

Summer, 2019 – Handout #5
Series: How to Study the Bible
Lesson - Bible Character Study

INTRODUCTION

So far in this series on How to Study the Bible, we have approached Bible Study for a standpoint of studying a passage in light of its content, context, culture, comparing Scripture with Scripture and drawing out of the text what the original author had in mind and how it applies and affects me. The next method of Bible study is learning to do a character study in the Scriptures.

- 1) Bible characters helps us know how to walk the walk (1 Cor. 10:1-13; Heb. 11).
 - We find much instruction for our own lives as we study these real people, so we are not ignorant about the kinds of heart attitudes and actions with which God is pleased.
 - We see implications of truth applied to life as we look at their examples in both the positive and negative aspects of their lives.
 - We find warnings so we do not fall into the same temptations as they did but rather learn how to escape.
- 2) Bible characters gives us hope (Rom. 15:4; Heb. 11:39-40; James 5:17).
 - We encounter real people, just like us, who experienced God working on their behalf. How encouraging it is to realize that God can do extraordinary things in and through ordinary people.
 - We learn that they did not always see immediate results but were able to trust God to be faithful as they relied on His promises. Since we serve the same God, we can count on Him to help us too.

Examples - Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, David, Daniel, Hezekiah, Josiah, Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Esther, etc.

Gather Information

- Build a list of references of related verses or passages.
 - Use the cross-reference system in the margins of your Bible.
 - Use an exhaustive concordance or Nave's Topical Bible.

Research Main Truths in Scripture

- Who
 - Meaning of his name: this may or may not be an indicator of his character
 - His ancestry: father, mother, or tribe
- When
 - Times in which he lived, number of years lived, periods of life
 - Example: Moses' life is divided into three 40-year periods
- Where
 - Nation where born, raised, lived, died, buried
 - Example: Moses was born an Israelite, raised an Egyptian.
 - This gave him a unique perspective and created considerable difficulties for him.

- What
 - His accomplishments & shortcomings
 - His training and conversion: what caused him to turn toward or away from God
 - His spiritual life: prayer life, obedience, suffering, personal lessons learned from God, attitudes, responses, reactions
 - His conflicts/victories
 - The effect or impact of his life/ death on others
- How
 - a. Does his life illustrate scriptural principles?

Example: God does not show partiality in dealing with His leaders. He is to be obeyed, to be “sought the proper way”. When Moses smote the rock a second time, God disciplined him [Nu 20:2-12]. Compare with David, when he moved the ark of the covenant [II Sam 6:1-8, I Chr 13:1-14, 15:1-31].

Research Main Truths in Other Sources

- Use Bible dictionaries, commentaries, or historical sources (Josephus):
- Make sure they line up with the plumb line of God’s Word!
- Discover the Primary Person in the Individual’s Life– Always God – What Do You learn About God

Organize the material in various ways

- Chronologically: birth to death
- Major Life Events Example: Moses in Egypt, on backside of the desert, in the wilderness
- Principles of Life

Example: We must make a choice of whom we will serve. Moses chose to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, rather than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin (Heb 11:25). Compare with Joshua 24:15-22

Determine WHY this is important & Apply it to my own life

- Write out in first person the truths God has taught you.

Example: I know that to be used of God I must be taught of God as was Moses. I may be in a hurry to do God’s work, as was Moses (Acts 7:23-35), but God is not in a hurry. First, He must equip and prepare me until I see that only God can do God’s work (Ex 3:11-12). “God, reveal this truth to me in all its fullness”

Have a plan of how you will apply and implement the truths you learned into your life

Note: I have adapted the outline above from Kay Arthur.

Bible Character Study

Name: _____

Meaning of Name: _____

References/Chapters to Study – Use cross-references in Bible; Nave’s Topical Bible; Strong Exhaustive Concordance; Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia

Who? - His Family/Tribe

When? - Time Which He Lived/How long He Lived/Periods of His Life

Where? - Nation where he was born, raised, lived, died, buried

What? - His accomplishments & shortcomings; his strengths and weaknesses; his character traits; his discouragements; his struggles; His training and conversion; what caused him to turn toward or away from God; His spiritual life: prayer life, obedience, suffering, personal lessons learned from God, attitudes, responses, reactions; His conflicts/victories; stands he took; the effect or impact of his life/ death on others

How? - Does his life illustrate scriptural principles?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Research Main Truths in Other Sources - Use Bible dictionaries, commentaries, or historical sources (Josephus): Discover the Primary Person in the Individual’s Life– Always God – What Do You learn About God

Organize his life - Chronologically: birth to death; Major Life Events; Principles of Life (Separate Sheet of Paper)

Determine WHY this is important & Apply it to my own life – Romans 15:4 - Write out in first person the truths God has taught you.

