HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

I. WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

1. The Bible is God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). It was written over a period of about 1600 years by over 40 different human authors, guided the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).

2. The word "Bible" (biblos) means "book." Even though the Bible is one book, it has two major parts--The Old Testament, which is comprised of 39 individual books, and the New Testament, which is comprised of 27 individual books. The word "Testament" (Heb. Berith; Gk. Diatheke) means "covenant, or arrangement between two parties."

3. God gave the Old Covenant or Testament to Moses for the people of Israel (Exodus 24). Later, the prophet Jeremiah announced that God would make a new covenant with all His people (Jeremiah 31:31-34), which Jesus described at the Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-25; Matthew 26:28) and which took place at his death (Hebrews 9:16).

4. Today, all people are required by God to live under the New Covenant or New Testament.

"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law" (Galatians 3:24, 25). (See also Hebrews 7:19; 8:6; 9:23).

5. Although we live under the New Covenant, we should still study the Old Testament because it is the inspired Word of God. It teaches us about the nature of God, and it provides us with examples of how we are to live and not to live (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11).

II. WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

A. WE SHOULD STUDY THE BIBLE BECAUSE IT IS OUR DUTY.

1. I could plead with you to study the Bible for personal edification; I could appeal with you to study the Bible for personal happiness; I could beseech you to study the Bible because it would be the most fulfilling and rewarding educational experience of your life. But ultimately the main reason why we should study the Bible is because it is our duty.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Ezra 7:10 "For Ezra had set his heart to heart the Law of the LORD,
and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel."

2. For a Christian, Bible study is not an option. It is our duty.

III. WHY DO SOME PEOPLE DISREGARD BIBLE STUDY?

A. THEY THINK IT IS TOO HARD TO UNDERSTAND.

1. It is true that in some places the Bible is not easy to understand (2 Peter 3:16).

2. For the most part, the Bible is simple to read and understand.

3. If we can read the newspaper, we can read the Bible. Sometimes the Bible is easier.

B. THEY THINK IT IS BORING AND IRRELEVANT TO THEIR LIVES.

1. The Bible is the most relevant and exciting book that has ever been produced.

2. More Bibles have been sold than any other book ever!

Is There A Difference Between Reading And Studying The Bible?

A. There Is A Great Deal Of Difference Between Reading And Studying.

1. Reading is something we can do in a leisurely way, something that can be done strictly for entertainment in a casual manner. But study suggests labor, serious and diligent work.

2. Most people read their Bibles but do not study their Bibles. Reading the Bible is valuable (Nehemiah 8:2, 3 "So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.)

There is a time and place for Reading the Bible. But Studying the Bible is also valuable and is necessary in striving to understand God's truths. Ezra 7:10