



SECRET CHURCH

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Well, good evening. If you have a Bible, and I hope you do for crying out loud, let's learn how to study what is in your hands. Let me invite you to pull out this Study Guide that many of you received when you came in. I just got word that not everyone received one of these, and we are in the process right now of making extra copies. I don't see the people who have those yet, so what is going to happen is in the next few minutes, we are going to go ahead and dive in and get started.

In the next few minutes, there will be some people who will walk through some of the aisles and have some books with them. So, certainly, if you have any extras, that would be great to take those to the back and get them disseminated to some other folks. That would be wonderful, but if you don't have one, and you don't get one in the next few minutes, I will ask some leaders of the church to give theirs up if we can't find any others. We are in the process of copying some more, so you just raise your hand or get someone's attention. We will have some folks walking through with books. We just got haphazard and chaos going on right now. Just find a book. If you don't have a book, at the end of this first session, meet in the middle portal back here, and we will make sure we have a place for you to get them there.

You are going to need that book. It is loaded with stuff, and I mean loaded. Some of you are sitting here thinking, "We have a long night ahead," and we do. We have a long night ahead, and so kind of get ready. There will be times where you will want to stand up, kind of stand on the side, feel free to do that or take a walk during this thing. We have a long night ahead of us, so if you get tired, feel free to just come stick your head in the baptistery. It will wake you up. You just do whatever it takes.

The first time I had the opportunity to be in Indonesia was a couple of years ago, and I was teaching in an Indonesian seminary. Indonesia is the largest Muslim dominated nation in the world, and in this particular seminary, in order to graduate from this seminary, every student has to plant a church in a Muslim community with at least 30 new baptized believers. Master's degree as well as undergraduate degree. How many college students would go to a place where the requirement to graduate is to plant a church in a Muslim community with at least 30 new baptized believers? I spoke at their graduation with a whole host of students sitting in front of me that had all done that. Every single one of them had planted a church in a Muslim community with at least 30 new baptized believers. Two of their classmates that year had died in the process, and tonight, we are going to hear from Indonesia, and we are going to pray for persecuted brothers in that area of the world, brothers and sisters there, and then, we are going to study on their behalf.

I want to remind you from the very beginning, especially if this is the first time that you have ever been to Secret Church, I want to remind you that the goal tonight is not to entertain. My goal tonight is to equip an army in this room that will be mobilized and able to leave this place and go into all nations teaching people how to study the Bible. If your goal

tonight is to learn how to study the Bible, your goal is far too small. The goal is that you would walk out of here, tonight, not only knowing how to study the Bible, but knowing how to teach someone else how to study the Bible. If it stops with us, then we will miss the whole point of the gospel. God raise up a church that is no longer content to receive the Word of God. We are reproducers of the Word of God. You are going to be given, I hope, I pray, at least something good in the next six hours, and I pray that anything good that you receive will not just stop with you. I pray that it will spread through you.

What we are doing, and you see video cameras around the room, the whole point is we are taping what we do tonight and translating it into Spanish, and French, and German, Chinese, Indonesian, Swahili, and all of these different languages. The goal is, after we have done these, we will be able, to not only go out ourselves, but take resources with us and go into Indonesia and have, in their language, "How to Study the Bible, an "Overview of the Old Testament," and an "Overview of the New Testament" all translated into their language. So, what we do here tonight is so much more than what is going on in this room.

So, you have these notes. Let me encourage you to take good notes. People have said one of the keys of Secret Church is to be sitting next to somebody who is taking good notes because you are always missing blanks. What was that? What was this? Feel free to lean on each other, the people who are sitting around you. Hopefully, you have made a wise choice in the persons you are sitting next to, and if you don't know that person, you will soon become good friends with them, but there is a lot. I will just let you know this is information overload. All right. This is my time, all right?

This is information overload right here, and I know that. It is kind of the goal. This is far more information than one person can digest in an evening. I hope that this will catapult you into deeper study beyond this evening and be able to walk through that. So, don't expect to be able to soak in every single bit. My goal is that every single one of us will be able to walk away with some practical steps on how to study the Bible and how to lead others to do that. So, I hope that you will see that. We will not be, in light of all the Scriptures we are going to look at, we actually won't be turning a lot in each of our Bibles because I put a ton of Scripture in here. So, I would encourage you to make notes in here on the sides about different Scriptures that we look at, and then you will have this to go back into your Bible and study each of those passages, look at those passages and make those notes. So, write all over these pages. Not everything we talk about is included in here. I know you find that hard to believe, but we will talk about some things that are not even in here. With that said, let's get started on the very front.

WHAT Bible We Study

How to study the Bible, session one. I want us to read Psalm 19:7-11 together. You have it listed there on the front page of your notes. Let's read this out loud together.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure, and all together are righteous. They are much more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

We have a treasure in our hands with the Bible. The Word is perfect. It is perfect. This book and the words contained herein are perfect. The Word is relevant. We are going to see all these unfold tonight. The Word is good. It is very, very good. The Word is clear. It is not hard to understand. I hope that we see that tonight. The Word is eternal. It lasts forever. *"Heaven and earth pass away. My words will never pass away."* The Word is true, and here is the deal:

The Word is available. It is available, and I want us to pause for a second here and remember that we are indebted to a man named Jerome. I don't know if you realize it or not, but Jerome has had a pretty big impact on your life. Jerome, back around 400 A.D., took the Bible and translated it into Latin. It is a huge moment where the Bible was being translated into another language and being made available to more people. Then came along a man named John Wycliffe. John Wycliffe took that Latin translation, and he began to translate it into English. He was accused of being a heretic. He suffered persecution for his willingness to take the Bible and put it into the language of the common people. Those who got it were threatened for even pulling it out. Then came a guy named William Tyndale. Tyndale took Wycliffe's translation of the Latin and made the first translation of the English from the Greek and the Hebrew and the Latin, pulling them all together. He intended to complete the whole Old Testament and the New Testament, but he didn't finish the Old Testament. He died in 1536. He was executed, and his body was burned because of his commitment to translate the Bible. His associate John Rogers completed his work of the Old Testament. His associate John Rogers was martyred.

The point is this: the Bible we hold in our hands is a result of men and women who have laid their lives down to give it to us. Far be it from us today to take this Word and leave it on our doorsteps or on our chest by our beds at night and not dive into it and see what it means for our lives. We have a treasure that is in our hands called the Bible. It is worth giving our lives to study it. This is the Bible that we have. Now, all that picture, the Word is available.

