# How to Study Scripture

*Practical methods for studying the Bible*

Christianity is emphatically a revealed religion. The God who spoke the world into being has not left His creatures to grope after Him in darkness. He has made Himself known, and His written Word bears the voice, truth, authority, and sufficiency of God Himself.

Scripture is God-breathed, self-revelation that is without error or contradiction, being fulfilled in Christ, final in form, supreme in authority, the only rule of faith, necessary and sufficient for salvation, and is preserved, perceived, and proclaimed by the power of the Holy Spirit for the promotion of Christ to God's glory and man's joy.

## PRESUPPOSITIONS

No one comes to the Bible neutrally. What we believe about Scripture will govern how we read it, and a sound method of study rests upon a sound doctrine of Scripture. Before turning to the practice of Bible study, then, we gather up what the first five sessions of this series have established. These are not assumptions we hope are true; they are convictions Scripture teaches about itself. Because the Bible is what it claims to be, we may study it with reverence, confidence, and joy.

### INSPIRED AND AUTHORITATIVE

The living God is a speaking God. He has revealed Himself generally in creation and conscience (Ps. 19:1–6; Rom. 1:19–20), enough to leave all people without excuse but not enough to save. He has revealed Himself specially by His Word, climactically in His Son (Heb. 1:1–2), and permanently in Holy Scripture. "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Tim. 3:16): the word *theopneustos* describes the source of Scripture, not merely its effect upon readers. The Spirit so carried along the human authors (2 Pet. 1:21) that, in their own words, styles, and circumstances, they wrote exactly what God intended. The hands were human; the breath was divine. Calvin drew the necessary conclusion: "We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from him alone" (*Commentary on 2 Timothy*, 3:16).

- **God speaks.** Revelation is God's gracious self-disclosure. We know Him only because He has made Himself known.
- **God writes.** Inscripturation gives revelation permanence, precision, and public form, so that every generation hears the same Word. Scripture alone is the final rule (*sola Scriptura*).
- **God breathes.** Inspiration is verbal (it extends to the very words) and plenary (it extends to all of Scripture). Its authority is God's own.
- **God illumines.** Inspiration was God's once-for-all act in giving Scripture; illumination is the Spirit's continuing work of opening our minds to receive it (1 Cor. 2:12–14).

*Key text: 2 Timothy 3:16–17*

## INERRANT, INFALLIBLE, CLEAR, AND SUFFICIENT

Because Scripture is God's Word, it bears God's character. "Your word is truth" (John 17:17), and "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The psalmist calls it perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true (Ps. 19:7–9). Session 2 gathered these perfections under three words: Scripture is *true*, *final*, and *enough*.

- **True.** *Inerrancy*: rightly interpreted according to the author's intent and genre, Scripture in its original writings is true in all that it affirms. *Infallibility*: it cannot fail, mislead, or deceive.
- **Final.** Scripture's authority is intrinsic; it is not conferred by the church or the reader. Scripture is the supreme authority, not the only one (*sola*, not *solo*, *Scriptura*), and every other authority is tested by it.
- **Enough.** *Sufficiency*: Scripture contains all the words of God we need for saving knowledge, faith, obedience, worship, and maturity (2 Tim. 3:15–17). It is not an encyclopaedia of everything, but it holds everything necessary.
- **Clear.** *Perspicuity*: the saving message of Scripture can be understood by ordinary believers using ordinary means. Clarity is not the absence of hard texts; it is the presence of clear saving truth. As Wayne Grudem explains, right understanding "requires time, effort, the use of ordinary means, a willingness to obey, and the help of the Holy Spirit" (*Systematic Theology*). That is precisely what this handout is about.

*Key texts: John 17:17; Psalm 19:7–11*

## COMPLETE

God's people did not create the canon; they received and recognized the books God gave. A book is not Scripture because the church voted for it; the church received it because it was Scripture. The Greek word *kanōn* first meant a measuring rod, then a rule, and finally the list of books that serve as the church's rule of faith and life.

- **Given.** A book is canonical because God inspired it. Its authority comes from God, not from the church that receives it.
- **Heard.** Christ received the Old Testament as the Word of God (Luke 24:44). The New Testament rests upon the authority of His apostles, who already recognized one another's writings as Scripture (1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Pet. 3:16).
- **Confessed.** Councils such as Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) bore witness to what the churches had already received; they did not bestow authority. The church's role is ministerial, not magisterial.
- **Closed.** The apostolic foundation has been laid (Eph. 2:20), and the faith has been "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The Apocrypha, though of historical interest, is not Scripture (WCF 1.3).

*Key text: Jude 3*

## PRESERVED

The God who gave His Word has kept it. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever" (Isa. 40:8; cf. 1 Pet. 1:23–25). He has not done so by a miracle that kept every copyist from error, but by His ordinary providence, working through the copying, circulating, correcting, and comparing of manuscripts across centuries.

- **The Word endures.** Inspiration names God's act in giving the original text; preservation names His providential care of that text in history. The two must be distinguished, but never separated.
- **The Word traveled.** The original documents (autographs) no longer survive, but their wording does, in a vast family of copies, early translations, and quotations. In number and antiquity of manuscripts, the New Testament is without peer in the ancient world.
- **The witnesses are weighed.** Textual criticism, born of Christian reverence for the very words of God, compares the witnesses to recover the original wording. The great majority of variants are trivial, and no doctrine of the faith rests upon a doubtful reading. Footnotes in our Bibles are not confessions of loss; they are receipts.

