

**Christianity 201**  
**Taking the Next Step**  
**Sundays**  
**10 a.m.**  
**ROOM 200**

The Bible is a book of life, a treasure chest of truth, reviving the soul, making wise the simple, giving joy to the heart, giving light to the eyes, more precious than gold, sweeter than honey, and in obeying its teaching there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11) The abundant wisdom and riches God has provided in His Word are available to every Christian, but we only obtain them when we diligently dig for them. So how do I dig for them? What should I be looking for? In this class we will learn how and why to study the Bible. Then we will study five foundational topics for the Christian life.

**Sessions**

1. How And Why To Study The Bible - April 25, 2010
2. Developing Spiritual Maturity - May 2, 2010
3. Living Under Christ's Lordship - May 9, 2010
4. Trusting God's Promises - May 16, 2010
5. Discerning God's Will For Your Life - May 23, 2010
6. Living With The Heart Of A Servant - May 30, 2010

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# How And Why To Study The Bible

The Bible is the greatest book that has ever been written. In it God Himself speaks to men. It is a book of divine instruction. It offers comfort in sorrow, guidance in perplexity, advice for our problems, rebuke for our sins, and daily inspiration for our every need.

The Bible is not simply one book. It is an entire library of books covering the whole range of literature. It includes history, poetry, drama, biography, prophecy, philosophy, science, and inspirational reading. Little wonder, then, that all or part of the Bible has been translated into more than 1,200 languages, and every year more copies of the Bible are sold than any other single book.

The Bible alone truly answers the greatest questions that men of all ages have asked: "Where have I come from?" "Where am I going?" "Why am I here?" "How can I know the truth?"

The late Dr. Wilbur M. Smith relates seven great things that the study of the Bible will do for us:

1. The Bible discovers and convicts us of sin.
2. The Bible helps cleanse us from the pollutions of sin.
3. The Bible imparts strength.
4. The Bible instructs us in what we are to do.
5. The Bible provides us with a sword for victory over sin.
6. The Bible makes our lives fruitful.
7. The Bible gives us power to pray.

## Personal Devotional Bible Study

The Bible is not an end in itself but it is a means to the end of knowing God and doing his will. The apostle Paul said, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) God has given us the Bible in order that we might know Him and do His will here on earth.

Therefore Personal Devotional Bible Study is the most important kind of Bible study. Personal Devotional Bible study means reading and studying the Word of God in order that we may hear God's voice personally and that we may know how to do His will and to live a better Christian life.

For your devotional reading and study of the Bible, here are several important, practical suggestions:

1. Begin your Bible reading with prayer. (Ps. 119:18; John 16:13-15)
2. Take brief notes on what you read. Keep a small notebook for your Bible study.
3. Read slowly through one chapter, or perhaps two or three chapters, or perhaps just one paragraph at a time. After reading ask yourself what the passage was about. Then reread it.
4. It is often very helpful in finding out the true meaning of a chapter or passage to ask yourself the following questions, write the answers in your notebook:
  - a. What is the main subject of the passage?

- b. Who are the persons revealed in this passage: Who is speaking? About whom is he speaking? Who is acting?, etc.
  - c. What is the key verse in the passage?
  - d. What does the passage teach me about the Lord Jesus Christ?
  - e. Is there any sin for me to confess and forsake in this passage?
  - f. Is there any command for me to obey in this passage?
  - g. Is there any promise for me to claim?
  - h. Is there any instruction for me to follow?
  - i. Is there any prayer I should pray?
- Not all of these questions may be answered in every passage.
5. Keep a spiritual diary. Write down daily what God says to you through the Bible.
  6. Memorize passages of the Word of God.
  7. Obey the Word of God. 2 Tim. 3:16, James 1:22

### Study for Bible Knowledge

There are many valuable methods of Bible study. One may study the Bible, as it were with a telescope, to see the great truths which stand out in every book. Or one may study the Bible with a microscope to find all of the marvelous details which are in this mine of spiritual riches. In this section there are several proven methods by which a person may do more intensive Bible study. The most important thing is to follow faithfully some systematic method of Bible study.

