



HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE







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Richard L. Mayhue



CHRISTIAN FOCUS





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TO:

Dr. Homer Kent, Jr.

Dr. Tim LaHaye

Dr. John MacArthur

Dr. Henry Morris

Dr. Charles Smith

Dr. John Sproule

Dr. Robert Thomas

Dr. John Whitcomb, Jr.

whom God has used to impress upon me
the supreme importance of *cutting it straight*.





Foreword

There are two main ways in which we all need help in approaching the Bible. The first is in our understanding of its nature and origin. That takes us immediately to such subjects as the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible. But secondly we need to understand how to approach it, how to read it, how to understand its language, how to make our way through the various types of literature it contains. This is all part of the crucial biblical science of interpretation. 2 Peter 1:10 forbids us interpreting the Bible any way we like, and it is for this reason that we need principles of biblical interpretation clearly set out for us to follow. It is to this whole issue that my friend Dr. Richard Mayhue addresses himself in this excellent little book.

The book is not a heavy theological treatise addressed to academics. It is intended for all kinds of Christian people who are serious about studying the Bible carefully and interpreting it properly. He is helping us to fulfil the command we have in 2 Timothy 2:15: 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.'

The contemporary Christian church greatly needs the guidance that is found in this book. It will be valuable to Christian people at all stages of their experience. The book comes from the pen of an able scholar, an experienced pastor, and a gracious Christian. I warmly commend it.

Eric Alexander







Introduction

R.A. Torrey, former president of Moody Bible Institute, offered this profound thought over a century ago: 'I learned years ago, to go to one place for the deepest lessons of life. That one place is the Bible.'

Today Christians still go to that one place, but with even greater opportunities to understand God's Word. More Bible teaching goes out faster to larger groups of people than ever before. Satellite transmissions of radio and television, the Christian publishing boom, the advent of affordable audio and video cassettes, and the computer craze has saturated our society.

However, with these unprecedented opportunities for truth comes the potential liability for error. Just because someone broadcasts a message or publishes a book does not necessarily mean that he or she is delivering God's Word as God intended it to be delivered. Thus, false teaching is abroad today more than ever.

The problem is not new. That is why Paul told Timothy, 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth' (2 Tim. 2:15). Without the Word being rightly divided, there would be ruined Christians (2:14) and ungodliness (2:16), and the church would be poisoned just as gangrene ravishes the human



body (2:17). Hymenaeus and Philetus had gone astray in Timothy's day and had upset the faith of some with false teaching about the resurrection (2:17-18).

Our challenge is to produce a new generation of Christians who are committed to getting God's Word right; pastors and teachers who teach with meticulous care; students and parishioners who listen and learn with discernment.

How to Study the Bible is written for those who go to the Scriptures for the deepest lessons of life. It would be tragic to come to the well and drink deeply of its refreshment, only to discover that its content had been altered so that what was consumed differed from the reservoir. Likewise, it would be pitiful, having come to God's inerrant Word, to depart with an errant message.

Both scholar and new believer can be impacted by these studies. They cover a wide range of subjects and purposes including:

- * Teaching a basic Bible study method
- * Warning about interpretation mistakes
- * Exposing current theological error
- * Providing right steps to avoid wrong doctrine
- * Emphasizing the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture

If we understand that when we open the Scripture we handle God's Word, there will be an awesome sense of responsibility as we seek to understand what He wrote – particularly if we intend to pass it on to someone.

Years ago, as a brand new Christian, I heard Dr. Lehman Strauss tell about having 'The Word of God' stamped on



the spine of his rebound Bible. That idea made a lasting impression upon me. I decided then, if my new Bible ever needed rebinding, I would do the same. Five bindings later, 'The Word of God' still graces the spine of my 'Sword' and reminds me it is not just 'a book,' rather it is 'The Book', none other than the Word of God. It demands my very best in reading, interpreting, obeying, and teaching.

God gave these words to Israel: 'But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at my Word' (Isa. 66:2). *How to Study the Bible* speaks to a generation of Christians who are awed by God's Word and more than anything else in life want to get it right.

I pray that our dedication to God's Word will give us the experience promised by the psalmist:

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel
of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of
water,
Which yields its fruit in its season,
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers (Ps. 1:1-3).