Not only that, but there is a need for translations. The total world languages in the world are 6,912. Do you know how many languages still have no Bible? 2,286. 2,286 languages in the world still do not have a translation of the Bible. I am praying that the reason that some of you are here tonight is so that you will experience a conviction from the Spirit of God to rise up and say, "I am going to learn a language, and I am going to translate this Word into that language." I pray that will be a reality across this room. This is a non-negotiable for a church that believes that we are looking forward to a day when a multitude that no one can count from every tribe, people, nation, and language will bow around the throne and sing the praises of our Savior. If we want that, if we are looking forward to that, then we will take 2,286 languages and make the Bible available to those people.

The question of translations. Many people ask me all the time, "Pastor, which translation should I use?" We all know that there are just tons of English translations. I listed some of them. *The Open Bible, The Thompson Chain Reference Study Bible, the NRSV Access Bible, The Life Application Study Bible, the Holman Christian Standard Bible,* also known as the hardcore Southern Baptist Bible, *the NIV Study Bible, the Ryrie Study Bible, the NKJV Women's Study Bible, the KJV Promise Keepers Men's Study Bible, The Spirit Filled Life Bible, The Living Bible,* and then we have *The New Living Bible.* So, what do you do with all these different translations?

I want to encourage you, as you think about which translation you use of the Bible, to look at the process behind the translation. There is a process that goes behind any translation,

and here is how it works. It starts with a divine author, God. God breathes his Word through human instruments. So, you have a divine author and human author. The book we hold in our hand has dual authorship: the Spirit of God and the men who have put these words down that God has breathed into them. You have a divine author, human authors, and then you have what they wrote, the original text, but then you have from there copies of the original text, and what we have is a book that was written literally thousands of years ago, and we have copies of the original text that go as far back as possible, but not to the very, we don't have the exact letter that this person wrote on or that person wrote on, and so, we want to get back as far as we can to the copies of the original text.

This is, personally, why I don't recommend the King James Version of the Bible. If you just love the King James, then please don't take offense to this. However, since the King James was translated in 1611, we have found texts that went back further than that. So, we have got more accurate pictures of the text before that. Not that the King James is bad, but we want to get as close as we can to the original copies of the original text.

That leads to a critical text. What I mean by that is that you have this fragment of this text here, and this fragment of this text here, and you put them all together and you have a critical text, which basically means that there is maybe a little difference here, a little difference there, and you put them all together and try to figure out as best as possible how we know what the original text was saying. So, that is what I mean by critical text. Then, you have people who take the critical text, either a translator or a translation team, and bring that text into contemporary culture. Some people do this on their own, one translator. Some translations that I gave you were one translator. It is wisest to look for Bible translations that have a translation team. A pool of scholars that have worked together, and not just one person trying to figure out what this whole deal means, but leaning on each other. Different experts on different parts of biblical history and biblical portraits and biblical books, you bring all those experts together. I think it is important to look at who is the translation team behind any translation that we have of the Bible. Then that leaves the translation to the contemporary reader.

Now, what you have is, with all these different translations that I mentioned, you have a continuum that is basically from one side to the other. One side is the formal approach, which is a "word-for-word" approach to translating the Bible, and basically, it is saying, "Here is the Bible. We are going to translate it word-for-word as best we can." A very literal translation. Examples might be the *King James* or *New King James Versions* or the *New American Standard* version. Very literal. Sometimes even wooden because it is word-for-word. Then on the other side, you have a more functional approach. A "thought-for-thought" approach for translating the Bible, which basically means instead of doing every word by every word, they kind of take all the words together, look at the thought and try to translate the thought. The extreme on this side would be *The Message* or *The Living Bible*. More of a paraphrase, many times, than a translation. So, you have this continuum, word-for-word and thought-for-thought.

My recommendation, this is my personal recommendation when it comes to English translations or any translations along this continuum, is to find either somewhere in the middle or somewhere towards the word-for-word. That is why I would recommend, and why I put in there, the *NIV*, which is what I use, which is pretty close to the middle. That is what I use to preach from. When I study the Word, many times I use one step over toward the word-for-word, which would be the *English Standard Version*, which I highly recommend. It is a great translation. It is more word-for-word, but it is still not quite as wooden as the next one to the right, which would be a *New American Standard* version. So those are just some thoughts on translations. It is an overview about how I think we need to think about

translations. Word-for-word, thought-for-thought, if you are going to lean anywhere, lean toward the word-for-word. Now, that is the Bible we study.

WHY We Don't Study the Bible

I think we need to ask the question concerning why we don't study the Bible. Ever since we said this is what we are going to do tonight in Secret Church, so many people have come up to me and said, "I have been a Christian for 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 years, and I have never learned to study the Bible." Why is that? Here are some phrases I think might capture why that is:

Number one: we think, even if we don't say, we think, "I don't see how the Bible really applies to my life." I think this may be the number one reason why people are not studying God's Word today. They think it is archaic, out of date. I think we have all struggled with this a time or two reading through Leviticus or Deuteronomy or Jeremiah or Ezekiel, some of the visions there. What does this really have to do with life in the twenty-first century? Does it really apply to my life?

A second phrase: "I have tried, but I just don't know how to study the Bible." I am guessing that there are people all across this room who have gone to some conference or had a spiritual experience where you said, "I need to learn the Word more." So, you sat down to learn the Word, you have opened it up, but you haven't known where to start, what to do now, and all these things that people say are in the Word, you just can't find them. You are not seeing it at all, and you have gotten frustrated because you just don't know how to do it.

Third phrase: "I am not a professional; isn't that the pastor's job?" This phrase is my favorite. "The pastor understands all that stuff, and besides, if I have a problem, I will go to him." The only problem with that is that opens up the door for 5,000 emails every single week asking the pastor what this passage or that passage means. Now, that may sound like a good thing to those who are sending the email, but it is not that good a thing to receive all those emails. So, here is the deal, not that the pastor is not open to helping you study the Bible, but one of the things that I realized as I was preparing this, one of the things that really excites me most, is that there is a point when I was studying to get ready for tonight, where it hit me: if they really get what we are talking about, they won't need me any more, and part of me was kind of mad. "Maybe I shouldn't give them all the trade secrets. You know? Maybe I should hold some back so they will still want me." So, I kind of had that wrestling, but isn't that the beauty of it? The fact that it is possible for me not to be the only one, or a church leader not to be the only one who is able to unlock the beauty of God's Word? That God actually designed this thing so that every single person in this room is able to unlock the beauty of God's Word? I am leaning on the fact that, even if you do get all this, that you will still need me, and I came back around to this: that you will still want me because I think this will transform the way that we come to worship on Sundays. I think it will transform the way we approach the study of the Word. We would now come together, and I am uncovering truths in God's Word that you are already saying, "I already knew that," or "I already got that," and it is just affirming that, and we have an expectation for what we are going to do every time we open the Word together. So, let's not think, "I am not a professional isn't that the pastor's job? Isn't that what we are paying him to do?"

