

# DEEPER BIBLE STUDY

by

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## I. Introduction

Purpose: The purpose of this class is for you to have a closer relationship with God and He with you through enriching your personal Bible study

Why do you study the Bible? What is your purpose?

To make yourself better?

Because you think you should?

To impress others with your knowledge?

To be able to teach it to others?

To be able to prove yourself and your beliefs right to others?

To know and have a great relationship with God and he with you?

Paul had a purpose in his life. His ultimate goal is expressed in Phil. 3:8-11:

I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of **knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

Paul's *desire* was to **know Christ**. Biblically this concept is more than just an intellectual concept. **It is experiential knowledge, a knowledge that builds relationship.** Paul heart's desire was to **experience** Christ.

God wants this experiential knowledge of us also. He wants to experience our hearts.

Note: Deut. 8:2-3:

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you **in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.** He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that **man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD**

God wants to have a relationship with you through his word. He wants to experience your heart. He wants to experience our emotions, thoughts, and good will

toward him<sup>1</sup>. This is how close relationships are made. To complete the relationship there must also be **our** experiencing of His heart, his emotions, thoughts, and good will toward us. *That is what true relationships are all about: Experiencing each other's hearts.* God's words from his heart initiate that relationship. Our heart, words, and responses back to him can develop and complete that relationship which brings life.

## **II. Four Keys to Bible study that bring you into a closer relationship with God and He with you.**

### **Key#1: Understand the passage:**

- A. Realize that every word is important and that man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD (Matt. 4:4)**
- B. Look up the meanings of words in a Bible Dictionary or Bible Encyclopedia, even if you think you understand them. You may not understand them as used in Bible times.**
- C. Look up the meanings of the word(s) in a Bible Concordance (Greek or Hebrew dictionaries and/or theological dictionaries if you are able).**
- D. Determine what the sentence is saying.**
- E. Look at Bible cross-references, notes, and footnotes for insights**
- F. Look at Study Bible notes for insights**
- G. Look up the passage in a good conservative commentary for another perspective. Beware of the internet! Check the publisher on all books you publish to see if it might be liberal or not (see conservative and liberal publishers below).**
- H. Look at the context. How does the verse fit in?**

**You can discover great things through word/context study:**

- E.g., The meaning of love as loyalty**
- The concept of "knowing" as experiential knowledge.**

**Key #2: Determine its application. Ask the following about the passage:**

- a. Is there a command to obey?**
- b. Is there an example to follow or avoid?**
- c. Is there a promise to claim?**
- d. Is there a warning to heed?**
- e. Is there a teaching to act on (even if not phrased as a direct command)?**
- f. Is there a truth to believe?**
- g. Is there a need that prompts prayer or a blessing that motivates praise?**
- f. Is there a heart to emulate or ask God for?**
- g. Then ask "Where is my heart?" "How can I get it there?"**

**Eg., I Pet. 1:22-25**

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<sup>1</sup>The dominant use of the term "bb1" (lbb) in the OT is in "reference to the center of human psychical and spiritual life, to the entire inner life of a person" (Alex Luc, *NIDOTTE*, s.v., "b1") including "the whole spectrum of emotion", one's "thoughts", and "will" (*TWOT*, s.v. "bb1").

**Key #3: Experience the heart within the passage.**

When you read and study a Bible passage seek to find and to experience the “heart” of God. This brings you to the point of knowing (experiencing) God. Then apply that “heart” message to your life to obey God. This allows God to know (experience) your heart. Relationship is then established. You know God through accepting His salvation (Gal. 4:8-9) and He knows you through your love/obedience (I Cor. 8:3 and I Jn. 5:3). True relationship takes both. The essence of any true relationship is HEART to HEART:

*You experience the other person’s heart and he/she yours.*

Ask yourself these heart questions:

A. “What is God’s heart here?”

B. “What is the writer’s heart?”

E.g., Thessalonians and the heart of Paul: I Thes. 1:1-3; 2; 17-20.

C. “Is my heart like that?” “How can I have that heart?”

Decide that your heart will be like God’s, Paul’s, or another writer’s or another disciple’s heart you know today.