*Key text: Isaiah 40:8*

## ACCESSIBLE

God gave His Word to be understood, believed, and obeyed, not confined to ancient languages or hidden from ordinary people. At the Water Gate, the Levites "read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading" (Neh. 8:8). Faithful translation continues that work.

- **The Word is for the people.** Translation belongs to the mission of God, carrying the gospel to every nation, tribe, people, and tongue (Acts 2:11; Rev. 5:9).
- **The Word must be carried faithfully.** A translation is not a new revelation, yet when it faithfully represents the original, it truly is the Word of God. Translations range from formal correspondence ("word for word") to functional equivalence ("thought for thought"), with mediating translations between.
- **The Word has come into English.** The English Bible was bought at great cost, from Wycliffe and Tyndale onward, so that what was once forbidden could become ordinary to us.
- **Why we use the ESV.** Our church uses the English Standard Version as its primary translation because it is essentially literal and yet readable. It supports close observation, exposition, memorization, and shared congregational use. Other faithful translations remain valuable for comparison.

*Key text: Nehemiah 8:8*

# PREPARATION

Bible study begins before the Bible is opened. The Scriptures are not a field for detached specialists; they are the voice of the living God, and the heart that comes to them must be made ready to receive. Peter and James both join *putting away* to *receiving*. Malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander must be put off before the believer can long for the pure milk of the Word, as a newborn longs for milk (1 Pet. 2:1–2). Filthiness and rampant wickedness must be laid aside before the implanted Word can be received with meekness (James 1:21). Unconfessed sin dulls the appetite and clouds the eye, and a proud heart sits in judgment over the text rather than under it. The study of Scripture therefore requires mind and method, but it is a spiritual exercise before it is an academic one. It begins with humility, repentance, and hunger. R. A. Torrey observed that the one who meets these spiritual conditions "will get more out of the Bible, while pursuing the poorest method, than the one who does not meet them will, while pursuing the best method" (*How to Study the Bible for Greatest Profit*).

> **1 Peter 2:1–2** So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. [2]Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—
>
> **James 1:21** Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

## GIVE THANKS

Thank God for His Word. This might sound strange, but just as we ought to thank Him before we partake of bodily nourishment, so even more we ought to take the time and heart to acknowledge the goodness and care of God to provide us with such a vital gift for the provision of spiritual life. Thank Him for giving, identifying, preserving, and illuminating His Word.

## PRAY

If study is a spiritual exercise, prayer is its first discipline. The same Spirit who breathed out the Scriptures must open our eyes to see what He has written. The psalmist does not merely read; he prays as he reads. He asks for a united heart that fears God's name (Ps. 86:11), for a heart inclined to God's testimonies rather than to selfish gain (119:36), for opened eyes (119:18), and for understanding (119:73, 125). He finds in the Word "great spoil" (119:162). James adds the promise that God gives wisdom "generously to all without reproach" to those who ask (James 1:5). Pray before you read, as you read, and after you read: for illumination, humility, obedience, and delight in God. John MacArthur warns, "No Christian should ever look down at the Word without first looking up at the very Source of that Word and asking for guidance. To engage in Bible study without prayer is presumption, if not sacrilege" (*Unleashing God's Word in Your Life*).

> [You] should straightway despair of your reason and understanding. … But kneel down in your little room [Matt. 6:6] and pray to God with real humility and earnestness, that he through his dear Son may give you his Holy Spirit, who will enlighten you, lead you, and give you understanding.
>
> —Martin Luther, Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings (1539), in *Luther's Works*, vol. 34 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 285–86.

**Psalm 86:11** Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.

**Psalm 119:36** Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!

**Psalm 119:18** Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

**Psalm 119:73** Your hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.

**Psalm 119:125** I am your servant; give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies!

**Psalm 119:162** I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.

**James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

## READ

Before we can study a passage, we must read it, and then read it again. MacArthur is blunt: many Christians "read a lot of books about it, but they don't really read the Bible, and there is no substitute for reading the Scripture" (*How to Study the Bible*). G. Campbell Morgan, the "prince of expositors," is said to have read a book of the Bible as many as fifty times before he would preach or teach from it. As a seminary student, MacArthur read 1 John through every day for thirty days. Robert Murray M'Cheyne gave his congregation in Dundee a calendar (1842) for reading the whole Bible through each year, the New Testament and Psalms twice. Such repetition is not wasted time; it is how the Word gets into us. "You learn by repetition, repetition, repetition. That's the way to learn the Bible" (MacArthur). God attaches His blessing to simple reading. "God did not write a book to trip you up," MacArthur reminds us, and even the book many fear to open begins with a beatitude for the one who reads it.

> **Revelation 1:3** Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

- **Large segments.** Read whole chapters and, where possible, whole books at a sitting. Reading in large units trains and disciplines the mind to follow the flow of the discourse, to hear an argument develop, and to absorb the context that a single verse cannot supply. Most New Testament letters can be read in one sitting.
- **Big picture.** Aim to grasp the whole before dissecting the parts: the book's theme, purpose, and structure, and its place in the one storyline of Scripture that runs from creation to new creation and centres on Christ (Luke 24:27). The details are rightly understood only in the light of the whole.
- **Context.** Train yourself to ask, every time, what comes before and what comes after. "Above all, good reading goes with the flow" (D. A. Carson, *Collected Writings on Scripture*). Context widens like circles in water: sentence, paragraph, book, author, Testament, and the whole Bible. Nate Pickowicz recalls Robert L. Thomas's maxim: "A text without a context is a pretext for a subtext" (*How to Eat Your Bible*).
- **Repeatedly.** Read the same book again and again until its contents, structure, and burden are familiar. Each reading notices what earlier readings missed.