Next, "I just don't have time." I just don't have time. This is valid. "I have a 70 hour work week." "I stay at home with the kids all day." "If I have 20 minutes to myself, I don't have the mental energy to sit down and study the Word, and even if I did, you can't really get

into exhaustive study in 20 minutes, so I just don't have the time." I think there is a lot of validity here. It is true in order to study the Bible, you have to have the time. I think the question we need to ask though is "Where does Bible study fit in on our priorities?" That is the key question that we can't ignore. Where does Bible study fit in on our priorities? Many people across this room will have time to sit for three hours in front of a TV. The question is, "Do we have time to study the Bible on a daily basis? Is it a priority?"

Next, "I am not sure if the Bible is even true." I mean Jonah and the big fish, that sort of thing, is kind of hard to believe. Is this book really true? Is it viable? I think it is completely reliable, it is completely true and completely authoritative.

Finally, the last thought that we sometimes have. "To be honest, the Bible just seems boring to me." My goal tonight is to uncover the rich treasures of God's Word in front of you that you see that it is not boring. To show you that there is a hunger that God has designed for us to have for His Word. A craving for it. I have told the folks here at Brook Hills that when I first started dating Heather, the first time that I went over to her house to have dinner, I grew up in a home where we never ate seafood. Dad hated seafood, so we all hated seafood. We didn't have anything to do with it. I got over to Heather's house that night. First girl that I ever dated. First time I have ever been in this situation, eating dinner with the family, and you will never guess what they cooked. Seafood. So, they put seafood down, and I think, "I can't blow this. This is my first girlfriend, so I really would like to keep this going as long as possible." So, I looked at them, and I said, "This meal looks great," and I began to just play it up. "I love seafood. This looks so good," and I am eating it and kind of hiding my real emotions and saying, "Oh this is wonderful. This is wonderful." The only problem was that they bought it. So, every single time after that, when I ate with Heather's family, you will never guess what they cooked. "Ah, David loves seafood, so we will cook seafood." So, I couldn't get out of that right now. So, every time I went to eat, they had seafood. Whenever I go on vacation with Heather's family, "Well, David loves seafood. Let's get some seafood tonight." The deal is that today, I love seafood, and the only reason is because I had to learn to love seafood. The more I ate seafood, the more my taste developed for it. Maybe the reason we have found the Bible not good, maybe the reason we have found it boring is because we have never really tasted it. I am convinced, the more we taste it, the more that hunger, the more that craving will grow, and we will stand in awe. The Bible says we will tremble in awe of what it says. This book is not boring.

WHY We Must Study the Bible

So, why do we need to study the Bible? I think maybe we have all those phrases, and maybe one of the reasons we don't study the Bible is because we have never been told what the Bible does. I want you to see some benefits. They are really not benefits, they are essentials, and I have some verses here.

First, it is essential. Bible study is essential for spiritual growth. 1 Peter 2:2, "*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.*" I want you to see what that means.

Number one, we need this like a baby who needs milk. I have a young 18-month-old son, and one on the way in five weeks, and there is a need there for food, and it is clear at certain points during the day. There is a need for food. Not just a need, but we want it. We want it. We crave it. I love that word in 1 Peter 2:2. We crave it. We have a hunger for it. We want it. We need it for our spiritual lives. We want it, and we can't grow up without it. If

we don't give little Caleb milk, if we don't give soon-to-be Joshua milk, then obviously, they will be completely stunted in their growth. I give you a picture of the Church of Jesus Christ apart from the pure milk of God's Word.

Second, because it is essential. The study of the Word is essential for spiritual maturity. Listen to what the author says in Hebrews 5:11-14:

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, still being an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

We need solid food even beyond the pure milk of God's Word.

Then, finally, because the study of the Bible is essential for spiritual effectiveness. 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Two of the most important verses about the Bible. *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* I love that phrase. All Scripture, all Scripture is useful. That includes Leviticus, and it includes Habakkuk, and, you remember, it includes Deuteronomy. You remember when Jesus was tempted three times in the desert by the devil, and each time what did he do? He quoted from where? He quoted from Deuteronomy. What if your spiritual success this week was dependent on your knowledge of Deuteronomy? This is the means by which we, not only get to know God, but we have become useful in God's hands. I am guessing that all of us have, at some point in our spiritual journey, wondered or thought, "I want to be more effective. I wish I could be more effective in my life for Jesus Christ." The Word is the key for that. The Word is the key for that. It is essential for spiritual effectiveness.

WHO Can Study the Bible

Now, who can study the Bible? The good news is that anyone can study the Bible. Anyone in this room can study the Bible. The difference is only those who have the Spirit of Christ can understand the Bible, and this is the key. It is the key across this room. I know that that there are hundreds and hundreds of people in here tonight, and anyone can study this book, but unless you have come to the point in your life where you have trusted in Jesus Christ to save you from your sins, and He has put His Spirit in you, then you will never be able to understand this book. This is what 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 says. Go about halfway down and listen to what it says. *"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."* We need the Spirit of God to understand the Bible.

The Spirit has done a few things and does a few things with the Word. First of all, the Spirit inspired the Word. This is key. The Spirit, just like we saw in 2 Timothy 3, breathed this Word and has given it to us, just as He gave it to them a couple of thousands years ago. He has given us this Word. Now, the thing is, this Bible, this book, is the inspired Word of God, and we don't need to add any other books that are inspired by Him. This is enough for us. The Spirit inspired this book, and God is not in heaven thinking, "I really wish I had added some things to this book to help people out in the twenty-first century." He has given us all

we need. The Spirit has given us all we need to grow in Christ. That is huge because there are questions that we have that are not answered in this book, that sometimes we want to be answered, but we have to trust that God has given us everything we need through His Spirit.

He inspired the Word, and second, the Spirit illuminates the Word. What happens is when you begin to study the Word, the Spirit of God is right there helping you to understand it, illuminating it, opening your eyes and your heart to see it, and the Spirit instructs us in the Word. He instructs us. The Spirit shows us how this Word applies to each our lives.

So HOW Do We Study the Bible?

That leads us to this next picture. How do we study the Bible? First of all, this is overview, but it is so foundational. We study the Bible prayerfully. I want to remind you, ladies and gentlemen, that when you sit down to study the Bible, you never study the Bible alone. It is a divine interaction with Holy Spirit of the God of the universe that is going on in your bedroom, or going on in your kitchen, or going on in this room tonight. The Spirit of God. As a result, we study the Bible prayerfully. We study the Bible in conversation with God.

Second, we study the Bible humbly. We study the Bible humbly. We want to know God. We want to submit our lives to His Word, and we have to ask the question, whenever we come to the Word, we have got to ask, "Do we really want to know Him?" Are we humbling ourselves before this book?"

