



NUMBER 1: Mark your Bible!

Employ every technique you can to pull the words from the page and plant them firmly in your heart.

Ask questions of the scripture, Dig until you find answers. Place a demand on the Holy Ghost in His role as Teacher, knowing that it the hungry who are fed, and those who seek that experience the joy of finding! The lazy and flippant lose even that which they have;

The Bible is made for use, it is our toolbox, a handbook for living.

“Underline, highlight, use different colours for different themes to make your searches easier. Don’t be afraid to mark your Bible in meaningful ways. Create your own cross-references in the spaces between verses. Connect related scriptures and ideas, even across pages. In this way you begin to engage with the text, and, dare I say, begin to develop a ‘personal relationship’, not just a distant admiration or polite acceptance!”

Mark 4:24-25 (Amp), be careful what you hear
Proverbs 2:2-7 (apply yourself)

“And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you—and more [besides] will be given to you who hear. For to him who has will more be given; and from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away [by force],” (Mark 4:24-25 AMP)

“If we sow much we will reap much”
2Corinthians 9:6 / Luke 8:11

“So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;” (Proverbs 2:2-7 NKJV)

Be vigorous. Take your place as a king and priest in God’s Kingdom.

“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.”
(Prov 25:2 NKJV)



NUMBER 2: Look it up, Speak it out, Write it down!

This key is one that has probably helped me more than any other. It helps you to retain scriptures, it helps you to negotiate your Bible with ease and skill, it engages the mind with what is being studied, it commands the body to concentrate on what the spirit is focused on.

These are great ways to store the Word in your mind and heart for future use. You must make scripture your own. As long as it stays as 'someone else's revelation', when the pressure comes on, it won't be firmly rooted in your own heart for the Holy Ghost to retrieve and give you as the weapon to overcome. The Holy Spirit can only 'bring to remembrance' those things that you have put there to retrieve.

One time I spent several months studying some of Kenneth Hagin's material. Pastor Hagin taught 'faith' for many, many years. If you do know him, you will not be surprised to hear that most of my study was based around the scripture found in *Mark chapter 11, verses 22-24*;

"Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

I studied a small portion of Dr Hagin's books every day, alongside other texts. During those months I must have looked up, spoken out and written down that scripture hundreds of times! The temptation was always there to say or think, "I know that", but friend, until the mountain moves, and I get all those whatsoevers I am desiring and praying for every time, it is obvious that I do not know that scripture in its fulness!

Obviously, writing out in full every scripture that we come across is not realistic, but in certain circumstances, and during our set study times, it provides an excellent and simple avenue for God's Word to find root in our thinking. Try it.



NUMBER 3: Refer to Different Versions of the Bible

As you probably know, there are many different translations of the Bible available. Sometimes this can prove a little confusing. Which one is the best? Why do we need so many? They range from freely rendered paraphrases like Eugene Peterson's 'The Message', to the literally translated 16th Century classic, the King James Version, or the more modern New International Version.

In Bible translation there are basically two schools of thought:

1. *Translation* – taken directly from the actual words of the original documents.
2. *Paraphrase* – The texts are taken broadly, idea by idea, and presented in easy to understand language. These do not always remain accurate to the original language texts.

Translations

Translation Methodology also falls into two main categories.

1. **"verbal or 'literal' equivalency"**. Literal word for word translation (Example: King James Version, New American Standard)
2. **"dynamic equivalency"**. Involves some degree of interpretation, where the translator tries to present what he thinks the writer is trying to tell us, whilst aiming to stay true to the original text. A cornerstone of dynamic equivalency is its goal of translating ideas rather than words. This methodology has become by far the most popular in recent decades. In English, popular dynamic equivalency versions include the New International Version, the New Living Translation and The New Testament in Modern English by J B Phillips. Some contend that dynamic equivalency can divert the meaning of scripture, because it involves the attempts of fallible men to interpret what they consider to be the meaning of any given passage: Dr Ryken, in "The Word of God in English", points out: *"if it is possible to translate more accurately by abandoning the words of the original for its ideas, why do the dynamic equivalent translations end up in such disagreement with each other?."* Supporters of dynamic equivalency however, point out its ability to provide the modern reader with a clearer understanding of what otherwise may remain obscure and incomprehensible. It is indeed true that the New Testament in particular was not written as an intellectual or exalted form of literature, but very much in the common language of

those to whom it was addressed.

Dynamic equivalence is not a paraphrase. Dynamic equivalence applies to individual words or phrases, not whole sentences and paragraphs as in a paraphrase.