- **Systematically.** Follow a plan through the whole counsel of God rather than opening the Bible at random. Pickowicz encourages, "If you do nothing else but read through the whole Bible every year for the rest of your life, the Lord will surely use His Word to instruct, convict, sanctify, and bless you!"
- **Attentively.** "The goal is understanding. Therefore, read with a view to understanding" (Pickowicz). Read slowly, with pen in hand; write down your questions; read aloud at times (Rev. 1:3); and occasionally compare another faithful translation.

*Do not minimize the sufficiency of Scripture.*
*Do not minimize the accessibility of your English translation.*

## MEDITATE

Reading fills the mind; meditation carries the truth to the heart. The Puritans insisted that the aim of Scripture is not mere information but transformation: truth must be pondered until it warms the affections and moves the will. Pickowicz offers a simple definition: "At the most basic level, meditation is the act of mental chewing." Torrey lamented a kind of Bible study in which "there is observation, analysis, classification, but no meditation," adding, "There is perhaps nothing so important in Bible study as meditation." Meditation is where the study of the Word becomes communion with the God of the Word. Two Puritan masters make the point.

> [Meditation] is a duty wherein the very heart and life-blood of piety lies. Meditation may be thus described: it is a holy exercise of the mind; whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance, and do seriously ponder upon them and apply them to ourselves. In meditation there are two things: (1) A Christian's retiring of himself, a locking himself up from the world. Meditation is a work which cannot be done in a crowd. (2) It is a serious thinking upon God. It is not a few transient thoughts that are quickly gone—but a fixing and staying of the mind upon heavenly objects: this cannot be done without exciting all the powers of our souls, and offering violence to ourselves.
>
> —Thomas Watson, *The Christian Soldier; or, Heaven Taken by Storm* (Robert Moore, 1816).

> The end of study is information, and the end of meditation is practice, or a work upon the affections. Study is like a winter sun that shines but does not warm, but meditation is like blowing up the fire, where we do not mind the blaze but the heat. The end of study is to hoard up truth, but of meditation to lay it forth in conference or holy conversation. In study, we are rather like vintners that take in wine to store themselves for sale; in meditation, like those that buy wine for their own use and comfort. A vintner's cellar may be better stored than a nobleman's; the student may have more of notion and knowledge, but the practical Christian has more of taste and refreshment.
>
> —Thomas Manton, Sermons on Genesis 24:63, in *A Fourth Volume Containing One Hundred and Fifty Sermons on Several Texts of Scripture* (London, 1693).

### PONDER

Biblical meditation must not be confused with its Eastern counterfeit. Eastern meditation, rooted in Hindu and Buddhist practice and widely imitated in the West, seeks to *empty* the mind: to silence

thought, detach from desire, and dissolve the self. Hebrew meditation does the opposite. It seeks to *fill* the mind with the words of God and to turn them over until they shape the heart. The word used in Psalm 1:2 (*hāgâ*) means to murmur or mutter, the low sound of one reading and repeating to himself; Isaiah uses the same word of a lion growling over its prey (Isa. 31:4). The blessed man does not empty his mind; he delights in the law of the LORD and meditates on it day and night, and he becomes like a fruitful tree. J. C. Ryle counselled believers "to take two or three texts with us when we go out into the world, and to turn them over and over in our minds whenever we have a little leisure. It keeps out many vain thoughts. It tightens the nail of daily reading" (quoted in Pickowicz, *How to Eat Your Bible*). Paul joins hard thinking to humble dependence: "Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything" (2 Tim. 2:7).

> **Psalm 1:1–3** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; [2]but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. [3]He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.
>
> **Psalm 119:97** Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.
>
> **Psalm 119:99** I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.
>
> **Psalm 119:148** My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise.
>
> **2 Timothy 2:7** Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

# STUDY

Reading and meditation lead naturally to study. Manton distinguished study from meditation, but he did not set them against each other: the one who studies well gathers the fuel that meditation sets alight. Study that engages the heart has four marks. It enlists the *whole heart*: "With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!" (Ps. 119:10). It is given *sufficient time*: Torrey counselled, "Select for your Bible study the best portion of the day that you can give to it," not the drowsy minutes before bed. It is guarded from *distraction*: a fixed time, a quiet place, and a silenced phone. And its *desires are rightly directed*: we study not to win arguments or hoard notions, but to know, love, and obey God. D. A. Carson states the aim well: "not so much to become masters of Scripture, but to be mastered by it, both for God's glory and his people's good" (*Collected Writings on Scripture*).

## INDUCTIVE

There are two basic ways to come to a text. *Deductive* study begins with a conclusion and goes to the Bible to find support for it. At its worst it becomes proof-texting: making the Bible say what we already believe. *Inductive* study begins with the text itself. It gathers the particulars, observes carefully, asks questions, and only then draws conclusions, which are in turn tested by the rest of Scripture. The student's assumptions are not abolished, but they are exposed and corrected. Meaning does not rest upon the interpreter; the text tests the text. As the Westminster Confession puts it, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself" (WCF 1.9). MacArthur warns, "In

Bible study, get the right message from the right passage. Don't 'proof text' your bias or opinions by making the Bible say what you already know you want it to say" (*Unleashing God's Word in Your Life*).