Third, we study the Bible carefully. Here is what I mean by that, and this is the crux of a lot of things we are going to talk about tonight. Bible study is a journey into this book, and we have to be careful where we step. We don't want to misinterpret this book. We don't want to twist this book to make it say things that it was not intended to say. We have to study the Bible carefully. We have to look at passages like Leviticus that say you are not supposed to wear anything that is made of two different types of fabric, and we have to ask the question, "What does that really mean?" Does that mean only 100% cotton for me from here on out? When we look at Matthew 14, and we see Peter walking on the water, we have to realize that this means we need to do some really interesting, brave things next summer when we are out at the pool. We have to ask ourselves the question, "What does this book mean." That means that we have to study the Bible carefully in order to understand the text rightly.

Next, we study the Bible joyfully. Psalm 119:32, "*I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.*" This is the thrill of personal discovery.

Next, we study the Bible simply, and I want to pause here for a second. I want to say that everything that we are doing tonight is designed so that you would be able to walk away and, just between you, the Holy Spirit and this book, be able to study the Bible. What that means is I am not going to talk much tonight about other resources that we can use to help us study the Bible, and I hesitate to do that because those resources are available to every single one of us in this room, whether it is on the Internet or from different books, and I have included at the very back of your guide some recommended resources to help in that, and if we have those resources available to us, we need to use them. Bible dictionaries or handbooks, overviews of the New Testament, the Old Testament, different things. However, our brothers and sisters around the world don't always have the liberty of having those resources. So the time we are going to study together tonight is going to be based around

simply you, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit. What can happen in that interaction? Study the Bible simply. I want us to be able to walk out of here and be able to say that anyone who can read can do what we talked about tonight.

Third, not third. I don't know what number we are on. Study the Bible confidently. The Holy Spirit is in you to enable you to do this. Ladies and gentlemen, it is an overwhelming task in some ways, but the beauty of it is God Himself has put His very presence in you to enable you to do this.

Next, study the Bible consistently. I want us to be equipped to study every text of every book here. I want us to be freed up from having to skip over the text that just doesn't make sense to us, shrugging our shoulders and saying, "Let me go back to John 3:16 because I have my arms around that one." I want us to stop isolating texts for studying the Word and really understand how to get into every single text. We need a method, so to speak, that we can apply to every single text. That is the goal tonight.

Study the Bible diligently. This is huge. Learning to study the Bible will not happen overnight. There are some people who think, "Well, I am a Christian, and I have the Spirit of God in me, you said that Dave, so I don't have to do anything when it comes to interpreting the Bible. It just happens. I could just read, and it just happens." That is just flat out spiritually lazy. God has given you a mind to take with His Word and really dive into what it means. It doesn't just happen automatically. It is going to take work for us to really get into the truths of the Bible. The Bible does not yield its fruit to the lazy. We study the Bible diligently.

Next, we study the Bible intentionally. Let me even go back up to diligently for just a second. I think this is what we do. We lead someone to Christ, and then we give them a Bible and act like they are going to know exactly what to do with it, and the result is 30 years later some of us are sitting here because somebody did that to us, and this is first time we are learning how to study the Bible. That is a huge mistake in the church. We are robbing people of the joy of walking with Christ if we do evangelism like that. Study the Bible diligently. Intentionally, I want to encourage you to always study the Word with a Bible and pen or pencil and notebook in your hand. If God is going to speak to you, I want to encourage you to be ready to write it down. So, be ready to take the message as you get into it. Some of you think, "I don't have anything deep to write down." Just give it a shot. Just see. My most valuable possession, one of the most valuable possessions that I lost when our house went under water in Hurricane Katrina was years and years of journaling through the Word. I tried to figure out how to save those pages, but it was just impossible. They were just molded, and it was so humbling to lose some of those things. I treasured them because they represented my spiritual journey for so many years. Let me encourage you to have that. Study the Bible intentionally.

Study the Bible personally. The danger is if we don't learn to study the Bible, we will spend our entire Christianity living in proxy with our relationship to God. We will be living our lives with Christ vicariously through this preacher or that preacher, vicariously through this teacher or that teacher. Try to do a marriage like that. Try loving your husband or getting to know your wife through someone else. That does not work. It is personal. One on one interaction. That what happens in Bible study, and nothing can substitute for the kind of personal action we have with God through His Word. I am convinced, when we get into it, we will fall in love directly with the Author of this book, and we will find that our lives are living under the authority of this book, and when the authority and power of this Word combines together with a humble heart that wants to know what it is saying, that kind of

combination, I am convinced, can change the world. So, let's do it. Let's figure out how to study this book.

Dangerous Approaches to Bible Study

There are a few dangerous approaches to Bible study that we have to avoid. Dangerous approaches to Bible study that we have to avoid.

Number one is what I call the emotional approach. What feels right to me? This is a dangerous way to study the Bible. To go to a text of Scripture and say, "All right. What feels like it works best for me? What feels good to me when I walk away from this?" The only problem is, if you want to have what feels right, you will skip over all kinds of texts in the Bible because some kinds of texts just don't incite the kind of good, mushy feelings that you desire from Bible study. You begin reading about the wrath of God in the prophets of the Old Testament, and you will not walk away feeling great. You read Lamentations, and you will just flat out be depressed. We can't base our understanding of Scripture on what feels right to us. We have to avoid the emotional approach.

Second, the spiritual approach. Asking the question, "What deep hidden meaning is there for me?" The result is, when we do that, we come to the Word, and we say, "Okay. It seems like it means this, but let's find out what it really, really, really, really means." So, we start to pick it apart and begin to twist it to try to figure out. You know, we do this in dynamics of our relationship sometimes. Whenever somebody speaks to us, we are saying, "Okay, we are hearing what he is saying, but what did he really mean by that word?" "Oh, I don't know if she meant it this way or that way," and there is a part of that which is good. We want to find out what it means, but if we keep digging into it too much, we all know the danger of over-analysis that happens in relationships when that is there. So, you have to avoid the spiritual approach looking for this deep hidden meaning.

Third, the pragmatic approach. "What works best for me?" Going to the Bible to try to find what fits best with each of our lives. This is a self-centered, arrogant way to study the Bible, and it misses the whole point of discovering God's truth. We have to avoid a pragmatic approach that says, "It's my life. I am going to live how I want, and I am going to use the Bible to justify what I want." That is an extremely dangerous way to live Christianity, and it is happening all across our country today. Using the Bible to justify our lives instead of diving into this book and seeing what it determines for our lives.

