

## THE ART OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

**2 Timothy 2:15:** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17:** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

### DEFINITIONS

**Biblical studies** - In Christianity, Biblical studies is the study, analysis, and interpretation of the Old and New Testament. Biblical studies which may also be synonymous to **Bible study** also called **devotion or devotional acts** by others, is the study of the Bible by ordinary people as a personal religious or spiritual practice. A **spiritual practice** or **spiritual discipline** (often including **spiritual exercises**) is the regular or full-time performance of actions and activities undertaken for the purpose of **cultivating spiritual development (becoming students of the Bible)**.

### EXPOSITION

**Biblical studies** describe the detailed examination of a subject with the intent to learn, interpret, and understand Scripture; people; place; time; and culture. When Paul preached to the **Bereans**, it is stated that they **searched the Scriptures daily to see if what he said was true.**

(Acts 17:11) Such examination can involve analysis of the text and comparison of it with like texts. The two disciples walking with Jesus on the road to Emmaus learned much when he expounded from the Scriptures all the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:27) **Biblical studies thus serve to enlighten us in our pursuit of God.**

**Determining the meaning of Scripture** is one of the most important tasks a believer has in this life. God does not tell us that we must simply

read the Bible. We must study it and handle it correctly. (**2 Timothy 2:15**) Studying the Scriptures is hard work – it is wrestling with the Word. A cursory or brief scanning of Scripture can sometimes yield very wrong conclusions. Therefore, it is crucial to understand several principles for determining the correct meaning of Scripture.

**We** must pray and ask the Holy Spirit to impart understanding, for that is one of His functions. **“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come”.**

(**John 16:13**) Just as the Holy Spirit guided the apostles in the writing of the New Testament, He also guides us in the understanding of Scripture. Remember, the Bible is God's book, and we need to ask Him what it means. If you are a Christian, the author of Scripture—the Holy Spirit—dwells inside you, and He wants you to understand what He wrote.

**We are not to pull a Scripture out of the verses** that surround it and try to determine the meaning of the verse outside of the context. We should always read the surrounding verses and chapters to discern the context. While all of Scripture comes from God, God used men to write it down. (**2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21**) These men had a theme in mind, a purpose for writing, and a specific issue they were addressing. We should read the background of the book of the Bible we are studying to find out who wrote the book; to whom it was written; when it was written; and why it was written. Also, we should take care to let the text speak for itself. Sometimes people will assign their own meanings to words in order to get the interpretation they desire.

**We must not attempt to be totally independent in our studying** of the Bible. It is arrogant to think that we cannot gain understanding through the lifelong work of others who have studied Scripture. Some people, in error, approach the Bible with the idea that they will depend on the Holy Spirit alone and they will discover all the hidden truths of Scripture. Christ, in the giving of the Holy Spirit, has given people with Spiritual Gifts to the body of Christ. One of these Spiritual Gifts is that of teaching. (**Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:28**) These teachers are given by

the Lord to help us to correctly understand and obey Scripture. It is always wise to study the Bible with other believers, assisting each other in understanding and applying the truth of God's Word.

To summarize the art of Biblical studies, we must: through prayer and humility, rely on the Holy Spirit to give us understanding; we should always study Scripture in its context, recognizing that the Bible explains itself; and we should respect the efforts of other Christians, past and present, who have also sought to properly study the Bible. Remember, God is the author of the Bible, and He wants us to understand it.

### APPLICATION

**The Bible contains the mind of God;** the state of man; the way of Salvation; the doom of sinners; and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are Holy; its words are binding; its stories are true; and its decisions are unchangeable. Therefore, you should read it to be wise; believe it to be safe; and practice it to be Holy.

**The Bible contains light to direct you;** food to sustain you; and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map; the pilgrim's staff; the pilot's compass; the soldier's word; and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored; heaven is opened; and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object; and the glory of God its end. It should fill your memory; rule your heart; and guide your feet. It involves the highest responsibility; it is given you in life; will be opened up at the judgment; and remembered forever. Therefore, **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth".** (2 Tim. 2:15)

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## GOODWIN MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

### ALL MINISTRIES STUDY GUIDE

*"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together".  
Ps. 34:3*

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***"THE ART OF BIBLICAL STUDIES"***

*The Monthly Point of Focus is a study guide developed and written by members of the Christian Education Ministry. The study guides for 2012 will focus on "Living Biblical Lives". As we remain united in study in our Ministry meetings and in our homes, let us pray for an increase in both our understanding of and commitment to God's Word, His Will and His Way.*