- **Ask questions.** Interrogate the text (who, what, when, where, why, and how?) and let the text decide which questions matter most.
- **Seek understanding.** Do not stop at what the text says; press on to what it means, as one searching for hidden treasure (Prov. 2:4–5).
- **Mine the text.** The richest ore lies beneath the surface and rewards hard labour. Dig into words, connections, and structure (Job 28:1, 12).
- **Compare Scripture with Scripture.** Let the clearer passages illuminate the less clear, and let no passage be set against another (Isa. 34:16).
- **Test your conclusions.** Hold every assumption, tradition, sermon, and commentary accountable to the text (Acts 17:11).
- **Record your findings.** Write down observations, questions, and conclusions. The pen is a discipline of attention.

> **Isaiah 34:16** Seek and read from the book of the LORD…
>
> **Job 28:1** "Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold that they refine.
>
> **Job 23:12** I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.

*Of John Bunyan, Spurgeon said, "Prick him anywhere—his blood is* Bibline*, the very essence of the Bible flows from him." Every Christian should study the Bible until the same can be said of him.*

## PRACTICAL STEPS

Proverbs promises that "whoever gives thought to the word will discover good" (16:20), and Ezra shows what such thought looks like in a life. Ezra 7:10 is a pattern for every student of Scripture. Notice the order of its verbs: he set his heart to *study*, to *do*, and to *teach*. Each word is chosen with care.

> **Proverbs 16:20** Whoever gives thought to the word will discover good, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.
>
> **Ezra 7:10** For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

1. **Heart, not head.** Ezra set his *heart*. Study begins in the inner man, with the affections, will, and mind engaged together, not with the intellect alone.
2. **Set, not chanced.** The Hebrew verb (*kûn*) means to fix, establish, or prepare. Ezra's study was resolved and deliberate, not occasional or accidental. It had a settled place in his life.
3. **Study, not merely read.** The Hebrew word (*dāraš*) means to seek, inquire, or search out. Ezra went beyond reading to diligent inquiry.
4. **His heart, not another's.** Ezra studied first for himself. We must not study only to teach others or to win debates; the Word must first do its work in us.

5. **And to do it.** Knowing precedes doing, and doing precedes teaching. Ezra did not teach what he had not first obeyed.
6. **To teach God's statutes and rules, not Ezra's.** The teacher's authority is derived, not his own. Ezra taught "his statutes and rules," the LORD's, in Israel.

It is no accident that the same chapter says that "the hand of the LORD his God was on him" (Ezra 7:6) and that "the good hand of his God was on him" (7:9). God delights to bless such study.

### RECEIVING AND EXAMINING

The pattern did not end with Ezra. After the public reading of the Law at the Water Gate, the heads of fathers' houses, the priests, and the Levites gathered to Ezra "in order to study the words of the Law" (Neh. 8:13). Hearing led to study, and study led at once to obedience: they found the command concerning the Feast of Booths and kept it with very great rejoicing (8:14–17). Centuries later, the Jews of Berea "received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11), and Luke calls them "more noble than those in Thessalonica." Yet Paul could thank God that the Thessalonians had received the word "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13). The two are not rivals. The Bereans examined; the Thessalonians received. Noble faith does both.

> **Nehemiah 8:13** On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe **in order to study the words of the Law**.
>
> **Acts 17:11** 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.
>
> *More than those in Thessalonica, and yet:*
>
> **1 Thessalonians 2:13** And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

Biblical faith, then, is not credulity. The Bereans joined the humility and faith that *receive* the Word to the objectivity and intellectual diligence that *examine* it, and neither half may be lost. Luke commends no merely emotional response to the gospel, and neither does he commend cold scepticism. The verb translated "examining" (*anakrinō*) belongs to the language of judicial inquiry. It is used of the Sanhedrin examining the apostles (Acts 4:9) and of Felix being urged to examine Paul (Acts 24:8). It implies integrity and the absence of bias. The Bereans weighed Paul's preaching against the Scriptures as an honest judge weighs evidence, and having found it true, "many of them therefore believed" (Acts 17:12). Every hearer of sermons, and every student of Scripture, should do the same.

## FORMAL STUDY METHOD

The sections above describe the posture of the student; this section describes his tools. What follows is the most detailed and practical guidance in this handout. Careful Bible study moves through three tasks, each answering its own question. The order matters: we cannot know what a passage means until we have seen what it says, and we cannot rightly apply what we have not rightly understood.

Peter Krol names the chief enemy at each stage: "The Greatest Enemy of Observation is Familiarity," of Interpretation "Presumption," and of Application "Inertia" (*Knowable Word*).

1. **Observation:** What does the text *say*?
2. **Interpretation:** What does the text *mean*?
3. **Application:** How should the text *change me*?

## OBSERVATION

Observation is the discipline of seeing what is actually there. It is not yet interpretation, application, or opinion; it is slow, careful attention to the words on the page before we decide what they mean. Krol explains: "Before we can set our eyes on the horizon, we have to get our noses in the text. … When we observe, we try to figure out what the text says—not what we want it to say, think it should say, or heard someone else say about it" (*Knowable Word*). The questions below are not a checklist to be completed for every verse; they are a set of lenses. Use the ones the passage invites, and keep looking.

### HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

These questions set the passage in its original setting. The Bible was written to real people in real places. As David Powlison reminds us, "We are reading someone else's mail" (in *Understanding Scripture*), and we must read it as theirs before we can rightly read it as ours.

- **Author:** Who wrote the book? What do we know of his life, experience, and relationship to the readers?
- **Date:** When was it written? Where does it fall in the author's life and in the unfolding of redemptive history?
- **Audience:** To whom was it written? Believers or unbelievers, Jews or Gentiles, a church or an individual? What were their circumstances?
- **Place:** Where were the author and the readers? What was the setting of the events described?
- **Context and purpose:** What was going on at the time, and why was it written? Look for stated purposes (e.g., Luke 1:1–4; John 20:31; 1 John 5:13).

### EXTERNAL FACTORS

Scripture speaks into a world with its own customs and institutions. Knowing them protects us from reading modern assumptions into ancient texts. Background illuminates the text; it never overrules it. Grudem cautions, "I do not think that historical background information can ever properly be used to nullify or overturn something the biblical text actually says" (*Systematic Theology*).

- **Cultural and customs:** family life, hospitality, meals, dress, marriage, burial, and the logic of honour and shame (e.g., foot-washing in John 13).
- **Geographical:** distances, terrain, climate, and the significance of places (e.g., the road "down" from Jerusalem to Jericho, Luke 10:30).

- **Political:** rulers, empires, and power structures (e.g., Roman occupation and the Herodian dynasty).
- **Economic:** money, wages, trade, debt, slavery, poverty, and wealth (e.g., a denarius as a day's wage, Matt. 20:2).
- **Legal:** covenants, contracts, inheritance, courts, and testimony (e.g., two or three witnesses, Deut. 19:15).
- **Agricultural:** sowing, harvest, vineyards, shepherding, and the seasons (e.g., the parable of the soils, Matt. 13:1–23).
- **Architectural:** houses, rooftops, city gates, the tabernacle, and the temple (e.g., the paralytic let down through the roof, Mark 2:4).
- **Social:** classes and relationships between Jew and Gentile, men and women, master and slave (e.g., John 4:9).
- **Religious:** Jewish sects, feasts, synagogue and temple worship, and pagan cults (e.g., Pharisees and Sadducees; Artemis of the Ephesians, Acts 19).
- **Philosophical:** the ideas in the air, such as Greek philosophy and early ascetic or mystical tendencies (e.g., Acts 17:18; Col. 2:8).

## LITERARY QUESTIONS

These questions attend to *how* the text says what it says. God inspired not only the content of Scripture but its form, so the shape of a passage is part of its meaning.

- **Genre:** narrative, law, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, gospel, epistle, or apocalyptic? Each is read according to its own conventions. Carson notes that "Wisdom Literature is not law" (compare Prov. 26:4 and 26:5).
- **Prescription or description?** Is the text commanding something, or recording what happened? Narrative faithfully reports many things it does not approve.
- **Basic investigation:** Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- **Structure:** How do the statements relate to one another? Mark the connecting words: *but*, *if*, *and*, *for*, *therefore*, *because*, *so that*, *in order that*.
- **Dynamics:** cause and effect, condition and result (if–then), question and answer, problem and solution, general and specific.
- **Comparisons and contrasts:** what is likened (*like*, *as*, *so also*) and what is set against (*but*, *however*, *yet*)?
- **Terms (versus words):** a term is a key word that an author uses with a consistent, specific meaning (e.g., "flesh," "world," or "faith" in a given author). Note it and trace it.
- **Emphasis:** what the author stresses by proportion (how much space he gives), position (first or last), or explicit statement.
- **Parallelism:** the pairing of lines in Hebrew poetry, whether synonymous, contrasting, or developing (e.g., Ps. 1:6; Prov. 15:1).

- **Repetition:** repeated words, phrases, and themes signal the author's concern (e.g., "believe" in John; "better" in Hebrews).
- **Telescoping:** prophecy that views distant events together, like mountain peaks seen from afar without the valleys between (e.g., Isa. 61:1–2, where Jesus stops reading before "the day of vengeance," Luke 4:18–21).
- **Ellipsis:** words left out but implied, to be supplied from the context (e.g., Eph. 5:22, where the verb "submit" is carried over from v. 21).
- **Figures of speech:** metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, and anthropomorphism, read as figures and not with wooden literalism (e.g., Matt. 5:29–30).
- **Verbs:** tense, mood, and voice. Distinguish commands (imperatives) from the statements of what God has done (indicatives) on which they rest (e.g., the "therefore" of Rom. 12:1).
- **Pronouns and antecedents:** to whom or what do "he," "they," "this," and "that" refer?
- **Quotations and allusions:** where does the passage cite or echo earlier Scripture?
- **Chiasm and inclusio:** mirrored structures (A–B–B′–A′) and "bookends" that frame a unit (e.g., "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 5:3, 10).
- **Lists and progressions:** sequences that build toward a climax (e.g., Rom. 8:29–30; 2 Pet. 1:5–7).

## COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS

Ask what kind of speech the passage contains. Every text communicates something God wants known, believed, felt, or done.