Finally, the superficial approach. I would say this is the most common approach, dangerous approach to studying the Bible, and it is asking this question: "What does this passage mean to me? What does this mean to me?" We have all been in a situation where we sit around in a Bible study, maybe with a small group, and we read a passage, and the first question that comes out of the leader's mouth is, "What does this verse mean to you?" So, all of a sudden you go into a discussion where people are sitting around and saying all the different things that this verse means to them. The problem is that it quickly congeals into a pool of ignorance. A lot of people sitting around saying what they think the Word says, and they have never asked the question, "What does the Holy Spirit actually mean in this particular passage?" We have to be careful. I am not saying, now follow me here, I am not saying that each verse is going to apply the exact same way to every single one of our lives. That is application. However, when we come to this Word, this is a Holy Spirit inspired book, and when the Holy Spirit gave these words, he meant something, and the goal of Bible study is to get to what the Holy Spirit meant. Then, once we see that we are not concerned

about what the verse means for you, and you are not concerned about what the verse means to me, but we are concerned about what the verse means according to the Holy Spirit of God, once that happens, then we are freed up to think about how it applies differently to our lives. We are not asking the question, "What does this mean to me," but now we are asking, "What does this verse mean?" Now, that means we really have to do something.

A Dependable Approach to Bible Study

That leads us to a dependable approach to Bible study, and this right here is going to be the foundation for everything we talk about tonight. The foundational process, so to speak. I want to use a parallel in order to help us imagine this dependable approach to Bible study.

Imagine going on a mission trip ...

I want you to imagine going on a mission trip to another country. Say you are going to a place like Asia or Southeast Asia, and, if you are going to go on a mission trip, there are some things, some processes that you are going to need to walk through in going into another culture like that. First, you are going to observe their home. When you get there, you are going to start looking around and asking the question, "What do I see?" What do I see? You are going to look at how they interact. In some countries, you are going to see them going up and greeting others by shaking hands. In some countries, you are going to see them walking around all the time holding hands. In some countries, you are going to walk up, and you are going to see them greeting each other by kissing each other on the cheek. It is important to know what is going on in that culture when you see those different things. You have to look at how they eat. Sometimes they eat with their hands. Sometimes they eat with only their right hand and never their left hand. You are observing this. You are looking at this unfold. Sometimes they eat with chopsticks, and sometimes with forks and knives.

In the Middle East, recently, when we were there, there was a picture of what happens when you get around with all the men after dinner. They take a little cup and another little cup of coffee, pour some coffee in the little cup, some very heavy Lebanese coffee, and they come around the room and hand it to you, and you say, "Okay. Thank you," and you drink the coffee even if you don't like coffee. Once you have taken a drink of the cup and you hand it back, then he pours it some more and hands it back to you. "Okay, yes, thank you," and you drink it, give it back, and he pours you some more. "Okay, thank you, thank you," and you start drinking again, and you realize that there is a pattern here. When you give this cup back, if you shake it, he will not give it back to you. If you just give it back to him, that is a sign that you want more. Okay, well that is helpful. You won't be up all night on Lebanese coffee as a result of just shaking the deal.

You look at how they relate to one another in India, so to speak. In India, I don't know if you have ever been to India. Maybe some of you are from India in here tonight, but a lot of the time you look, and you see this mannerism that when you are talking to someone, they will be looking back at you, and they do this kind of bobble head thing. Their shoulders are not moving, but it is just this bobble head thing. Kind of looks like they are shaking heads back and forth. So you are observing this. In some countries, it is very common to keep some personal space between you and the person you are talking to. In some countries, they are right in your face, and they are talking to you. So, you are observing all of these things, but not just observing their home. What do I see?

We have to understand their home. We have got to ask the question, "What does it mean?" We see people walking around holding hands in a country. In this particular culture, like Sudan for example or parts of the Middle East, if you are walking around holding hands and a man grabs your hand, it is a good thing. It is a sign of his friendship. Obviously, in other cultures, it would be a sign of something completely different. When you go up and begin kissing this man in front of you, that means one thing in the Middle East, and it means something completely different in other cultures. When you see that bobble head thing going on in India that is usually a sign that they are agreeing with you, kind of like we nod our heads "yes" when somebody is talking to us. That is their way of doing it, but it looks like they are saying no.

So there is a story about one missionary who was trying to pay for his taxi ride in India, and he said, "Now, I am not sure how much this is. Is this enough?" The driver looked at him and did that bobble head thing. So he said, "Okay? How about this?" The guy kind of looked at him, kind of smiled, and he kept giving him money until he realized that this guy was saying, "Yes, that is more than enough." So, that is important to know.

What do these different things mean? What do these different things mean? Not just seeing them, but what do they mean? Why do they only eat with their right hand in some countries? Well, the left hand is considered unclean, and I will let you fill in the blank in how that might be considered unclean. All right. Yeah.

Next, we observe their home, and then, we have to understand what these things mean? What is it? Not only what do I see, but what does it mean? Then third, bring it back home. How does it relate? This is when you are leaving that country, you get on the plane, and you start to think, "Okay. What did I learn in that culture that is going to affect the way that I live back in this culture?" I know I was so challenged leaving the Middle East just a couple of months ago. I was so challenged when it came to hospitality. Those people were some of the most hospitable people that I ever met before in my entire life, and I began to think, "Now, am I that hospitable? I have Christ in me, and these were Muslims who were so hospitable to me." How is that going to affect me? Bring it back home. How does it relate?

Then, finally, apply it in your home. Okay. "What do I do?" How does my life here going to be different as a result of what I have seen? What do I do?

So, you have four questions there. One, observing, and two, understanding - what does it mean? Number three, bring it back home - how does this relate? Finally, fourth, applying it back home - what do I do?

Let's take a trip into the Word ...

So, I want us to think about taking a trip into the Word, almost like we are going into another culture, and I want to encourage us to think through four questions.

First, observe their home. What do I see in the Word? Now, this step involves exploration. This is where Bible study starts. These are four steps in studying the Bible. This step involves exploration. It is like you are a detective, or you are on a journey, and you open up the Word, and you take a chapter, a paragraph, a verse of Scripture, and you begin to look for everything. What do you see in there? You look and you look. You are doing your observation thing. Your goal is to discover what text is saying. Imagine you are in the audience that, for the first time, is reading this particular letter, and you hear it. What are you feeling? What are you seeing? What is sticking out to you? You are looking at the whole text from their shoes. It is a question of content. A question of content. What do I see?

Exploring like a detective through this particular passage in God's Word. That is step number one.

Second is to understand their home. What does it mean? This step involves interpretation, not just seeing what it says. We want to know what it means. Not just seeing that they are holding hands, but what does it mean in that culture. Not just seeing that they are shaking the glass, but what does it mean in that culture? Not just seeing that they are bobbling their head, but what does that mean? We are asking those questions. Not just what do I see, but what does it mean? This is a question of context. We are asking, "Okay, what did that mean in that day for Paul to say this, or Moses to say this, or the psalmist to say this?" What does that mean then? Understand their home. What does it mean? Question of context.