D. “Can I have that heart?” Realize that you *can* have that heart if you call out to God for insight and cry out for understanding, if we look for it and search for it. Remember, the very fact that you want this heart is an indication of the new person God has put within you that He wants expressed.

Proverbs 2:15 states:

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and *if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure,*<sup>2</sup> then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

Cry out to God, “God please help me to have that heart!” It takes struggling in prayer.

Through your study, **allow** your heart to experience his grace, unconditional love, forgiveness, discipline, loyalty, patience, kindness, peace, goodness, etc.

Through your response of love by repentance and a changed life, you let him experience you. Your openness is key to friendship with God (Jn. 15:12-15).

**Key# 4. Use different types of studies to enrich your knowledge and understanding of God from the Bible<sup>2</sup>:**

**1. Do a topical study.**

a. Choose and narrowly define your topic. Eg., Narrow “God’s

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<sup>2</sup> Some of this material comes from A. J. Conyers *How to Read the Bible* (Downer’s Grove: Intervarsity, 1986), 127-139.

love” to God’s love for an individual or God’s love of the world”

- b. Look up your topic in a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia
- c. Make a list of related synonyms and words and keep the list to refer to
- d. Use an exhaustive concordance to look up the passages related to your topic.
- e. Study all the passages that relate to your topic and compare parallel passages
- f. Make a list of your personal conclusions from the study and any “heart” insights you see
- g. Ask God to give you the good heart insights you see.

**2. Do a biographical study** of a Bible person’s life focusing on their heart.

- a. Choose a person whose life you want to study, e.g. Moses, David, John, Mark, etc.
- b. Using a concordance, find all the passages which speak of this person
- c. Study those passages looking for the character and heart of the individual. Note how you would relate to their character, what you could learn from their life and how you might imitate the good aspects of their heart.
- d. Ask God to give you the good heart and character you have found.

**3. Do a study of the writings of a particular writer**, such as Paul, John, Luke.

- a. Find all the writings of this particular person in the Bible
- b. Read and study those works noting (writing down) the particular emphases of that person. What convictions does he have?
- c. Appreciate his character and how he is different from the other writers in the Bible. Note how it is the heart of God to use different people with their different characters. Reflect on how God could use you with your special talents and convictions
- d. Ask, “What good heart convictions can I ask God for?”

**CONCLUSION:**

**As you experience the HEART of God through diligent study of His word, and respond to that word by changing your life accordingly, your relationship with him will become more and more intimate. Then truly you will know him and He will know you.**

## CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PUBLISHERS

The following list of conservative and liberal (liberal and conservative in the religious sense not a political sense) publishers come from my experience. The vast majority of the religious material (although not necessarily all of it) published by those listed in their columns reflects their respective theological stance. Choose conservative publishers to become more well grounded in the Word before venturing into the liberal views who do not take the Word of God as inspired nor accept the miraculous as possible.

### CONSERVATIVE PUBLISHERS

DPI  
Baker  
Zondervan  
Eerdmans  
Navagators  
Moody Press  
Tyndale House  
Word Books  
Westminster  
Great Commission Illustrated Books  
Standard Publishing  
Sweet Publishing Company

### LIBERAL PUBLISHERS

Harper and Row  
Hendricksen  
John Knox  
Fortress  
Schribners  
Double Day  
Harvard  
Yale  
Princeton

As for individual authors, of course any of our “disciple” DPI and Great Commission Illustrated Books authors would be good. Also, *any authors* who teach at the following schools and their writings would tend to be conservative (this does not mean they necessarily practice or preach what the Bible says about discipleship, the plan of salvation, or the doctrine of the last things (e.g., some might teach the false doctrine of Dispensationalism or Pre-millennialism), but that in general they claim to approach the scriptures as the inspired word of God): Abilene Christian University (and other traditional Church of Christ schools), Lincoln Christian College and Seminary (and other traditional Christian Church Schools), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, Trinity College and Theological School, and others. I have either studied at the above school, was taught by one of their professors, or studied material from people who either taught in these schools or have been taught in all these schools.

I hope this will help you when looking at books to judge the material as to where the author is coming from.