

How to Get God's Mind From His Word

If you have made the choice for Jesus Christ and are born again according to the directions in the last chapter, then you now have the Lord Jesus Christ carrying you the rest of your earthly journey. You have the Holy Spirit living within teaching you. Now what you learn from the Bible that your natural self could not have accepted will become obviously true and a joy to your heart.

Wondering where to start? Start in the New Testament with the Gospel of John or the Gospel of Matthew (Jewish perspective). Then read Acts, Genesis and Romans (and Hebrews if you are Jewish) before going on to read the whole Bible. This is typically suggested. Further reading plans are online at www.blueletterbible.org/dailyreading/.

You will miss God if you just look for verses in the Bible that seem to fit your situation. There is a right way to understand the Bible to get God's mind. These principles apply to all Scriptures. (*Underlined words are defined in the footers below them.*)

1. Begin by accepting that Scripture has no error. (See zoominpublishing.org > Trust the Astounding Bible!)

Isa 46:9b-10 - I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

2. Expect your knowledge, wisdom and insight to grow from *prayerful study of the Bible*, not just reading it.

2Tim 2:15 - Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

3. Pray, asking the Holy Spirit for understanding. The Holy Spirit may directly *tell* or *show* you truth, but usually He will *guide* you into truth as you study both the Word and what others with differing information and opinions have written and said.

2Pet 1:20 - Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private [*one's own*] interpretation.

- Claiming that God (the Holy Spirit) gave a verse a new interpretation or new revelation, particularly for your own life, does not make the interpretation or revelation true. That is just one person's word against another's with no evidence to prove or disprove

Rightly divide—to analyze (break down/divide) for piecing together topics & concepts for full & correct understanding. **Proverb**—wise saying **Revelation**—the bringing forth of new understandings by God **Heresy**—teaching or opinion contradictory to God's Word **Cult**—a group considered by the majority to have teachings and practices contradictory to God's Word

it. Such interpretations or revelations that have not been proved are “of private interpretation” and can lead to heresies and cults.

Prov 11:14 - Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

- If you attend a church in a denomination that makes a point of saying they are right and others are wrong, and that you shouldn't attend Bible studies or services of other denominations or talk with individuals in outside churches about the Bible, you are likely in a cult, a group that does not accept certain *essential* teachings of the Bible (especially if they deny that Jesus Christ is God who became a human being to die for our sins). Seek out the opinions of others (plural!) and compare them with the Bible.

4. Accept the plain meaning even when it is contrary to your own mind by asking and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you through your spirit.

- For example, belief in the Genesis account of the creation of Adam and Eve is difficult for people long schooled in the theory of evolution, but the Holy Spirit can teach your heart (spirit) to believe the truth.

5. Use resources.

A. A study Bible will give helpful information by introducing each book of the Bible and explaining verses below the text. Compare them by searching “study Bible” online.

B. A dictionary to learn the new vocabulary you will need to easily converse with other Christians and understand sermons. Online dictionaries are quick to use. Even if you use a Bible version like the New Century Version that puts the concepts in everyday vocabulary even second graders can understand, you will benefit from clearly understanding basic theological terms like *justification*, *atonement*, *propitiation*, *redemption*, *sanctification*, *dispensation*, *sin* and so forth.

C. Blueletterbible.com has study tools for understanding Bible things, cultures, situations, places, history and characters: Bible Commentaries (Text and Audio & Video Commentaries), Bible References (Harmony of the Gospels, Encyclopedias / Dictionaries, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Introductions to the Bible, Topical [subject] Indexes, Charts and Outlines, Timelines, and Maps / Images), Theological Resources (Articles / Books, Women's Resources, Don Stewart's Theological FAQs, Blue Letter Bible Theological FAQs, Missions Resources, Cult Resources, and Creeds, Catechisms & Confessions) and Multimedia (Media and Music)

D. Gotquestions.org and other online resources like search engines have ready answers for your questions.

Denomination—a Christian religious group with a specific name, such as Baptist, Lutheran or Methodist
Theological—having to do with the study of God (*Theo-* = God, *logy* = the study of) **Apologetics**—defense of the Christian faith as the only true faith.

E. Christian media will give you access to learn when you don't have time to sit down to study. To increase your understanding of the Lord and His Word, switch your media preference to...

1. **audio Bible readings** (free online: biblegateway .com, blueletterbible.com, etc.; scourby.com; several readers to choose from),
2. **Christian radio**, and
3. **oneplace.com/ministries** to find audio and web sites of ministers that tend to emphasize various aspects of the Christian life like John MacArthur (Bible study), Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth (women's issues), Alistair Begg (pastoral sermons), Gary Hedrick (messianic / Jewish perspective), Perry Stone (prophecy), Ravi Zacharias (apologetics), etc. See also **sidroth.org** (life in the Spirit).

6. Infer the meaning of words carefully.

A. Be aware that no translation can be exactly the same as the original. The original words may have other slightly different meanings as when the word is used in a figurative way or may imply a certain related use. The easy-to-understand version called the Holman Christian Standard Bible (H/CSB) puts notes by the words with other possible translations.