1. **Bible study by Chapters.** In the Bible there are 1,189 chapters in the Old and New Testaments. In a little over three years a person could make an intensive study of the whole Bible, just taking a chapter a day. It is usually a good practice to start your Bible study in the New Testament.
2. **Bible study by Paragraphs.** A paragraph is a unit of thought in writing, usually containing several sentences. When an author changes his subject of emphasis in his writing he usually begins a new paragraph.
3. **Bible study by Verses.** In studying the historical passages of the Bible, such as much of the Old Testament or parts of the Gospels, each verse may have only one simple meaning.
4. **Bible study by Books.** After you have begun to study the Bible by chapters or paragraphs or verses, you will be ready to study the Bible by Books. There are several methods of Bible book study. One is called the inductive method. Another method is called the synthetic method. In some cases the study of a Bible book becomes a historical study, if that book relates the history of a nation or a man in a particular period of time.
5. **Bible study by Words.**
6. **Bible study by Topics.**
7. **Bible study by Biography.**
8. **Conclusion.** There are many other methods of studying the Bible; the psychological method, the sociological method, the cultural method, the philosophical method, etc. However, the methods given above largely include all these other methods.

The great thrill of Bible study is discovering these eternal truths of God's Word for yourself and embarking on the adventure of obeying them and experiencing the blessing in your personal life.

### **Basic Bible Study Tools**

1. Bible. There are various Bible translations available today. These translations fall into the following categories;
  - a. Literal Word-for-Word, "New American Standard Bible" (NASB)
  - b. Thought-for-Thought, "New International Version" (NIV)
  - c. Paraphrased, "The Message Bible"(MSG)When choosing a Bible for study purposes it is helpful to chose one that has study aids.
2. English Dictionary
3. Notebook

### **Intermediate Bible Study Tools**

1. Concordance to the Old & New Testament for your translation.
2. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge
3. Bible Commentary of the Old and New Testament. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)
4. Topical Concordance

### **Advanced Bible Study Tools**

1. The Dictionary of New Testament Theology (2 Vol.)
2. The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (2 Vol.)
3. The Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (5 Vol.)
4. The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance
5. The Englishman's Greek Concordance and Lexicon
6. A Systematic Theology Book (Foundations of the Christian Faith / Boice)

### **Bible Study Software**

1. Bible Gateway free on-line <http://www.biblegateway.com/>
2. QuickVerse Bible Software <http://www.quickverse.com/shopfiles/default.asp>  
Free QuickVerse Version 2008 Download  
[http://quickverse.com/shopfiles/product\\_details.asp?ID=NFS1217MYC](http://quickverse.com/shopfiles/product_details.asp?ID=NFS1217MYC)
3. Logos Bible Software <http://www.logos.com/>  
Free On-line <http://bible.logos.com/#ref=Ge%201&ver=NLT>

## The Essentials of Christianity

Essential Christianity. We hear a lot of discussion about essentials and non-essentials, but what are the essentials of Christianity?

When we talk about the essentials of Christianity we're referring to the basic elements that make up and characterize our faith, and which, of course, separate it from other beliefs. Let's survey these doctrines.

First, we believe in **the authority of Scripture**, which is another way of saying that the Bible is God's inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word. It's the ultimate source for knowledge about God, as well as the definitive guide for our daily lives.

Next we **affirm the existence of a triune God** or one God in three distinct persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This God is self-existent, eternal, unchanging, omnipotent, omnipresent, holy, righteous, and loving. God created the universe from nothing and He rules over His creation sovereignly including both human and angelic beings.

We also hold that **man is a physical and spiritual being** who is created in God's image. But because of his sin or transgression, man has lost his fellowship with God. The extent of sin is so great that its effects continue to this very day in the form of cruelty, suffering, and death.

By God's grace, **Jesus Christ - Who is fully God and fully man - was sent to save us from our bondage to sin**. We believe that Christ was born of a virgin, died for our sins, physically rose from the dead, and will one day return to judge the world and deliver His people. Faith in Christ is the only means by which mankind can escape eternal damnation and judgment.

Finally, we recognize **the church as God's ordained institution** headed by Christ. The church is composed of all believers, and is organized for worship, for fellowship, for the administration of the sacraments, for spiritual growth and support, and for evangelizing the world.

**Infallibility** - From the word in, "not," and fallere, "to deceive." The doctrine that the Bible is free from mistakes, incapable of error, not liable to mislead, deceive, or disappoint.

**Inerrancy** - The whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration. That inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. This doctrine does not assert that no errors in the copies were transmitted through history or that one does not have to study the text carefully in regard to textual problems and interpretation.

The view that the Bible is inerrant is rooted in our view of God. If there are good reasons to believe in a God who is Supreme Being, unlimited in His very nature (unlimited in power, knowledge, goodness, wisdom and so on), then there is little problem with the possibility of such a Being communication with mankind in a way that would preclude the possibility of error. In fact, if such a God exists then one would expect this kind of revelation from Him. The real problem would be if no such communication existed. *Excerpted from "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" Zondervan 1979 pages 493-502.*