

Midweek Study

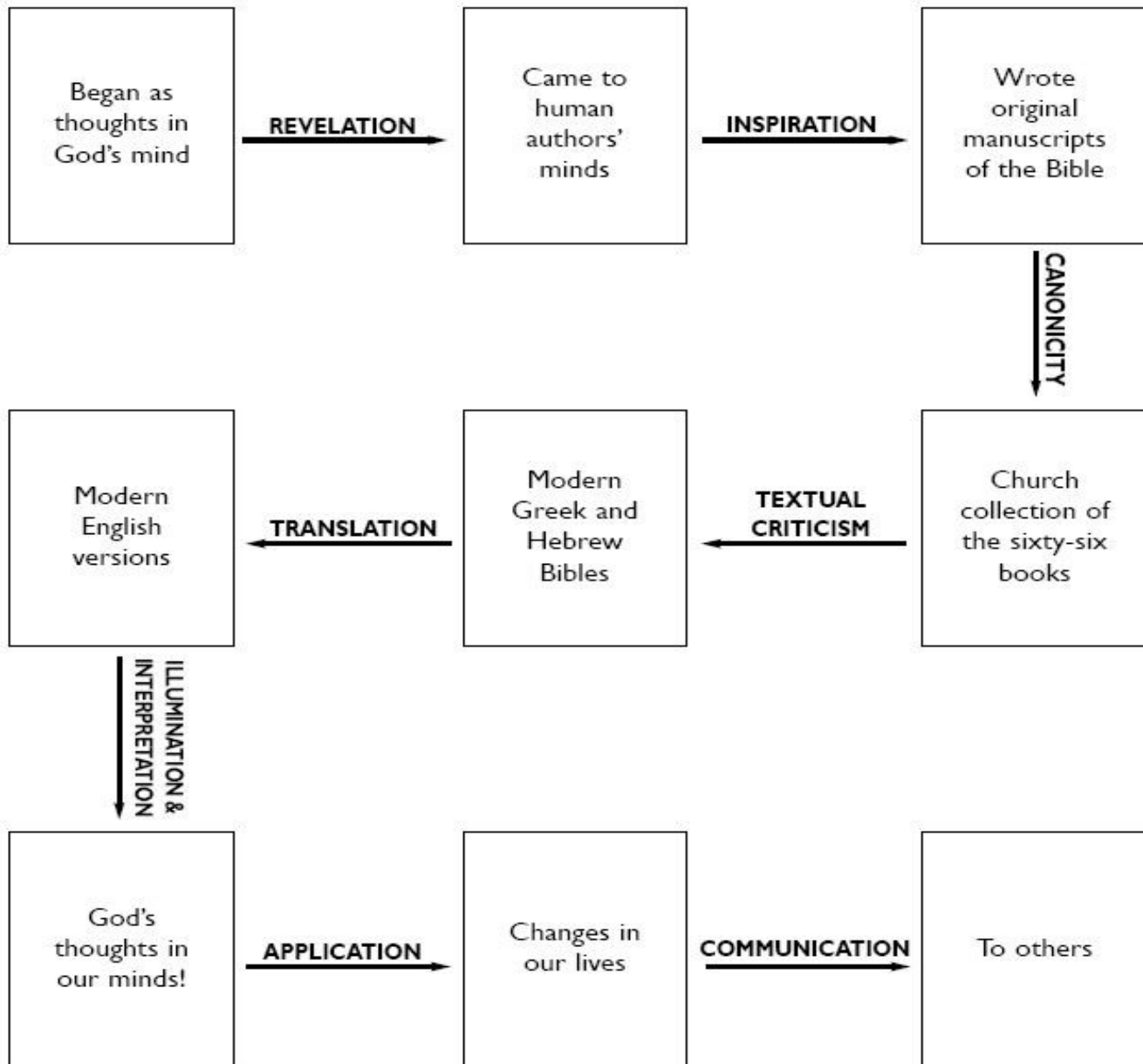
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HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE



From God to Us:

Learning to Hear God Speak from His Word



(Source: "How the Bible Came to Us," by: Dr. Daniel Akin)

“Appealing to the same Bible, Christians, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses can reach amazingly divergent conclusions. Christians, for example, believe there is only one God, a triune Being (Father, Son, and Spirit) who has existed and will exist forever. Mormons cite verses to assert that the God of the Bible is just one among countless deities and that we ourselves, if male, can also become gods. Jehovah’s Witnesses claim it is blasphemy to say that Jesus or the Spirit is a divine person. Even people who claim the name of Christian disagree vehemently as to whether the Bible condemns homosexual behavior. On another level, believing Christians can be puzzled after reading an Old Testament text regulating infectious skin diseases or land redistribution in ancient Israel. How are such texts applicable today? Clearly, it is not enough to simply say, “I believe the Bible.” Proper interpretation of the Bible is essential.”¹

General Principles for Interpreting the Bible²

1. **Approach the Bible in Prayer**
2. **Read the Bible as a Book That Points to Jesus**
In a debate with the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem, Jesus said, “**You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life**” (John 5:39–40; cf. Luke 24:25–27).
3. **Let Scripture Interpret Scripture**
4. **Meditate on the Bible**
5. **Approach the Bible in Faith and Obedience**
As the apostle John writes, “**This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God**” (1 John 5:3–5).
6. **Take Note of the Biblical Genre You Are Reading**
7. **Be Aware of Historical or Cultural Background Issues**
8. **Pay Attention to Context**
9. **Read the Bible in Community**
10. **Begin the Journey of Becoming a More Faithful Interpreter**

Great Tools to Help You Study The Bible

1. **ONLINE RESOURCES** (www.biblegateway.com; www.blueletterbible.org; www.logos.com)
2. **STUDY BIBLE:**
 - a. **NKJV** – NKJV Study Bible; MacArthur Study Bible
 - b. **NIV** – NIV Study Bible; Quest Study Bible
 - c. **ESV – ESV Study Bible**
 - d. **Life Application Study Bible** (multiple translations)
 - e. **Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible** (NIV; NKJV)
 - f. **Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible** (multiple translations)
3. **ADDITIONAL TOOLS:**
 - a. **Parallel Bible:** NKJV/AMP Parallel; CONTEMPORARY COMPARATIVE (NIV; NKJV; NLT; Message); ESSENTIAL EVANGELICAL (ESV; NKJV; NLT; Message); CONTEMPORARY PARALLEL NT (8 versions, but only New Testament).
 - b. **Commentary:** **Bible Exposition Commentary Series by Warren Wiersbe (6-volume)**; Believer’s Bible Commentary by William MacDonald (one volume); (check out www.bestcommentaries.com)
 - c. **Bible Handbook:** Holman Illustrated Bible Handbook
 - d. **Bible Atlas:** Holman Bible Atlas
 - e. **Bible Dictionary:** Word Studies in the Greek New Testament by Kenneth Wuest; Mounce’s Complete Bible Dictionary by William Mounce
 - f. **“Building a Theological Library”** pdf by Dr. Daniel Akin (www.danielakin.com)

¹ Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2021), 89.

² Taken from Plummer, 107-120.