B. Remember some of its words in old versions have changed meaning over the years since language is fluid. For example,

Mar 10:14 - [Jesus] said unto them, **Suffer** the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. [*Suffer meant permit in the 1600s.*]

For this reason be sure to define words by the plain meaning of the original language words rather than by the current English meaning. (You can understand the original meaning of words easily using blueletterbible.com > [word, phrase or verse] > Tools button > Interlinear tab > Strong's number. Under Strong's Definitions all words after "—" are ways the word is translated in the King James Version.)

7. Read with *precision* by assuming that the original author's choice of each word in a true translation was purposefully inspired by the Holy Spirit.

8. Consider the context of the words at all levels: consider the sentences for interpreting words, the passage for sentences, the book for passages, the Testament for the book, and the whole Bible for the Testament. Learn the whole of Scripture because a part of it cannot be fully understood without knowing all of it.

9. Interpret Scripture appropriately for its various genres including the Law, history, poetry (Hebraic parallel poetry: restatement, not rhyme; example, p.103.), prophecy, narrative,

Infer—to draw a conclusion by reasoning **Context**—words before or after a term or concept that influence its meaning **Genre** ["zhon-ruh"]—here, a category of language arts with a particular form, content, etc. **Narrative**—story **Doctrine**—a teaching **Reproof**—scolding or gentle criticism **Parable**—a very short story for teaching a truth **Lyrics**—song words

doctrine, reproof, parables, lyrics, wisdom and so forth. Accordingly, interpret historical events as facts, not merely as fictional events that represent spiritual truths as you would for events in parables.

10. Recognize and interpret figures of speech, including idioms, similes, metaphors, personification and symbolism, by the intended literal meaning of the analogy rather than the unintended literal meaning of the words. (Learn more at https://biblical studies.org.uk/article_idioms.html, etc.)

11. Recognize and accordingly interpret literary devices such as allusion, flashback, foreshadowing (prophetic), hyperbole, irony, sarcasm and stereotyping.

12. Use other Scriptures to interpret Scripture. Be sure to interpret Scriptures so they agree with the whole of Scripture.

13. First find the one original meaning intended for and understandable by the original recipient or audience.

14. Consider the author's point of view such as the author's cultural, historical, geographical, religious and situational context.

15. Consider the author's purpose such as to encourage, inform, direct or correct.

16. Make inferences only from statements previously established as obvious and proven, rather than from assumptions.

17. Make inferences with logical reasoning.

A. Read *out of God's Word* what it *does say* rather than read *into* God's Word what you *hope* it says. Draw conclusions from Bible evidence; do not interpret the Bible with your own or outside-like accepted science-ideas.

B. Use the three basic laws of logic about *things considered at the same time in the same way*

Figure of speech—expression with words not used in their normal meaning or way to suggest an image or special effect **Literal**—normal meaning of words **Analogy**—similarity, comparison **Idiom**—an expression using words that do not have their normal meaning (couch potato) **Similes**—comparison using *like* or *as* **Metaphor**—words used to represent something as a likeness rather than literally. (God is a *shield*.) **Personification**—giving human qualities to nonhuman things. (Trees *clap their hands*.) **Symbolism**—using one thing to represent another (A cross represents Christ's crucifixion.) **Literary device**—writing technique (examples follow) **Allusion**—an indirect reference to call something to mind **Flashback**—a scene previous to the current scene inserted in the current scene **Foreshadow** (prophecy)—to show beforehand **Hyperbole**, [high-per-buh-lee]—obvious, purposeful exaggeration **Irony**—an indication of something contrary to what is expected **Sarcasm**—hurtful or bitter irony **Stereotyping**—classifying all in a category as being typical instead of individualistic **Point of view**—standpoint for taking a position or opinion **Inference**—a conclusion reasoned from evidence

1. Law of Identity—Everything is what it is. Figs are figs, not birds. Definitions should be well-established to promote understanding.

2. Law of Non-Contradiction—No statement can be both true and false. Of two contradictory statements, at most one is true, and both could be false.

3. Law of the Excluded Middle—Every statement must be either true or its contradiction must be true—no middle position. Example: If you start with *Jesus is God*, its contradiction is *Jesus is not God*. *Jesus is half God* is a middle position that is not accepted as logical here. (Note that *Jesus is God* does not logically contradict *Jesus is man* any more than *Chickens are food makers [eggs]* contradicts *Chickens are food [meat]*).

C. Seek four descriptions regarding logical inferences from Scripture reflected by the principles here:

1. Consistent—No inferences contradict any Scriptures

2. Valid—No false inferences from the Scriptures

3. Complete—Provable from the whole of Scripture

4. Sound (consistent, valid and complete)—Provable, logical reasoning from the whole of Scripture

D. Avoid errors in thinking called informal fallacies.

Informal fallacies are thinking errors unrelated to the form of the argument as are *formal fallacies*. They are important to know! Search “informal fallacies list” online.

