookshelves.
    - b. Preacher was looking for a “*white*” set of books to balance out dark colored books.
  2. Make your first books those at your current level.
    - a. If you are a beginner, advanced books will just set on the shelves and gather dust.
    - b. Invest in books that will help you progress up to the next level.
  3. Each person studies a little differently and all have varying interests.
    - a. I knew a man who bought books about Isaiah because his friend liked Isaiah.
    - b. The person who studies mostly from the N.T. is not wise to buy books on the O.T.
- D. Buy books you know and those written by authors you know.**
1. Check a book out from the library before buying a copy.  
\* *The public library can order in a surprising variety of religious books for you.*
  2. If you can’t get a book from the library, spend a half hour with it in the book store.
  3. Read book reviews. (*There are more out there than you might think.*)
  4. If a friend has the book, ask him about it.
  5. Ask your preacher or some other serious student. (*Don’t ask ignorant store clerk.*)  
\* *The only book you absolutely have to have is the bible.*

### III. Start with reference books.

## Suggested First 10 Books For The Beginning Bible Student

**Preface :** This list assumes one has already purchased a good study bible with references and margins wide enough to note additional references.

- 1 - **Textual Concordance For Your Translation ( e.g., Young's or Strong's )**  
A concordance enables one to locate where specific words appear in the text of the bible. It locates, but does not establish context. When selecting a concordance one must make sure it is for his translation, some like Young's are KJV only.  
**Note :** One can locate a free concordance on line via our website.
- 2- **Topical Concordance ( e.g., Nave's Topical Bible By Orville J. Nave )**  
A topical concordance helps to locate where similar subjects are discussed in the bible. None of these are complete, but they are helpful in the early stages of research on a given topic.
- 3- **Dictionary of New Testament Words ( W.E. Vine )**  
W.E. Vines Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words was one of the first reference books I purchased and I highly recommend that every Christian use it or Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament words.
- 4- **Bible Dictionary ( R.F. Youngblood .. Nelson's )**  
A bible dictionary goes beyond the definition of words. It can be used to look up various things related to the scriptures, people, places, things, concepts, etc. Start with one volume and as you advance, buy a set. Smith's set is the standard work and it can be accessed free online. ( biblestudytools.com )
- 5- **Bible Encyclopedia ( M.C. Tenny )**  
The function of the bible encyclopedia is very similar to that of any other encyclopedia except it is limited in scope to things pertaining to the bible. When investigating a set, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia is the most well known and can be accessed free on line, (internationalstandardbible.com) but I prefer my set of The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia Of The Bible.
- 6- **Baker's Bible Atlas ( Charles F. Pfeiffer )**  
Other bible atlases are available, but I prefer Baker's. A bible atlas is essential for serious bible study. Knowing the geography facilitates understanding. Bible writers give geographic references because knowing *where* often helps with the understanding of *why*. ( Some prefer the bible atlas by Thomas V. Brisco )

### 7- General Introduction To The Bible ( Geisler & Nix )

I strongly suggest this as a must read for every Christian who seeks to understand the Holy Scriptures. It explains inspiration, how we got the bible, how it was decided which writings were inspired scripture, how the early bible translations came to be and much more. This work deals more with bible as a whole rather than individual books.

### 8- Introduction To the New Testament ( Everett F. Harrison )

Introductory material is fundamental to understand the scriptures. A good introductory work is most valuable helping one to establish the general context of a bible book, in analyzing the structure of the book and in learning the background material surrounding its writing. ( Introduction To The N.T. by Henry Thiessen and a more recent work by Carson and Moo are also recommended. )

### 9- Introduction to the Old Testament ( Edward J. Young )

This work introduces each book of the O.T. Most find introductory material to be particularly helpful when studying the O.T. prophets. ( A comparative work by Longman and Dillard has been recommended. )

### 10- Hermeneutics ( D.R. Dungan )

Hermeneutics is the art or science of interpretation. This book teaches one the basic principles and skills of biblical interpretation. Dungan wrote this book for beginning students so it is in simple language which the average person can easily understand. ( Principles Of Interpretation by Clinton Lockhart is comparable. )

**Note :** “How To Study The Bible For All It's Worth” ( By Fee and Stuart ) was recommended by some. It is instructive, but much more elementary than Dungan.

**Note :** This list was prepared in collaboration with a dozen preachers. All of the above books are agreed upon as being profitable for personal bible study. You will notice that commentaries are conspicuously absent from this list. Learning to study enables one to find the answers for himself. The bible is the only answer book. Commentaries should never be looked as authoritative or as the source of the answers to one's questions. After one has studied, commentaries are useful to stimulate further thought. They are fertilizer, not seed. Once one learns how to fish he is much less likely beg fish from others.

These recommendations are for the reference books which will form a foundation upon which others may be added. All are individual volumes so the total cost to purchase them should be less than \$300. As one's study progresses, he will wish to add more volumes, but these will enable one to begin fishing from the bank and progress into the deep water.

Those of you who have access to the internet will find some of these works free on line sites like e-Sword.net, biblegateway.com, biblestudytools.com and others.

**CONCLUSION :****A. Do you want to please God ?**

1. What are you doing to insure that you are pleasing to Him ?
2. How diligent are you in seeking to learn how to please Him ?

**B. God has given you a book that contains everything you need to know.**

1. **II Pet. 1 2-3** Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; **3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.
2. **II Tim. 3: 16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17** so that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

**C. How much we desire to please God is demonstrated by how much time and effort we put forth to master the guide book to pleasing God.**

1. We spend countless hours amusing ourselves.  
( *After all, we work hard so we deserve a little “R & R.”* )
2. We spend what we can afford to make ourselves happy.

**D. Only you and God know your heart.**

1. I urge you to spend time communicating with God.
2. Drink deeply from the spring that flows with living water.
3. Equip yourself for the quest.

**E. The rewards defy description.**

1. When understanding grows, meditation naturally follows.  
( *Though unbidden the word will automatically drift through your mind.* )
2. This meditation fosters deeper love which in turn fosters an intense longing.

**INVITATION :**

Remember :

God longs to **be** your life.

Come to join in fellowship with Him

Scripture Text :

## **II Timothy 3: 1-7 , 10-17**

**1** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. **6** For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, **7** always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**10** Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love perseverance, **11** persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! **12** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. **13** But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived. **14** You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, **15** and that 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. **16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17** so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

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