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Photo by Peter Schmidt Haltern

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Just remember the three main points

Overview, Word Studies and Layers

or **Owl** for short.

Layers

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Introduction

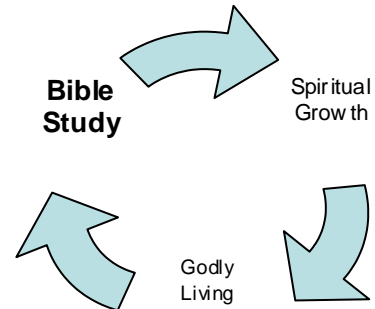
Hi! How are you doing? I'm the writer implanted here in this paper, waiting to help you out. I did not make this like a lecture or thesis, but like a conversation. I hope this style will help you greatly. As you read, imagine a person asking you this question, take a journey with me. For the entire study I use the King James translation.

☺ *I'll put **bold print and this smiley face** to show what you might be thinking. When you see an italicized part like this, it's me talking to you.*

How is this paper set up?

This paper is the first part in a three-part series: Bible Study, Spiritual Growth, and Godly Living.

The series is based on a trinity because God is a trinity and he made man with a trinity nature also.



1John 5:7 “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

Genesis 1:26 “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

The universe is also based on many trinities. Atoms are trinities; they are made of protons, neutrons and electrons. The basic necessities of life are also a trinity. Every animal has to eat, have water to live and needs to breath. Even Earth itself is made of a trinity in its nature because it contains water, land, and atmosphere.

There are many other examples of this in nature. Can you think of any others?

How are you a trinity?
A. He, she, and it
B. Mind, body, and spirit
C. Good, bad, and ugly
D. Me, myself, and I

Why are you a trinity?
A Because God said so
B Because God made us in his image
C I am not a trinity
D I don't know what I am

Answer box

Answer Box

Spiritual Pop Test

Do you talk to your dog or cat more than you talk to God?
 Do you ever study the Bible outside of church?
 Are you happy with your life?
 Do you live a life pure of addictions?

Yes	No
Yes	No
Yes	No
Yes	No

1 Thessalonians 5: 17 “**Pray without ceasing.**” Shouldn't we at least give the same courtesy to God we give to our pets?

2 Timothy 2:15 tells us “**Study to show thyself approved.**” God honors those who honor his Word.

Nehemiah 8:10 “**for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**” The child of God has a source for joy and peace from God.

Jesus said in **Matthew 5: 8**, “**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**”



Ok I admit it, my spiritual life is not what it should be. But what does it matter if I learn about God or not. Can't I just live my life the way I want? It's my life you know.

So why should we learn about God?

1. There is a God and one day you will face judgment.

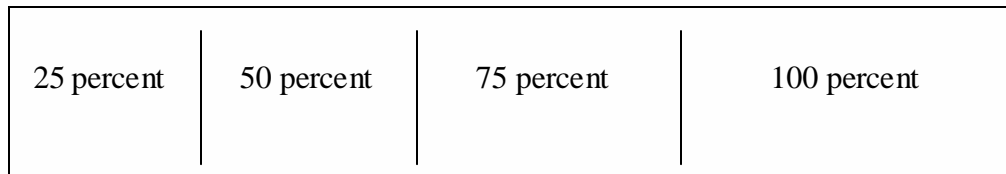
Hebrews 9:27 “and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”
And there will be no excuses:

Romans 1:20 “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

2. You need God.

Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Let’s say this box represents all knowledge. Color in an area that you think you know compared to all knowledge



It was very small, yea I get it. I don’t have the answers but he does.

3. The Bible is the only source for the true answers you need in life

2 Peter 1: 19 “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.”

We have more education, technology and medicine than any other time in history but we still live in a world of violence and pain. Only the Bible contains the answers we truly seek in life.

Would you like to be closer to God? Well? Would you?



Yes, I suppose so, I haven’t really thought much on it I guess.