Then we bring it back home. How does it relate? This step involves not exploration or interpretation, but it involves implications. In other words, we want to see how the text travels. We all know that we don't live in the culture of the first century in the New Testament, and we don't live in the cultures of the Old Testament. This text has to travel, almost like crossing over a bridge or taking a flight back across the ocean. Okay. How does this text travel? What are the implications here? This is a question of connection. How does this Word connect to life in the twenty-first century? Bring it back home. How does it relate?

Then, finally, apply it in your home. What do I do? This step involves application. Okay. I have seen how the text travels. Now, we have landed. We are on the other side of the bridge. How does this text transform my life? Now, the problem is, what I want you to realize is, most of the time when we study the Bible, this is where we start. We open the book, and we are asking the question from the very beginning, "Okay. How does this apply to my life?" That is a good thing in the sense that we want to know how the Word applies to our lives, but if we run toward application first, we will miss out on the whole point of the passage through observation and interpretation, and, as a result, we begin really looking at the implications of what that means for us, and we will begin to misuse the Bible. We can't start with application. We end with application. This is a question not of content or context. It is not a question of connection, but a question of conduct. How do we act?

Now, I don't know if you received when you picked up your notes when you came in, did you receive one of these right here? There were some on the table back there. It is just a half-sheet, and on the front it says, "Studying the Bible from Their Home to Our Home." If you didn't receive one, there are numerous copies in the back for you to walk away with. If you did receive one, hold it up. Okay, most people received one. Okay. This right here is basically an outline of where we are going to head tonight. You see these questions. Observe their home – what do I see; understand their home – what does it mean; bring it back home – how does it relate; and apply it in your home – what do I do? The goal tonight is that you would be able to walk away and understand what we are talking about in each four of these steps and be able to sit down, whether you use this or you adapt it to be something else that you like that accomplishes these things, my goal is that you would be able to walk away tonight, have this in front of you with a text of Scripture and be able to really study the Bible, and, with this half-sheet, be able to really uncover the truths of God's Word in all four of these steps. Like I said, there are tons. You can pick up a stack of these. I think there are some notebooks in the back that we are making available, so you can begin to use that, but this is kind of an overview of where we are headed. We are going to walk through, over the next minutes, we are going to walk through what it means to observe their home, interpret their home, and then bring it back home and apply it in our home. That is kind of the overview. Make sense? Okay.

OBSERVE THEIR HOME: What Do I See?

With that picture, let's start with the first step. Observe their home. What do I see? I am guessing that all of us have had times when we sat down to study the Word, and we have almost gotten frustrated, wondering why we are not getting out of it what everyone else seems to get out of it. I want to say that the reason for that is probably twofold.

Number one is we have never learned how to read the Word. I mean really read the Word. How do you read the Bible? One of the books that I recommend in the back, the title of it is *How to Read the Bible for All It is Worth*. It is an excellent book on this very issue. How do you read the Bible?

Two Revolutionary Disciplines for Reading the Bible...

Then, we don't know what to look for in the Word. So, I want us to start by looking at two revolutionary disciplines for reading the Bible. We need to, first, learn to listen. We need to learn to listen, not just hear. It is a big difference there. Learn to listen, and, second, learn to look. You have to learn to listen and learn to look. If we can get our arms, our minds, our hearts around those two disciplines, it will radically transform the way we understand the Bible. Learn to listen and learn to look.

Learn to Listen...

Let's start with the first one. Learn to listen. I think the main requirement for studying this book is to sit down and really, slowly say, "Okay. I want to listen to what this is saying." This sounds very simple, but we all know in our culture today it is not an easy thing. We want a fast food approach to studying the Bible. How can I run through this and get the most out of it in the smallest amount of time? If we are approaching it like that, we will miss what this book has for us. We have to learn to really sit down and listen to what it is saying. How do we listen?

First, we listen thoughtfully. Bible study is not a mindless activity. If we read a text, maybe a text that is familiar to us, and we think, "I already know what this means, let me go on to a different one," and we don't really think through, maybe for the first time in a long time, what does this verse really mean, even a simple verse like John 3:16, then we will go right to what we have heard about this verse, and we will miss what God desires to do right there in that moment for us. However, when we really listen thoughtfully, I think we will begin to uncover the biblical goldmine that is in every single verse, passage, discourse, segment of Scripture.

It is kind of like my wife Heather who is a big encourager and note writer. Ever since we started dating, she has always written me notes. She always wrote me letters, and I remember, even before we started dating, she wrote me a couple of letters. I can remember, I mentioned she was the first girl that I dated, and the first letters that a girl had written to me, and so I thought, "Okay," and I am looking at every single word, by the way, and I am thinking, "All right. She said 'Dear David.' Like does she say that in every letter or is that just like a letter to me that I am dear, and everybody else is just David, but I am 'Dear David'? She also said, 'How is it going?' Okay, let's think through that. What does that mean? Then, she says, 'I am praying for you,' and I am starting to think, "Okay, does she say that to everybody? Does she say that in the sense that she is praying for me

like I pray for you, or is it like in the sense that girls pray for their future husband kind of praying? Is that the kind of praying that she is doing for me? She put a smiley face here in the note. Like does she do that all the time, or is she particularly happy when she is thinking about me? How does this whole thing work?" You start to really look at everything in the letter, and you are unpacking everything. That is how we study the Bible. We look at it all. That is what we are talking about. Listening thoughtfully.

Second, listen thoroughly. If we are going to understand the Bible, we have to bombard the Bible with questions. This is key. The Bible is not embarrassed to be asked questions. So, we have to pour questions all over everything we are looking at when we are studying the Word. Here are some main questions that we ask: We ask "Who?" Who wrote this book, this particular part of the Bible? Who originally read this particular passage? Who were the main characters? The second question is "What?" What is happening in the text? What is wrong with the picture? What is the author saying? In every single text, we are asking these questions. Every single text doesn't answer all these questions, but we are asking them every time. Who, what, where. Where is the writer when he is writing this? Where are the original readers? Where is the text taking place? Next: when. When was it written? When did these events take place? Understanding the audience in their context. Finally, asking the question why. Why is the author writing this? Why is this even included in Scripture? Haven't you read some passage of Scripture and wondered why in the world this is included? This is a good question to ask. Don't be afraid to ask that question. "God, why in the world did you think this was that important?" When we start to ask those questions instead of walking away and saying the Bible is irrelevant, if we ask those questions, we are on the verge of a breakthrough where we are starting to see what God is doing in His Word. Ask those questions. Why did the events happen the way they did? Why did the author say what he said? We listen thoroughly. Bombard every passage you study with question after question after question. Who, what, when, where, why, how. Ask it all.

