



The G.E.M.

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REMEMBER TO STUDY

We are living in times when there is a need for discernment. There are many false teachings and scary theologies doing the rounds. These are the days Paul warns about in 2 Timothy 3, where "evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (v13). What protection do we have from this? Paul then encourages his readers to "continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of" (v14). It is only through God's Word, the Bible, and what He has taught us through His Holy Spirit, that can keep us from being deceived.

Therefore this month in *The G.E.M.* we have focussed on some of the tools that are excellent for effective study of the Bible. Our main article on page 3 highlights the difference between just reading the Bible and studying it. If you are needing any more information on the items discussed there, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The normal *Bible Basics* appears on page 2, as well as *This Day in History*. The next two cards in the *God's Library Cards*, Leviticus and Numbers, and the normal *Bible Sudoku Challenge* are on the back page.

Be sure to visit our updated website where we have detailed over 600 products that can be ordered on-line. Forward the details to family, friends and your congregations so that they too can become aware of all the great products available for spiritual growth.

We hope that you will find this newsletter both fun and informative.

Until next time,
Glyn and Linda. †

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord"
(2 Peter 1:2)

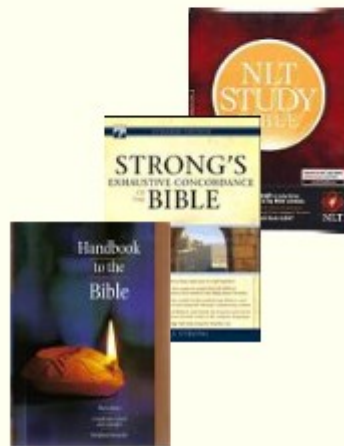
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BIBLE BASICS

Proverbs

The Book of Wisdom

Proverbs is perhaps the most practical book in the Old Testament because it teaches wisdom for all aspects of everyday life. In short concise statements and stories, Solomon and other contributors set forth about nine hundred proverbs. They are not only theoretical but practical; and are easily memorised, timeless truths that can still be applied today.

Basic Outline: The Book of Proverbs can be divided into six sections:

	<u>Chapters</u>
Purpose of Proverbs	1:1-7
Proverbs to Youth	1:8-9:18
Proverbs of Solomon	10:1-24:34
Proverbs copied by Hezekiah	25:1-29:27
Words of Agur	30:1-33
Words of Lemuel	31:1-31

Theme and Purpose: Proverbs is one of the few biblical books that clearly spells out its purpose.

The purpose statement appears in chapter 1, verses 2–6, and has two basic purposes:

- (1) To impart moral discernment and discretion (1:2a,3–5); and
- (2) to develop mental clarity and perception (1:2b,6).

The words *“wisdom and instruction”* (1:2a) complement each other because wisdom means “skill,” and instruction means “discipline.” No skill is perfected without discipline, and when a person has skill he has freedom to create something beautiful.

Date and authorship: Most of the proverbs are accredited to King Solomon (970-930 BC), but others were added to the collection at various times by Lemeul and Agur.

It is traditionally accepted that the book of Proverbs as we know it today was finalised during the time of Hezekiah (715-686BC), as is suggested in 25:1

Contribution to the Bible: Proverbs, along with Job and Ecclesiastes form the section of the Old Testament known as the Wisdom Literature. Its base is the fear of Yahweh as the foundation for practical holiness in life. Its subject matter is universal because it talks to everyone, no matter what one's background or religious persuasion is.

The proverbs are general statements that are true to life even though individual cases may differ. Psalms emphasises a life of worship and devotion before God, but Proverbs concentrates on how one walks before men.

The proverbs are practical, moral, and concise – and should be read slowly in small sections, and applied at every opportunity.

Reading a proverb takes only a few seconds; applying a proverb can take a lifetime! †

NEW BIBLE STUDIES FOR WOMEN

NEW HOPE BIBLE STUDIES FOR WOMEN



FACE-TO-FACE series by Janet Thompson

The Face-to-Face Bible study series offers an excellent opportunity for spiritually mature women to come alongside younger or new Christian women to be taught, counselled or mentored.

The studies are practical and are excellent for use one-on-one in a mentoring environment, in small groups, or for use individually. Questions and daily studies are provided for each topic for use within each of the three settings mentioned above.