- **Declarations:** statements of fact or truth (e.g., "God is light," 1 John 1:5).
- **Doctrines:** teaching about God, Christ, the Spirit, man, sin, salvation, the church, and the last things.
- **Commands:** what we are to do or not do. Note to whom the command was given.
- **Promises:** what God pledges, to whom, and with what conditions (e.g., 1 John 1:9).
- **Warnings:** the consequences of unbelief and disobedience (e.g., Heb. 2:1–3).
- **Examples:** patterns to follow or to avoid (e.g., 1 Cor. 10:6, 11).
- **Prayers and praises:** models for our own (e.g., Eph. 1:15–23).
- **Questions:** rhetorical questions that demand an answer (e.g., Rom. 6:1–2).

## REVELATION QUESTIONS

Finally, ask what the passage reveals. The Bible is first a book about God, and every part of it bears witness to Christ (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

- What is revealed about **God** in this text: His character, attributes, works, and ways?
- What is revealed about **Christ and the gospel**: how does the passage anticipate, present, or apply His person and work?

- What is revealed about **man** in this text: his creation, sin, need, and calling?
- What is revealed about _____ in this text (the church, the world, Satan, the age to come)?

## INTERPRETATION

Observation asks, "What does it say?" Interpretation asks, "What does it mean?" In other words, what did the author intend to communicate to his original readers? MacArthur, reflecting on Nehemiah 8:8, writes, "we must not only read the Word, we must also seek to know what it means by what it says" (*How to Study the Bible*). A passage has one meaning, determined by its divine and human author, though it may have many applications. The interpreter's task is not to create meaning but to discover it, and Krol warns that the greatest enemy at this stage is presumption.

So labour to understand the text for yourself. Many believers reach for a study note or commentary before they have even tried to think a passage through. They borrow conclusions they cannot defend, and they miss the joy of discovery. Begin with your own observations and questions, and then *think*. Read the passage in its context, and pay close attention to its grammar; diagramming a sentence often exposes its main clause and the relation of every phrase to it. Do not change the rules of interpretation for the Bible. Read it as you would read any honest communication, according to the normal sense of its language, grammar, and genre; as MacArthur says, "The Bible is not a book that's supposed to have some kind of hidden truth—it's not a secret book." Interpret what is implicit by what is explicit, and what is obscure by what is clear. Determine the meaning of words by lexicography (how a word was actually used), etymology (its origin, a limited and sometimes misleading guide), and, above all, context, for words mean what they mean in use. Only then turn to commentaries, to test, refine, and supplement your work. Pickowicz advises, "It's wise to consult a commentary after you have done your interpretive work first."

### INTERPRETATION AND AUTHORITY

The clarity of Scripture invites every believer to study it, but clarity does not make every interpretation equally valid. Six convictions keep our study humble and accountable.

***1. Every believer may understand, but not every believer is equally gifted.***

The clarity of Scripture does not mean that every believer is equally gifted and skilled to understand what is written. Understanding is neither mystical (a private impression that bypasses the text) nor mechanical (a technique that works apart from grace). God assigns to each "the measure of faith" and distributes gifts "according to the grace given to us" (Rom. 12:3, 6). He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding (Dan. 2:21), and He has given shepherds and teachers to His church (Eph. 4:7, 11). Each must therefore think with sober judgment, test his own work, and honour those who teach him (Gal. 6:3–6). **No one can be cavalier with God's Word.**

> **Romans 12:3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.
>
> **Romans 12:6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

**Ephesians 4:7, 11** But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. … [11]And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

**Daniel 2:21** He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

**Galatians 6:3–6** For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. [4]But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. [5]For each will have to bear his own load. [6]Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

### *2. There are no private interpretations, yet meaning is not decided by popular vote.*

Scripture has one objective meaning, and no individual owns it. Yet neither is its meaning settled by majority opinion. God has placed His Word in the church, "a pillar and buttress of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), and has charged faithful men to rightly handle it, teach it with authority, and entrust it to others (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; Titus 2:1, 15). Paul refused to be a "peddler" of God's Word, a petty retailer who sells deceitfully, or to tamper with it; he spoke "in the sight of God" to every man's conscience (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:1–2). Some things in Scripture are hard to understand, and the ignorant and unstable twist them to their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16). Those who desire to teach without understanding wander into vain discussion (1 Tim. 1:5–7), and those who teach will be judged with greater strictness (James 3:1). We therefore study within the church, under accountable teaching, and with a good conscience before God.

**2 Corinthians 2:17** For we are not, like so many, peddlers **[a petty retail merchant who sells deceitfully: hawker, huckster]** of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, **in the sight of God** we speak in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 4:1–2** Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. [2]But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's **conscience in the sight of God**.

**1 Timothy 1:5–7** The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a **good conscience** and a sincere faith. [6]Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, [7]desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

**2 Peter 3:16** as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. **There are some things in them that are hard to understand**, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

**Jeremiah 23:36** But 'the burden of the LORD' you shall mention no more, for the burden is every man's own word, and you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God.

**Titus 2:1, 15** But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. … [15]Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

**2 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

**2 Timothy 2:2** and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

**James 3:1** Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

**1 Timothy 3:15** if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

**1 Timothy 6:3** If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,

### *3. Understanding what is written is more than an intellectual endeavour.*

The natural person cannot accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:13–14). The religious leaders searched the Scriptures and missed the Christ of whom they spoke (John 5:39). A veil lies over hardened minds until it is removed in Christ (2 Cor. 3:14), and the god of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4). Some cannot understand because they cannot bear to hear (John 8:43); others have grown dull of hearing (Heb. 5:11). Therefore we test every teaching by the Word (Isa. 8:20), and we pray, "Open my eyes" (Ps. 119:18).