Next, listen repeatedly. Read the text over and over and over and over. Get the point. Read the entire book in one sitting sometimes. We are going to talk about this with the New Testament letters. You wouldn't open up a new novel and start in the fifth chapter. That is how we study the Bible a lot of times though. We start in the very middle, and we miss the whole point of what is going on before that and what is coming after that because of the way we are studying. So, listen repeatedly. Reading it over and over and over again.

Listen patiently. This is going to take time. We need to be patient with the text. Don't jump to application from the very beginning. We have to do this observation step. What do I see? Also, be patient with yourself. This is a journey. Just relax and enjoy the ride through the text. Don't try to rush through it. Be patient. Read it patiently.

Next, listen imaginatively. I will let you figure out how to spell that. See the sights, smell the smells, experience the emotions. Take a journey through the text. Put yourself in the text. When I was in the Middle East the other day, we went to Mount Nebo. This was the mountain that Moses stood up on and looked out across the Promised Land, and to know, that as I stood there just looking out, trying to put myself in Moses' shoes, that, because he had been disobedient to God in what seemed like a small area, here he was. God had given him an opportunity to look at the whole Promised Land, but he wasn't able to go into any of it. Can you imagine the emotions that he felt? Then Joshua was standing there, and he was looking out, and he was about to lead these people into that land. Talk about a weight on your shoulders. Instead of just reading Joshua 1 and Joshua 5:13 when he is looking out over Jericho, put yourself in his shoes and feel what he is feeling. Listen imaginatively.

Next, listen meditatively. Take time to reflect, to meditate. I am not talking about this, "Om" kind of thing. I am talking about get into it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said this: "Just as you don't analyze the words of someone you love, but you accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart as Mary did. That is all. That is meditation." Joshua 1:8 said, "*Meditate on this book day and night.*" Psalm 1 says, "*On his law, the men who prospers meditates day and night.*" Psalm 119:97, "*I love your law, I meditate on it all day long.*" Listen meditatively.

Finally, listen purposefully. Listen purposefully. We are not just reading to check off a box on our spiritual "To-Do list." We are reading because we want this text to transform our lives. We are not just reading to get a bunch of details and information. We want to grow into the image of Christ. That is the purpose of this book, and that is the purpose of studying the Bible. We want to grow into the image of Christ. So, learn to listen in all those ways. So, we are asking questions, we are putting our minds into this thing. Who is doing this? What is going on here? Where is that happening? Why is that happening? Putting ourselves in the passage. Learn to listen.

Learn to Look...

Next, learn to look. Learn to look. The art of Bible reading is seeing. Seeing. What makes one person more a student of the Bible than another? I think the answer is that he knows how to see the Bible. He knows what to look for. One of the most critical skills in studying the Bible is the ability to see these details.

Look at those squares that are there. How many squares do you see? I have not heard the right answer yet. It is not 16. It is not 27. It is not 17, 22, 29. Okay, stop the mob. Stop the mob. All right. There are...I am not going to tell you. We will do it after the break. Here is the deal. Remind me to do it after the break, but here is the deal. We immediately jump to 16. A piece of cake. No. No. There is more there. We want to see. We want to see. We do the same thing with the Word. "Oh, this is what that means." No. Look deeply. What does it mean? Okay. I will tell you because you are not going to listen to a thing I say if I don't. All right. The number of boxes, the number of squares that you see in front of you is 30. 30 squares. All right. Now, some of you are still are not going to listen. "I don't believe him." All right.

What I want to do is give you six clues for what to look for in Scripture. All right. Here you go. Six clues for what to look for in Scripture. Look for these different things, and when you see these things, I am just about guaranteeing that you are going to uncover gold about every time you see them. You look for these things, these six things.

First of all, look for what the Word emphasizes. Look for what the Word emphasizes. There are all kinds of ways that the Word and a text of Scripture emphasize something. One way it emphasizes something is in the way the verbs, the actions takes place. Verbs are action words. How does the author depict the action of the text? Ask the question. We are going to get a bunch of questions to ask. This is what we do. Is the verb past, present or future? Think about this. In Ephesians 1:11, we read this verse: "*In him we were also chosen...*" What kind of verb is that? It is past. We were chosen by God is what he is saying there. "*...Having been predestined...*" Is it past, present or future? Past. "*...Predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything...*" What is that? Present. Now, just in that one little question, we have a picture of a God who has chosen and predestined to call us by name, and He is working in our lives right here in the present. What an incredible picture of God's relationship to His people just by asking what is the tense of the verb! So is the verb past, present or future?

Is the verb imperative? Matthew 28:19. There is one imperative in this verse. Anyone know what it is? The word is, actually, not "Go," and that is where we are a little hindered because the original language of the New Testament is not translated in the NIV here as it is. "Go" is actually a participle that is, actually, "going" kind of like baptizing and teaching are participles later in the verse. The only imperative is "make disciples." Now that transforms the way we understand Matthew 28:19. It is the only imperative that he gives in the entire Great Commission. Make disciples. That means that the Church needs to talk about making disciples all the time. Some of you, here at Brook Hills, are saying, "Amen. That is what we do all the time," and that is why, because when Jesus prepared to leave this earth, He gave us one command, and we are tempted to do everything except the one thing that Jesus told us to do. I could preach for a while on this, but we are just going to stop here and say this is an imperative. Every follower of Christ, make disciples. Period.

Is the verb active or passive? Now, look at this. This is one of my favorite examples of this. Look at Genesis 12. God's promise to Abram. "*Leave your country and your people and your father's house and go to the land that I will show you.*" Now remember, just in case some of you are thinking, "Man, I haven't been in English class in a while. What is active, passive?" Active is something that the subject is doing. Passive is something that the subject is having done to them. Okay? So, "*I will make you into a great nation.*" Active. God is saying, "I am going to make you into a great nation, Abram. I will bless you." That is active. "*I will make your name great.*" Active. "*I will bless those that bless you.*" Active. "*Whoever curses you, I will curse.*" That is active. Listen to what he says. "*All peoples on earth will be blessed.*" Is that active or passive? That is passive. Here is the picture. God is saying, "I am going to pour out all these things on you, and the result is that all the nations of the earth are going to be affected by you." Does that make sense? God is going to pour out His blessings on us, on His people, so that other people will be affected by us. That is why, if we sit back and soak in the blessings of God, and we don't take what we do tonight and multiply it among the nations, then we have missed out on the point of the people that God desires to be affected by us tonight. That is the picture just by asking active or passive.

