

# Basic Bible Study Method

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Taken and adapted from "Asking the Right Questions" by Matthew S. Harmon

## Getting Started

- First and foremost, begin your study of God's Word with prayer. You should always approach the Scriptures in a posture of prayerful humility and hunger to know God. Next, read your selected Bible passage multiple times and in various translations. I recommend reading your passage in a formal translation (like the ESV), and in a functional translation (like the NLT). Finally, after having read the passage carefully, ask and answer the following questions in relation to your text.

## Understanding the Bible

- **What do we learn about God?** (Highlight these words in yellow)
  - Look for God's *character* (who he is, what he is like).
  - Look for God's *conduct* (what he is doing).
  - Look for God's *concerns* (what things, events, people, he is concerned about).
- **What do we learn about people?** (Highlight these words in green)
  - Look for aspects of what it means to be *created in God's image*.
  - Look for the *fallen condition*.
  - Look for *how God's people should live*.
- **What do we learn about relating to God?** (Highlight these words in orange)
  - Look for things to *praise and thank God for*.
  - Look for sin to *confess and repent*.
  - Look for *promises and truths to believe*.
- **What do we learn about relating to others?** (Highlight these words in pink)
  - Look for how we should *interact with and treat others*.
  - Look for ways to *pursue reconciliation with others*.
  - Look for specific ways to *love, serve, and care for others*.

## Applying the Bible

- What does God want me to *think/understand*?
- What does God want me to *believe*?
- What does God want me to *desire*?
- What does God want me to *do*?

# English Bible Translation Guide

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## Formal Equivalence (Word-for-Word)

### Benefits

- Great for detailed Bible Study
- Great for memorizing Scripture

### Drawbacks

- Can prove difficult to read (esp. NASB)
- Can prove difficult to understand without study helps

### Best Formal Translations (according to Pastor Zach)

- NASB (New American Standard Bible)
- ESV (English Standard Version)
- NKJV (New King James Version)

## Optimal Equivalence (Blending Formal & Functional)

### Benefits

- Great combination of accuracy, readability, and accessibility
- Great for use in a variety of situations

### Drawbacks

- Can value clarity and readability over being literal

### Best Optimal Translations (according to Pastor Zach)

- CSB (Christian Standard Bible)
- NIV (New International Version)
- NET Bible (New English Translation Bible)

## Functional Equivalence (Thought-for-Thought)

### Benefits

- Great for devotional reading
- Great for ease of understanding
- Great for young readers

### Drawbacks

- Turns over more interpretive decisions to the translators

### Best Functional Translations (according to Pastor Zach)

- NLT (New Living Translation)
- NCV (New Century Version)
- NIrV (New International Reader's Version)