Paraphrases

A paraphrase goes beyond just taking certain words and translating them dynamically, to taking entire thoughts and paragraphs into modern language. Popular paraphrases include Today's English Version (Good News for Modern Man), the Living Bible, the Contemporary English Version, and The Message. Paraphrased Bibles cannot be used for serious Bible Study because they do not maintain textual accuracy, and therefore cannot be relied upon to be entirely trustworthy in their interpretations. Their limited use for personal reading and edification, and to enhance study of accepted translations can be helpful however.

Serious Bible students should have at least one good translation as an integral part of their Bible studies. A translation is more trustworthy than a paraphrase if you are looking to grasp the original words of the men who penned the scriptures. We would recommend either the King James or the New King James as the most accurate. Certain flaws in dynamic equivalency make other popular texts such as the NIV and NLT less dependable.

It is a good idea to have several different translations and paraphrases in your library, so you can enjoy the rich resource that they offer to any serious researcher. Many Bible software programs offer an extensive library of different versions and translations, and provide an easy route to quickly compare them with one another.

APPENDIX 1 at the end of this sessions notes lists some of the more popular translations and a small comment on their usefulness.

A Simple Study Method

A great method of study, particularly verse-by-verse study, is to simply look up the same scriptures in different versions of the Bible.

This is so easy and very rewarding, and the best thing is that you don't have to be a professor to do it! Often something as simple as this is all it takes to open our mind to new revelation as each version can shed a different light on familiar scriptures.

A couple of examples

Example 1: 2 Timothy 4:2 using the KJV and the Amplified

Module 1 – Foundations Lesson 5 – The Joy of Bible Study

“...the first step in learning is bowing down to GOD” Proverbs 1:7, THE MESSAGE

The King James translates 2 Timothy 4:2 this way:

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

Now, if you own an Amplified Bible, turn to the same scripture. The beginning of that scripture in Timothy is translated: *“Herald and preach the Word!”*

Instead of simply saying ‘preach’, the Amplified urges us also to ‘Herald!’. Herald who? As the Amplified makes clear with its capitalizing of the word ‘Word’, we are to herald ‘The Word’ Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ! The word ‘herald’ in the Oxford English dictionary includes these two ideas, among others:

*“...To proclaim the approach of.
...To usher in.”*

Can you follow how exciting this method of study can be? Using only two versions of the Bible and an English dictionary, we have gone from the merely ‘preaching the word’ to acting as a forerunner, announcing the immanent approach of the Lord Jesus Christ. And not only does our preaching herald His return, it also ‘ushers in’ His presence here and now! Surely this is the purpose of preaching!

Example 2: Colossians 3:1-2 using the NKJV and the NLT

Turn in your Bible to Colossians 3:1-2. The NKJV renders it:

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Now look at the same paragraph in the popular New Living Translation:

“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, **set your sights on the realities of heaven**, where Christ sits at God’s right hand in the place of honor and power. **Let heaven fill your thoughts**. Do not think only about things down here on earth.” (emphasis added)

Isn’t that beautiful? “Let heaven fill your thoughts”, “Set your sights on the realities of heaven.” I love that! This kind of discovery in the Word makes me want to jump and shout, “Hallelujah!”, right there in my study. In fact, that is exactly what I do. I have a Holy Ghost party right there as I spend time with God in His Word. After all, if people go to a feast, there is usually a great deal of drinking, dancing and shouting goes on. Why should it be any different at God’s banqueting table?

A word of warning

We must be careful not to build elaborate doctrines based on a particular rendering or translation of a portion of scripture. Always allow scripture to interpret scripture, and remember, only the original Hebrew and Greek texts are the *actual* words that God inspired His prophets to record. We must be careful not to *deify* a particular English translation, remembering that every translation, however good, by its very nature, will contain some discrepancies and mistranslations.



NUMBER 4: Faith comes by hearing...

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10:17

It is interesting to note that faith does not come by the Word of God, rather ‘hearing’ does. Faith comes when we hear the Living Word, the Lord Jesus, speak by the Holy Spirit to our spirit. Our time in the Word tunes our ear to hear His voice, excluding the multitude of other voices scrabbling for our attention. Through the written ‘logos’ (word) we sensitise our hearts to hear the Living ‘Logos’ (Word), Jesus Christ. John chapter 1 makes it clear Who the Living Word is. (*John 1:1-3*)



POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Take a few minutes to discuss different ways that we can open opportunities to ‘hear’ God’s Word.

“The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” (Psalms 119:130 NKJV)

Ways in which we can give entrance to the Word (ie: “hear” the Word)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____