"*Don't get drunk on wine,*" Ephesians 5:18 says, "*which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled...*" What is that? Is that active or passive? It is passive. "*...Be filled.*" The Spirit fills you. He does that. It is His action upon you. Colossians 3:1, "*Since, then...*" here is the contrast, "*...since, then, you have been raised with Christ...*" Active or passive? That is passive. Some of you might not be getting this active or passive thing. You are hesitating to guess. "I don't want to be wrong." Well, it is passive. "*...You have been raised...*" Somebody else has raised you up. You have been raised with Christ by God. "*...Set your hearts on things above...*" Active or passive? Passive? Active. Okay? Active. "*...Set your hearts...*" You do this. Maybe we didn't get that one, but that is Okay. If you did get it, ask that question, and it will be great. All right.

Next, not just verbs. Now, we are looking at what the Word emphasizes. Look at space. Space. What do you mean space? Well, you look at what the author, the Biblical author, is spending a lot of time on. I think I have Genesis 1-11, 12-50 in there. What is interesting is you have 50 chapters in Genesis. The author spends eleven chapters on that little thing called the creation of the world, the fall of man and the scattering of the people to the nations. That is only eleven chapters. Now, that is a pretty thick eleven chapters, but, out of 50, that is a small percentage on some pretty big things. He spends a chapter on creation. Literally, a little more than a chapter when you get into Genesis 2, but not a lot of time. Then from Genesis 12, which is when he calls Abram, we just read that, all the way to Genesis 50, he goes through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. He spends all of those chapters on just those guys' lives. What is the point here? I think from the way Genesis is written, as we study that book, we realize that what is most important in God's economy is

Him pouring out His blessing and His promises on His people. People are important in God's economy. Isn't that a great picture? Just from seeing the space that is devoted to that.

Matthew. Of 1,062 verses, at least 342 of them give us teachings from Jesus. That is a third of the book. That tells us something about the purpose of the book. Now, some of you are sitting here thinking, "Well, I just can't get that the first time I read it through, and I mean you really have to look hard to see that, out of 1,062, it is obvious there are only 342 devoted to the teachings of Jesus. That is a 'no brainer' of course." This is something that takes time. The more that we study the Word, the more all this will come together. Again this does not happen over night.

You look at Ephesians. It is cut down the middle. The first three chapters - explanation of salvation. The last three chapters - application of salvation. It is a great picture of Christ to save you. Now, here is how this affects our lives. Space devoted to that.

Next, the way the Word emphasizes through a purpose statement. Through a purpose statement. Does it often describe why he says something or why something happens? I have put some words down to look for. Look for "that," "in order that," "so that," "to" or "for." Listen to Deuteronomy 4:5-6. We know that God gave His people commands like the Ten Commandments, but why did He do it? Listen to this verse. "*I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that...*" Underline that. Circle that. Here is the purpose. Why did God give the laws? "*...So that you may follow them in the land that you are entering...*" Then, listen to what he says. "*Observe them carefully...*" Circle that. Underline that. This the is reason that you need to observe them. "*...For this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations...*" Why did God give His people the law? He gave us the law, so that the nations would know the wisdom of God. That is why we study this book and follow this book, so that the nations will know that God is good. That is the ultimate purpose here. Look for the purpose statement.

Psalm 119:11. Why do we hide God's Word in our hearts? "*...That I might not sin against you.*" Underline. Circle that.

John 3:16, a verse we all know. "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...*" He gave His one and only Son because of incredible love. "*...That whoever...*" The purpose is "*...that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*"

John 15:16. Why did Jesus call your names, ladies and gentleman? You did not choose Him; He chose you and appointed you. Here it is, as well. Here is the purpose of why He has called your name. "*...To go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.*" The purpose is huge.

You get to John 20:31. This is the purpose statement of the entire book. "*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written...*" This is why John says, "I wrote these things, that..." Here is the purpose. Circle it there. "*So that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing, you may have life in his name.*" You see the picture there. Okay. Let's go through a couple more, and then we will take a break.

Order. Order. Is the author giving importance to something by putting it in a certain order? You look, and we have looked at this Brook Hills numerous times, but you look at how the disciples are ordered. What you see is that they are ordered in groups of four, and the top name is at the same place in each one of those orders between Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. They are grouped into different, smaller groups among the disciples. We see that by the order. Ephesians 3:14-21. You might write that down. It is another great example,

Ephesians 3:14-21, where things are put into order. They build on each other in a progression. Order.

Exaggeration. Exaggeration. Does the author exaggerate something for intentional effect or emphasis? Look for exaggeration at different points in Scripture. Psalm 119:20, "*My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.*" That is, obviously, exaggeration. 2 Corinthians 11:8. Paul says, "*I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.*" I hope, we hope, that is exaggeration. That really blows the image of the Apostle Paul if that is not exaggeration. How about Jesus? "*You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.*" Now, that will preach. You hear that and start thinking that is exaggeration. There is something that is being emphasized there. So what is it?

Last. I think it is the last one: Chiasm. Chiasm. Now, some of you, I mean if you got lost in active or passive, you are really going to have to hang with me here. Okay? All right. Chiasm is when the author, and you see this especially in the Old Testament, highlights a main idea through a parallel structure in the text. Okay. Follow with me here. All right? Follow with me here. You look at Psalm 76:1. "*In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel.*" What happens is, I want you to see it, is almost like a sideways "V." Okay? What happens is these different lines parallel each other. Judah and Israel parallel each other: "*God is known; his name is great.*" That is just a simple example to show you, but you go to Genesis 3. What is really interesting is, I want you to see this, is that Genesis 3 begins with an introduction of sin into the world in the first seven verses, then God confronts man. Then, man said, Adam said, "She did it." So, God confronts woman, and she says, "He did it." So, God confronts the serpent and gives him a promise. Really a pretty thorough rebuke that pretty much sets the stage for the rest of the Bible, and then, it kind of backs up, and we see God give a promise to the woman, and then we see God give a promise to the man, and then it closes out with the consequences of sin. You see how they parallel each other? You don't see chiasm today in a lot of our writing, but this is what a lot of the Hebrew writers would do to put an emphasis on the very point of that "V." You look at Genesis 3. What is the main point, even structurally, in that text? The main point is what happened in Genesis 3:15 when He looks at the serpent, and He says, "There is coming a day when you strike his heel, and I raise up someone from the woman. You will strike his heel, but He will flat out crush your head," and it is a picture of the promise of salvation through Christ from the very beginning, and it is emphasized in the structure. In Genesis 11, you see the same thing. This is the tower of Babel. Everything points to this picture in verse five when the Lord came down. I will let you look at that. This is one of those areas that I just want to encourage you, after tonight, to go back and sometime look at some of these things. Even the very structure of 1 and 2 Kings shows that. Now, that is not always easy to see. Please, don't be discouraged if you think, "I am never going to find a chiasm." That is Okay. It is Okay. You can still know God. Okay?

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