Currently there are four titles available in the series: Elizabeth and Mary, Euodia and Syntyche, Mary and Martha, and Naomi and Ruth. More titles are due for release in South Africa soon.

Elizabeth and Mary: A study of the joys and benefits of one generation investing in the next. Through looking at the lives of these two women, ladies will learn how to relate to other women across generations in the way that a mother would to her own child.

Euodia and Syntyche: Through looking at the lives of these two women, ladies will learn positive ways on how to deal with conflict. The Biblical solutions taught will bring about resolution and reconciliation in all areas of conflict.

Mary and Martha: By discovering the personalities of these two women of the Bible, ladies will learn to complement each other as they serve within their local churches, as sisters in Christ.

Naomi and Ruth: With relevance for life today, this study will guide women to apply Biblical principles in their relationships with other women. It will guide women to become committed to other women, learning from the older and teaching the younger.

About the Author: Janet Thompson is the founder and director of About His Work Ministries, and founded the Women to Women Mentoring Ministry at Saddleback Church.

Order on-line today!

Our Price: R 100 each

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

13 May

Boy Preacher

Fifteen-year-old David Marks, eyes blurred with tears, left home with a dollar in his pocket to preach the gospel. The “boy preacher” soon created a stir in the American northeast, and he kept going for the next 25 years. He rode one horse 19,000 miles, preached to thousands, organized churches throughout New England, published books, wrote articles, taught school, and worked diligently in opposition to slavery and in support of foreign missions. Then he died from sheer exhaustion at age 40.

Just before sunset on May 13, 1828, Marks rode into the little town of Ancaster, Ontario, announcing he would preach in seven minutes in the park. A small crowd gathered, and he asked if anyone had a text he would like to hear preached. A man mockingly said, “Nothing!”

Marks immediately began preaching on “nothing.” God created the world from “nothing,” he said. God gave us laws in which there is “nothing” unjust. But, Marks continued, we have broken God’s law and there is “nothing” in us to justify us. There will be “nothing” to comfort sinners in death or hell. But, while Christians have “nothing” of their own in which to boast, we have Christ. And in him, we have “nothing” to cause us grief, “nothing” to disturb our peace, and “nothing” to fear in eternity.

Finishing his sermon, Marks mounted his horse and travelled to the next village. But some time later he returned to Ancaster. This time a larger group assembled, and the meeting house was opened to him. David preached “something” to them. He said there is “something” above all things. There is “something” in man designed to live forever, but there is also “something” in us that makes us unhappy. There is “something” about the gospel that reverses our unhappiness, “something” that gives us hope. There is “something” that will disturb the impenitent in death, but “something” resides in Christians that the world can’t understand, and “something” in eternity to give us everlasting joy.

All that from an uneducated young circuit rider, his mind filled with Scripture and his heart full of Christ, who had “something” to say – and “nothing” to fear.

Quoted from: *On this Day: 365 Amazing and Inspiring Stories About Saints, Martyrs & Heroes* (electronic edition) by Robert J. Morgan. †

LOW COST STUDIES

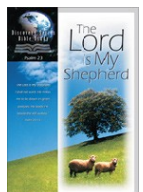
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BIBLE READING vs. BIBLE STUDY

Every sincere Christian wants to have a more meaningful personal Bible study, to understand the Bible better. While learning the Bible is the joyful task of a lifetime, here are several suggestions that can enrich your Bible studies.

Reading and Studying

First, recognise that Bible reading and Bible study are both important, but different. In order to grow, you need to read the Bible every day as part of your time with God.

But if you really want to learn the Bible, I recommend that you read broadly rather than narrowly. A one-verse devotional may be quick, but it will not really help you understand the Bible. Bible reading as part of your daily devotions should be separate from your times of Bible study. Let me explain.

Blocks of Time

Bible study, as opposed to reading, focuses on a single topic, Bible character, or book of the Bible for closer study. It therefore requires a longer block of uninterrupted time. Perhaps set aside 30 to 45 minutes on two nights a week for in-depth Bible study, or an hour on Saturday mornings before the family is up. Blocks of time are important to Bible study.