**1 Corinthians 2:13–14** And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

**Isaiah 8:20** To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

**John 5:39** You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,

**2 Corinthians 3:14** But their minds were hardened. For to this day, **when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away**.

**2 Corinthians 4:4** In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**John 8:43** Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.

**Hebrews 5:11** About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

**Psalm 119:18** Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

### *4. Understanding what is written begins with receiving it by faith.*

We do not stand over Scripture as its judges but under it as its hearers. The Thessalonians received the Word "as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13), and James calls us to put away what defiles and to "receive with meekness the implanted word" (James 1:21).

**1 Thessalonians 2:13** And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

**James 1:21** Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive **with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls.

### *5. Even the best study will not make us know all things.*

God has not revealed everything, but He has revealed everything we need to believe and obey. Humility accepts both the clarity of what is revealed and the mystery of what is not.

**Deuteronomy 29:29** "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

***6. Studying Scripture is not an end in itself.***

Israel's king was to read the Law all the days of his life, not to become a scholar, but "that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law" (Deut. 17:19). Scripture was written "for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). The goal of study is reverence, obedience, and hope in God.

> **Deuteronomy 17:19** And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them,
>
> **Romans 15:4** For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

## REVIEW OBSERVATIONS

Return to what you observed, and ask what each feature contributes to the meaning of the passage.

- **Words:** What do the key words mean *in this context*? Which are terms the author uses with a specific sense?
- **Phrases:** How do phrases qualify, limit, or expand the main statement (e.g., "in Christ" throughout Eph. 1:3–14)?
- **Prepositions:** Small words carry great weight: *in*, *through*, *by*, *for*, *with* (e.g., "by grace … through faith," Eph. 2:8).
- **Context:** How does the immediate and wider context shape and limit the meaning?
- **Connections:** How do the connecting words (*therefore*, *for*, *but*, *so that*) link the argument together?
- **Main idea:** Can you state the point of each paragraph, and then of the whole passage, in a single sentence?

## DISCERN MEANING

Bring disciplined thinking to bear on the text in four ways: logic, language, hermeneutics, and the analogy of Scripture.

- **Logic.** God is a God of truth, not confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), and His Word is consistent with itself. The basic laws of thought are tools for reading Scripture honestly.
  - **Law of identity (P = P):** a thing is what it is. A word means what it means in its context and must not be quietly redefined.
  - **Law of non-contradiction (P ≠ !P):** a statement cannot be both true and false in the same sense at the same time. Apparent contradictions call for closer study, not despair.
  - **Law of the excluded middle (P || !P):** a statement is either true or false. Scripture's claims call for a verdict.
- **Language.** God spoke in human language, and language has rules.

  - **Grammar:** *lexical* (what the words mean) and *syntactical* (how the words relate to one another in sentences).
  - **Literature:** the genre and literary features identified in observation.
  - **Tools:** lexicon, Bible dictionary, interlinear, and commentaries.
- **Hermeneutics.** The principles of interpretation, which guard us from reading our own ideas into the text.
  - **Textual context:** meaning is determined by the author's intent in context, not by isolated word studies.
  - **Historical context:** the culture, geography, and circumstances of the original setting.
  - **Redemptive-historical context:** where the passage stands in the progress of revelation, and how it relates to Christ and the gospel (Luke 24:44–47).
  - **Tools:** atlas, manners and customs, Bible dictionary, and commentaries.
- ***Analogia Scripturae* ("the analogy of Scripture").** Scripture interprets Scripture. Clearer passages explain less clear ones, and no interpretation may set one text against another (WCF 1.9).
  - **Cross-references:** compare parallel passages and the use of the same terms elsewhere, especially by the same author.
  - **Tools:** concordance, topical Bible, cross-reference Bible, and Bible software.

## APPLICATION

Interpretation asks what the text meant; application asks what it requires of me now. There is one meaning but many applications, and the student who stops short of application has not finished his study. "Application is terribly inconvenient," Krol admits. "It makes us doers of the Word, unlike inertia, which encourages us to remain merely hearers of the Word" (*Knowable Word*; see James 1:22). Torrey adds a sober warning: "Truth obeyed leads to more truth. Truth disobeyed destroys the capacity for discovering truth" (*How to Study the Bible for Greatest Profit*). Right application is gracious and Christ-centred, not moralistic self-improvement detached from the gospel. Because Scripture was first written to others, we apply most of it by careful extension and analogy, and, as Powlison notes, "application occurs in specifics" (in *Understanding Scripture*).

### HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE APPLY TO ME?

Ask these questions prayerfully, and write down your answers.

- **What principles are present?** "Learn to principlize the Scripture" (MacArthur). Identify the timeless truth that applies across cultures and ages.
- **How does the truth revealed here affect my view of God?** Right application begins with God, not with self. Every passage enlarges or corrects our knowledge of Him.
- **How does the truth revealed here affect my relationship with God? With others?** Does it call me to repent, trust, worship, or draw near? To love, forgive, serve, or be reconciled?
- **How does the truth revealed here affect my thoughts, desires, and affections?** Scripture aims at the heart. What should I believe, love, hate, fear, or hope?