Ok, fair enough. Take a look at this:

Lies about the purpose of life:

- *To make money or wealth*
- *Have fun, Entertainment, or Sex*
- *To gain power or fame*

Money won't buy you heaven or happiness. Entertainment won't bring you peace. Power or fame won't give you true joy. You've been lied to by Satan all your life.

*The problem with these goals is **enough is never enough.***

If the way you live decided your purpose in life, what would that purpose be?

A Recreation

B Working

C Relationships

D _____?

The Bible tells you the meaning of life.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Ecclesiastes 12:14 “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”



Hey man, why are you making me think this early on?

I just want you to realize how much you really need God in your life.

Wouldn't you like to read the Bible and really understand what it means?

ve you come to realize that there is more to life than just working and paying bills?

I invite you to begin this journey with me.

It's a journey worth taking.

You invest so much of your life in worldly things, come and learn how to invest in eternal things that won't fade away.

They say the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The first step for you is to realize where you are spiritually right now. I've scattered some pop tests though out a spiritual report card. No, I can't see in your mind but God knows the struggles you are going though and has given you the answers already in His Word.

Who can know the Bible?

Luke 8:10 says, “**Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they may not see and hearing they might not understand.**”

Only the saved person has been given the spiritual eyes and ears to be able to perceive the deeper, life changing lessons found in the Bible. Jesus said they would not be able to see, but he did not exclude them from hearing.

Romans 10:17 “**Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God**”.

The truth of the Bible must be taken by faith. In order to have the ability to understand all the principles of the Bible however; a person needs to be saved. When you receive his Word, God grants faith; this same faith is what you need to be saved, and faith is what God uses to guide you.

Saved people are given spiritual eyes and ears to understand the Bible. Are you saved? Quit making excuses or saying how good you are, I just need to know if you're saved.

How much of the Bible do you understand? _____

If you're not sure you're saved, here's how to be saved:

- 1. You need to realize Jesus died on the cross for your sins.**
 - 2. Repent of those sins, and ask him to save you.**
- It's that simple to be saved.**



Why should I study the Bible? That seems like a lot of work.

That's a fair question. The Bible is God's instructions on how to deal with all the problems in life, and it's easier than you think.

The Bible is like a ruler that sets the standard for all other measurements.



Photo by Michael Youngblood

With this ruler a straight line can be drawn. This line is the perfect will and standards of God. All lines that are not straight can be measured and seen for what they are by this ruler's edge. All other lines are the philosophies and moral codes that most people in the world believe. These jumbled up wavy lines do not match the perfect line set forth by the Bible. It is our responsibility to reach out to those who live by other beliefs and show them the perfect standards of God.

Matthew 28:19 “go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”



If the Bible is so great, why don't more people follow it?

That's a great question. Here are some reasons people will not follow the Bible:

Excuses why people don't study the Bible



- **Your line is judging my line.** People say we are judging them by telling them about the Bible, but we are simply showing the straight line for what it is.

Hebrews 4: 12 “ For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

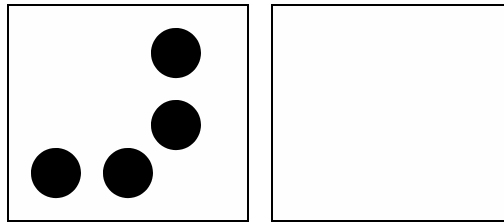
A mirror does not judge you when you use it. It is a tool which you can use to make improvements in yourself. It is not the Christian who is judging a person life; it is Gods Word which convicts them of their sins.

Which philosophy best suits you?

- If it feels good do it
- Nothing really matters
- Do unto others before they do unto you
- If your not first then your last
- In everything find the balance

Answer box

- **All lines lead to the same place.** Many people think that they can get to heaven with any belief, but Jesus says in **John 14:6**. **“I am the way the truth and the life, no one cometh unto the Father but by me.”** There is one and only one way to heaven.



Arrange these dots into a square shape. There are many ways to arrange the dots. But only one pattern for them to form a square shape. There is only one truth, and one way to the truth.

