

How to Study Your Bible

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Introduction

- ◆ Foundational Principles
- ◆ Practical Considerations
- ◆ Demonstration
- ◆ Deconstruction & Analysis

Foundational Principles

1. Presupposition Principle

- ◆ How shall we search the Scriptures in order to understand what they teach? We should come to the investigation of God's word with a **contrite heart, a teachable and prayerful spirit**. We are not to think, as did the Jews, that **our own ideas and opinions are infallible**; nor with the papists, that certain individuals are the sole guardians of truth and knowledge, that men have no right to search the Scriptures for themselves, but must accept the explanations given by the Fathers of the church. We should not study the Bible for the purpose of **sustaining our preconceived opinions**, but with the **single object of learning what God has said**. {GW92 125.1}

1. Presupposition Principle

- ◆ The student of the Bible should be taught to approach it in the **spirit of a learner**. We are to search its pages, **not for proof to sustain our opinions**, but in order to **know what God says**. {Ed 189.1}

2. Thought Inspiration Principle

- ◆ The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. **The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen.** {1SM 21.1}
- ◆ It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is **imbued with thoughts**. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God. {1SM 21.2}

3. Revelation Principle

- ◆ Your God is a **revealer of secrets**. [Daniel 2:47]
- ◆ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [Matt 7:7]
- ◆ Ever since the fall of man, Christ had been the **Revealer of truth to the world**. By Him the incorruptible seed, "the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever," is communicated to men. 1 Peter 1:23. [COL 37.1]

4. Human Language Principle

- ◆ The Bible is not given to us in **grand superhuman language**. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the **language of men**. Everything that is **human is imperfect**. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for **practical purposes**. [1SM 20.2]

5. Spiritual Things Principle

- ◆ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. [1 Cor 2:14]
- ◆ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. [Heb 11:6]
- ◆ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. [John 16:13]

5. Spiritual Things Principle

- ◆ Christ is the truth. His words are truth, and they have a **deeper significance** than appears on the surface. All the sayings of Christ have a **value beyond their unpretending appearance.** **Minds that are quickened by the Holy Spirit will discern** the value of these sayings. They will discern the precious gems of truth, though these may be buried treasures. {COL 110.1}

6. “Hoof beat” Principle

- ♦ The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that **the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed**. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24. The language of the Bible should be explained according to **its obvious meaning**, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. If men would but **take the Bible as it reads**, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error. [GC 598.3]

6. “Hoof beat” Principle

- ◆ We must be careful lest we misinterpret the Scriptures. The plain teachings of the Word of God are not to be **so spiritualized that the reality is lost sight of. Do not overstrain the meaning of sentences in the Bible in an effort to bring forth something odd in order to please the fancy. Take the Scriptures as they read. Avoid idle speculation concerning what will be in the kingdom of heaven. [1SM 170.2]**

7. Emotions Principle

- ◆ Genuine faith is founded on the Scriptures; but Satan uses so many devices to wrest the Scriptures and bring in error, that great care is needed if one would know what they really do teach. It is one of the great delusions of this time to **dwell much upon feeling**, and to claim honesty while ignoring the plain utterances of the word of God because that word does not coincide with feeling. Many have **no foundation for their faith but emotion**. Their religion **consists in excitement**; when that ceases, their faith is gone. Feeling may be chaff, but the word of God is the wheat. And "what," says the prophet, "is the chaff to the wheat?" [RH, November 25, 1884 par. 26]

8. True > New Principle

- ◆ Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by **gratifying the love for what is new and startling**. Converts thus gained have **little desire to listen to Bible truth**, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to **unimpassioned reason awakens no response**. The **plain warnings of God's word**, relating directly to their eternal interests, are **unheeded**. [GC 463.2]

8. True > New Principle

- ◆ "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." My words are in perfect harmony with the Old Testament Scriptures, and with the law spoken from Sinai. **I am not preaching a new doctrine. I am presenting old truths rescued from the framework of error, and placed in a new setting. [5BC 1136.2]**

9. Big Picture Principle

- ◆ The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view **the word as a whole**, and to see **the relation of its parts**. He should gain a knowledge of its **grand central theme**, of **God's original purpose for the world**, of the rise of **the great controversy**, and of **the work of redemption**. [Ed 190.2]

9. Big Picture Principle

- ◆ The life and character of Christ were living epistles of the truths he taught, and by his example he inspired faith in his followers...**He was the subject of all the lessons** he gave his disciples, the theme to which their attention must be riveted. **He was the great center of all**, and faith in him was to bring eternal life to all who would receive him... The types and rites of the Jewish church were **all connected with himself**; he was **the glory of the whole system**. Everything that was attractive, either in nature or revelation, was found in him; he was the **all-absorbing theme of patriarchs and prophets**,--the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega of all things. {RH, October 14, 1890 par. 2}

10. “No Pain, No Gain” Principle

- ◆ The study of the Bible demands **our most diligent effort and persevering thought**. As the miner digs for the golden treasure in the earth, so **earnestly, persistently**, must we seek for the treasure of God's word. {Ed 189.3}
- ◆ It is proper and right to read the Bible; but your duty does not end there; for you are to search its pages for yourselves. The knowledge of God is not to be gained without **mental effort**, without prayer for wisdom in order that you may separate from the pure grain of truth the chaff with which men and Satan have misrepresented the doctrines of truth. [FE 307.2]

One more thing...

Just read it.

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