Learn to Ask Questions

The real key to Bible study is being inquisitive; learn to ask questions of the text. First, read the passage. Then be a detective; look for clues. What is going on? What stands out to you? What do you not understand? Look for things that you might not expect to find here.

There are no right or wrong questions. But questions are vital, as they provide direction to where you are going in your Bible study. Give yourself freedom to follow some rabbit trails, exploring one theme and then another as you acquaint yourself with a passage.

The questions vary depending on the passage you are studying, but here are some typical questions:

- Who wrote or said this?
- When was it written or said?
- Where did this happen?
- To whom was it written or said?
- What circumstance or event prompted this incident or teaching?
- Why did the person act as he did or say what he said?
- How can I apply, emulate or obey what I learn in this passage?

By developing a questioning mind, you will be able to think of more questions, and you will learn. You will not find answers to all your questions, but over time many will be answered.

Take Notes

One main difference between reading and studying is writing down what you learn. This will not only help you to remember it later, but will help you to formulate your thoughts clearly. Writing forces you to

recognise fuzzy thinking for what it is. Writing down what you are learning helps you to understand the text better.

I recommend that you begin a notebook in which to record your observations or research. Start small, but take notes in a way that can be expanded easily. You could also take notes on a computer, naming the files in such a way that you can find them again or search an entire folder for a word or phrase. It is probably a good idea to print out your notes when you are finished and file them since computer files have a way of losing themselves after a few years.

Buy a Good Translation

One of the keys to learning the Bible is to use a good translation. Because the Bible was not written in English, but in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, a translation tries to render the original language into clear, accurate English. There are two types of translations:

Literal word-for-word translation: Written for accuracy, but can be hard to read out loud. A good example is the Amplified Bible.

Dynamic translation: Here the translator takes the meaning of the original language and tries to translate the concept into good English, without being tied to the exact words in the original. A good example is the New International Version (NIV).

Learn to Use a Study Bible

After deciding what translation to use, I encourage you to purchase a study Bible, since it will contain a number of tools in one volume that can help you dig deeper. Nearly every Bible publisher offers a study Bible. Here are some of the features that you will come to appreciate:

Cross References: In a column next to the text, a study Bible lists several other verses with a similar idea or theme.

Bible Book Introductions: It is important to know something about the author, date, themes, circumstances, and intended audience of the Bible book or letter you are studying. In most study Bibles you will find a

couple of pages of introductory comments for each book with a brief outline.

Study Notes or Annotations: Study Bibles have footnotes at the bottom of the page to help explain some of the more obscure ideas you run across. Remember, these are not part of the Bible itself, but can often point you in the right direction in your study.

Concordance: Do you have a verse on the tip of your tongue, but do not know where to find it? A concordance helps you find a Bible passage if you can think of a key word or two that the verse contains. A concordance can also help you find other verses that teach a concept or use a word found in the passage you are studying.

Topical Index: Some study Bibles also have a separate topical index that helps you find scripture references on a particular topic.

Maps: Part of understanding what is

happening in narrative passages of Scripture is learning the geography, the location of cities, battles, mountains, valleys, etc.

Other features you may find include articles on various topics, a brief Bible dictionary, outlines of topics and Bible books, index of place names, time lines, and so on.

Use a good translation

Specialized Tools

Obtaining a study Bible is the place to begin. But as your Bible studies increase, you may want to invest in some more specialised books. Some to explore:

Handbooks that contain more in-depth introductory information

Dictionaries and encyclopaedias contain brief articles on each significant subject, word, and person in the Bible.

While study Bibles provide an abridged concordance, you can find an **unabridged concordance** will help you find every occurrence of a particular word in the Bible.

Bible commentaries provide an overview and running explanation of each book of the Bible. Available in one-volume commentary on the whole Bible or of individual books.

Word Study tools include interlinear Bibles that show the Hebrew or Greek text on one line and a literal English translation above or below it. Lexicons provide clear, precise definitions for each Hebrew or Greek word.

Atlases contain more than detailed maps. They also describe geography and places of the Bible, and include illustrations and archaeological details.

All of these resources are available in electronic format for your computer.

Most Important Step

It is possible to be so engrossed in Bible study that you forget the most important purpose of Bible study – to learn exactly what the Bible teaches so that you can apply its teachings to your life.