- **How should this change my life?** Consider my habits, words, relationships, work, home, and church.
- **What specific things can I do to apply this truth to my life?** Be concrete: what, when, and with whom.
- **What is the most excellent response to this truth?** Seek not the minimum duty but the fullest response of love (Phil. 1:9–10).
- **How can I make much of Christ by this truth?** Every application should lead to Christ: trusting His work, imitating His character, and magnifying His name.
- **Who else needs to hear this?** Pass it on. What we have received we are to entrust to others (2 Tim. 2:2).

### A SIMPLE AID: APPLE

When you are pressed for time, look for these five things in the passage.

- **A**ttributes of God
- **P**romises of God
- **P**rinciples for life
- **L**essons learned, or sins to avoid
- **E**xamples to follow

**Be specific. Pray. Obey.**

## RESOURCES

The resources below are offered as helps. The list is not exhaustive, and the works in it vary in depth, emphasis, and quality; inclusion is not an endorsement of every view an author holds. Read them as the Bereans heard Paul, with eagerness and discernment, and let them serve the text rather than govern it. If you have a question about a resource, or would like a recommendation for a particular need, please ask one of the shepherds of the church.

#### ONLINE


Equip. Trinity Bible Church. https://equip.trinitybiblechurch.org/.

Blue Letter Bible. https://www.blueletterbible.org/.

Christian Classics Ethereal Library. https://www.ccel.org/.

Grace to You. https://www.gty.org/.

Ligonier Ministries. https://www.ligonier.org/.

Monergism. https://www.monergism.com/.

Piper, John. "What Tools Do I Need to Study the Bible?" *Ask Pastor John.* Desiring God. https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-tools-do-i-need-to-study-the-bible.


#### ON SCRIPTURE


Carson, D. A. *Collected Writings on Scripture.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Carson, D. A. *The Scriptures Testify about Me: Jesus and the Gospel in the Old Testament.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.

DeYoung, Kevin. *Taking God at His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

Grudem, Wayne, C. John Collins, and Thomas R. Schreiner, eds. *Understanding Scripture: An Overview of the Bible's Origin, Reliability, and Meaning.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Harris, R. Laird. *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Scriptures.* Rev. ed. Greenville, SC: A Press, 1995.

Kruger, Michael J. *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

MacArthur, John, ed. *The Inerrant Word: Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.

Warfield, Benjamin B. *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible.* Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1948.

### HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth.* 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Krol, Peter. *Knowable Word: Helping Ordinary Christians Learn to Study the Bible.* Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2014.

MacArthur, John. *How to Study the Bible.* Chicago: Moody, 2009.

MacArthur, John. *Unleashing God's Word in Your Life.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003.

Pickowicz, Nate. *How to Eat Your Bible: A Simple Approach to Learning and Loving the Word of God.* Chicago: Moody, 2021.

Sproul, R. C. *Knowing Scripture.* 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016.

Torrey, R. A. *How to Study the Bible for Greatest Profit.* Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1896.

### HERMENEUTICS

Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996.

Klein, William W., Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation.* 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.

Thomas, Robert L. *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002.

Zuck, Roy B. *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth.* Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991.

### BIBLE DICTIONARIES AND WORD STUDIES

Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology.* 2nd ed. Baker Reference Library. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Mounce, William D., ed. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Wood, D. R. W., ed. *New Bible Dictionary.* 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

### BIBLE SURVEYS

Carson, D. A., and Douglas J. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction.* Rev. ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament.* 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Arnold, Clinton E., ed. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: New Testament.* 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Beitzel, Barry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible.* Chicago: Moody, 2009.

Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament.* 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.

Packer, J. I., Merrill C. Tenney, and William White Jr., eds. *Nelson's Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.

Walton, John H., ed. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament.* 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

### STUDY BIBLES

*ESV Study Bible.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

MacArthur, John, ed. *The MacArthur Study Bible: English Standard Version.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Sproul, R. C., ed. *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version.* Rev. ed. Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015.

### COMMENTARIES

Calvin, John. *Calvin's Commentaries.* 22 vols. Translated by the Calvin Translation Society. 1844–56. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979.

Carson, D. A. *New Testament Commentary Survey.* 7th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

Henry, Matthew. *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament.* 6 vols. London, 1706–21.

Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown. *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments.* 6 vols. Glasgow: William Collins, 1864–70.

Longman, Tremper, III. *Old Testament Commentary Survey.* 5th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary.* Chicago: Moody, 1983–.

Poole, Matthew. *A Commentary on the Holy Bible.* 3 vols. 1683–85. Reprint, London: Banner of Truth, 1962.

Robertson, A. T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament.* 6 vols. Nashville: Broadman, 1930–33.

Spurgeon, C. H. *The Treasury of David.* 7 vols. London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1869–85.

Vincent, Marvin R. *Word Studies in the New Testament.* 4 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887–1900.

### APPLICATION

Hendricks, Howard G., and William D. Hendricks. *Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible.* Rev. ed. Chicago: Moody, 2007.

Kuhatschek, Jack. *Taking the Guesswork out of Applying the Bible.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Powlison, David. "Reading the Bible for Personal Application." In *Understanding Scripture: An Overview of the Bible's Origin, Reliability, and Meaning*, edited by Wayne Grudem, C. John Collins, and Thomas R. Schreiner. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

### BIBLE SOFTWARE

Logos Bible Software — https://www.logos.com/

theWord — https://www.theword.net/