

Study Tools

“Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord, God of hosts.” Jeremiah 15:16

Over the summer, we will study the precious and timeless truths found in Scripture so that they can be lived out in our relationship with God and with others. In order to see and experience the value in knowing God’s Word, it requires skill, hard work, and perseverance. Along with being disciplined, the most important ingredient in understanding God’s Word and applying it correctly is the complete dependence upon the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Without Him governing our minds and hearts, we cannot properly know and understand the truth that sets us free (John 16:13, 8:32). We are going to try to teach you some tools that allow you to discover the riches of God’s Word for yourself instead of having to rely on what someone else has said. The tools should be of benefit to you for the rest of your life as you strive to know the Lord through His Word.

Reading Rules:

- **Repeatedly**- Read the whole chapter that we are studying for the week **at least** once a day.
- **Thoughtfully**- Think about what you are reading. If you get distracted, read it over again.
- **Patiently**- Do not be in a rush to finish. Take your time in looking over the individual passages.
- **Selectively**- Answer questions like: who, what, when, where, why, how?
- **Prayerfully**- Ask God what He wants to show you from this text.
- **Reflectively**- Move it from your head to your heart.
- **Purposefully**- It’s not just for head knowledge, it’s to be more like Christ

Keys for Correct Interpretation:

You need to consider the following four areas as you interpret what a passage of scripture is about. Remember that the Holy Spirit is your teacher, so let Him guide you.

1. **Content**- This is who, what, when, where, why, how.
2. **Context**-
 - Literary context – where it sits in the text of Scripture: in the paragraph, section, book, in the Bible as a whole.
 - Cultural context – How did the culture receive it? Culture determines forms of communication and ways of understanding i.e. agricultural society, views of men and women, family life, etc.
3. **Comparison**- Comparing Scripture with Scripture will increase understanding and guard against distortions. Some helpful tools are a Concordance, Bible Dictionary, and Word Study Dictionary. Areas to use comparison are in word studies, character studies, difficult sections or concepts.
4. **Consultation**- Consultation involves using secondary sources such as Bible Commentaries to shed light on a text and help you understand it better. Use these as tools to learn from someone more knowledgeable, but do not become dependent on them and fail to do the work yourself. Avoid both the arrogance of “God will speak to me, I don’t need someone else” and being too dependent on these sources.

4 Steps in Application:

1. **Know**- The text and yourself. Take a spiritual inventory of your personal life, your family life, your church life, your community, etc.
2. **Relate**- The Word of God affects every area of your life. How does what you have learned affect your relationship with God, friends, or your enemies?
3. **Meditate**- It’s not quantity, its quality.
4. **Practice**- Knowledge without any change is useless.

****Ideas were gathered from Central Baptist Church’s logos groups****