For instance, **Using an Example as Evidence**—Do not try to prove a doctrine or practice from an example in Scripture. Another example you haven’t thought of or a teaching may contradict your conclusion. (Examples are for improving understanding rather than for proof.)

E. Know the three reasons for misunderstanding:

1. using **different definitions**

2. thinking with **different information**

3. having with **different values**

18. Accept what the Scriptures say before teachings and traditions which cannot be confirmed in Scripture. Use only the Scriptures to determine truth and necessary practice.

Col 2:8 - Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Act 17:11 - These [*Berean Jews*] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

19. Accept all beliefs and practices directed by the New Testament because the entire New Testament is the New Covenant that God made with us for the entire Church Age.

1Cor 13:8-10 HCSB/CSB - Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for languages, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when the perfect comes [*eternity with Jesus on the new earth in glorified bodies*], the partial will come to an end.

20. Seek to understand how each passage relates to Jesus Christ in God's plan of redemption through the ages. See the whole of the Scriptures as one unfolding story with progressive revelation until the fulfillment of all prophecy and the perfection of being with Jesus on the eternal new earth.

21. Learn the Biblical time concept and related Scriptural typology (shadows, analogies, allegories, parables) that both foreshadow future/prophetic fulfillments and tie the 66 books of the Bible together. These concepts are essential for interpreting prophecy.

- The Biblical time concept is not an abstract, progressing, straight timeline *dimension* with unrelated events that “happen” by chance, human will, or cause and effect, but rather a *recycled series of related events making a story* that God foreknows and “brings to pass.” These events can be repeated in a framework of hours, days, weeks, months, years, *shabua* (7 year periods), jubilees (50 year periods) and millennia (1,000 year periods) in the way a clock repeats seconds, minutes, hours and half-days.

Sometimes these events are cast in types (templates with their related themes, characters and events) that foreshadow the ultimate fulfillment, as Joseph typifies Jesus in many ways and as an abomination of desolation will come to a third temple. Because the Lord is the beginning and the end (**Rev 1:8**) He knows the end from the beginning (**Isa 46:10**)!

The Hebrews consider the importance and the connection of events more than the chronological order of events. Prophecies may have a double (or more) reference. The Feasts (*moedim*, plural, set, divine appointments) of the Lord from **Lev 23** that are celebrated yearly as commemorations of historic events for Israel are also rehearsals of prophecies divinely appointed for Messiah. For example, the Law was given to Moses on the stone tablets on the same day of the year the Law was written “in fleshy tables of the heart” (**2Cor 3:3**) by the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost. You can see why “history is prophecy” because “history repeats itself.”

- **Ecc 1:9** The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Typology—the study of types and symbols **Shadow**—an image representing an object instead of the object itself **Analogy**—similarity of two things in an important way (Jesus was analogous to Moses because He also is a deliverer from bondage.) **Allegories**—stories with characters or events as symbols for truths or other ideas (example: parables)

God's prophetic calendar, also called the Creation calendar is based on 360 days. This lunar (moon-based) calendar of 360 days has twelve 30-day months ("moonths"). The months and days of the month are numbered rather than named, as in the 5th Day of the 3rd Month. The year begins with the first visible crescent new moon nearest the spring equinox. A month is added as needed for "leap years" so that in 40 years it yields a year equal to the solar year of 365.242 days.

- The first day of the year (**Exo 12:1-3**) was the day He had His people set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation in the wilderness (**Exo 29:44-46**) and the day Yeshua/Jesus was born (tabernacled among us, **Heb 9:11**) See The Real Birth Date of Jesus.). This day was used to count the years of the reigns of kings.
- The Jews adopted for their civil year the Babylonian New Year's Day, (on or near *Rosh Hashanah* on your calendar) that coincided with the Feast of Trumpets on the First Day of the Seventh Month. This day is said to be the sixth creation day when Adam and Eve were created and so the birthday of the world.
- God defined a day as being from evening to evening (**Gen 1:5**).
- God has a way of compressing related events into a single prophetic declaration such as in **Isa 61:1** first coming - **2b** second coming.
- God compresses longer prophetic times into shorter-length terms:
 1. A day for a year (**Num 14:34, Eze 4**)
 2. A week for a *shabua*, a period of seven: 7 days (**Gen 2:2**), 7 weeks (**Lev 23:15,16**), 7 months (**Exo 12:2**), 7 years (**Gen 29:27-28, Lev 25, Dan 9:24**), 7 millennia (until eternity starts).
 3. A year for a jubilee/50 years (**Gen 6:3** 120 years as individuals, 120 jubilees [120 x 50 = 6000] as humanity before rescue)
 4. A day for 1,000 years (**2Pet 3:8**, 7 literal creation days repeating as 7,000 years until eternity.)
- Learn more by searching "Biblical types and shadows" online.
 - **Col 2:16-17** 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday [*feasts of the Lord*], or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

To know God and avoid merely gaining head knowledge about Him, learn in continual prayer. This is a relationship, so ask—don't wonder—then let the Holy Spirit open the living book to you so you experience Jesus living in and through you as you follow Him and use these principles.