My prayer is that your Bible study results in a heart that is tender to listen to what the Spirit is saying to you through Scripture and a will that is determined to live out in your everyday life what you are learning. †

The real key to Bible study is being inquisitive

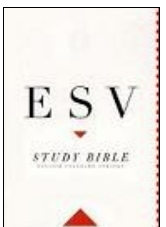
EXCELLENT RESOURCE

ESV Study Bible English Standard Version

The purpose of the ESV Study Bible is to help people understand the Bible in a deeper way. An extraordinary team was created, including 95 scholars and teachers, from 9 countries, nearly 20 denominations, including 50 seminaries, colleges, and universities. Equivalent to a twenty-volume Bible study library.

Primary features: 2,782 pages, 20,000 notes and resources, 200 full-colour maps, 40 full-colour illustrations, 200 charts, 50 articles, 80,000 cross-references and an extensive concordance.

The most comprehensive study Bible ever published.



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THE BACK PAGE

BIBLE SUDOKU CHALLENGE

How well do you know the Good Book?

Bible-Sudoku Challenge combines the logic skills to solve a normal Sudoku with Bible trivia.

Begin by answering the Bible trivia questions. Using the answers and placing them in the relevant coordinates, solve the grid on the right. The coordinates with each question indicates where in the grid that starter number is to be placed (e.g. A1, E9).

All answers are from the book of Proverbs.

- How many things does Agur ask the Lord to do for him before he dies? (A3, E6, G1, B4)
- In which Proverb are we taught about the creation of the world? (G6, F4)
- According to Solomon, how many things does the Lord hate? (H3, E2, A1, I7, F6)
- How many things that are too amazing for the writer? (F8, A5, B7)
- How many pillars does the house that wisdom has built have? (H2, C6, F5, E7)
- In which verse of Proverbs 12 does Solomon say, "Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food"? (H7, D5, F3, B6, G4, E8)
- In which verse of Proverbs 28 does Hezekiah tell us that the evil man does not understand justice? (D8, H4, B9, F1, I2)
- In which chapter of Proverbs does the writer say: "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn"? (C8, H9, E1, G2)
- Complete the verse: "As iron sharpens iron, so _ _ man sharpens another." (A2, D4)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

Answers in the Next Edition

Last Month's Solution

Trivia: 2 (62:11), 3 (3:3) 5 (5)
 9 (107:9) 6 (150:6) 8 (8:4)
 7 (119:164) 4 (29:4) 1 (84:10)

Sudoku Grid

8	3	5	6	1	4	2	9	7
7	2	6	8	3	9	1	4	5
4	1	9	2	7	5	6	3	8
5	4	1	3	2	8	7	6	9
2	8	7	5	9	6	4	1	3
9	6	3	7	4	1	5	8	2
1	9	2	4	5	3	8	7	6
6	5	4	9	8	7	3	2	1
3	7	8	1	6	2	9	5	4

GOD'S LIBRARY CARDS

COLLECT THEM ALL - Every month a new Library Card will be released, with facts on many amazing themes of the Bible, e.g. Books, people, places, food and events. Just cut them out and laminate them for easy reference. For additional cards and other related products, contact us.

LEVITICUS 3

Key Idea: Priests and sacrifices
Summary: The selection of priests for Israel and the establishing of sacrifices.
Key People: Moses, Aaron, Levites.
Key Places: Mt Sinai, the Wilderness.
Strange but True: Four-footed flying creatures (11:20).
 Skin disease that turned the hair white (13:3).
 An all-linen dress-code (16:3-4).
 Priests who do not shave their heads or shape their beards (21:5).
 Families living outdoors in makeshift shelters (23:39-43).

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NUMBERS 4

Key Idea: Numbering the Israelites.
Summary: Two censuses and the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.
Key People: Moses, Joshua, Caleb.
Key Places: Kadesh, the Wilderness, Moab.
Strange but True: A woman cured instantly of leprosy (12:9-13).
 Food from God that the people complained about (11:4-9).
 Grapes so large that two men needed to carry one bunch (13:23).
 A talking donkey that saw an angel (22:21-39).

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**Every word of God is flawless;
 He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.
 Do not add to His words,
 or He will rebuke you and prove you a liar.**

Proverb 30:5-6