- **There is no absolute line.** Some people believe there is no absolute truth. The Bible is the absolute truth which they are denying. Some people say there is no true standard for living, but the Word of God is the one true standard for all people.

2 Peter 3:3 “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.”

2 Peter 3:5 “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.”



- **Your line is old fashioned.** Some people say the Bible is obsolete. **Psalms 119:160 “Thy word is true from the beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.”**

Photo of Betsy Burns of Vivian la
Photo by Michael Youngblood

Like the elderly, Christians’ often get accused of being old fashioned. The wisdom gained by age never really goes out of date; neither does the wisdom of the Word.

Each of these tools basic design is thousands of years old.
A chisel
B hammer
C saw horse
D none of the above
Which one is so out of date, and is no longer useful?

Answer box

The world faces the same problems today as two thousand years ago. War, violence, crime and death as well as many other subjects are discussed in the Word of God. The Bible has the answers for all the worlds' problems.

- **You can make your line straight on your own.** Some people think that because they are a good person, they don't need the Bible or God. Some also think their good works will get them to heaven. The Bible says in **Romans 3:10** "**There is none righteous no not one.**"

From which of these diseases can you save yourself?	Answer box
A Heart attack B Cancer C Brain tumor	<input type="text"/>
<p>If you cannot save yourself from a physical ailment which you can see, you certainly cannot save yourself from sin in your spirit that you cannot see.</p>	

- **None of the lines really exist.** Some people claim we don't really exist and we should not worry about the after life or the consequences of our actions. These people will be very surprised the day they have to face God.

Hebrews 9:27 "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

If someone broke into your house and stole all your possessions, would you be angry?

Yes	No
-----	----

If we did not really exist why would it matter?

- **As long as your line is more straight than curvy you're doing ok.** Some people think that as long as your good works outweigh your bad works, God will let you into heaven. The Bible says, in **Isaiah 64: 6** "**But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;**"

No amount of church attendance, Bible study, or any other good works will get you into heaven.

If you had a gallon of clean water, how much sewage could be in the container with it and you still drink it?

- A Half the gallon
- B One cups worth
- C One spoonful
- D None at all

Answer box

How pure is your life?

Pop Quiz #2

Have you ever used an excuse of any kind not to serve God? Yes ___ No ___

How does your life compare to how the Bible says live? Close ___ Not close ___

Do you have any addictions or habits God would not like? Yes ___ No ___

The Purpose of the Bible

Have you ever had to stumble along in the dark, not knowing what you might trip on or step into? It can be frustrating at best and dangerous at worst. Let us travel in the dark no longer.

Psalms 119: 105 “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”



As a lamp, the Word shows a person where they are stepping. As a light unto your path the Word shows the direction you need to go.

So you're saying the Bible is for me. I always thought I was doing God a favor by studying, praying or going to church.

For the same reason you would read an instruction manual to a new electronic item, you need to read the Bible.

Our command to study the Bible

Let's look at 2 Timothy 2:15

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

- **Study** = is a command not a request
- **To show thyself approved** = give evidence for
- **A workman** = don't be lazy; anything worth doing takes work
- **Needth not to be ashamed** = come without being embarrassed before God and man
- **Rightly dividing** = knowing the correct interpretation- going through the layers
- **The Word of truth** = it's true because God said it.

We are to study to give evidence that we are saved. It allows us to work for God without shame, also to correctly interpret God's Word. Restate this verse in your own words

What we are to learn from the Bible:

Let's look at Proverbs 1:2-3

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding.

- **To know** = understand
- **Wisdom** = ability to apply knowledge; skillful
- **And instruction** = discipline and chastisement
- **To perceive** = means to separate something into various pieces or layers
- **The words of understanding** = to see the whole picture

God wants us to understand how to be skillful and how to be self-disciplined. He also wants us to recognize the deeper meanings of his message.

Which are you? Disciplined_____Non disciplined_____

Proverbs 1:3

Proverbs 1:3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity.

- **To receive** - to take in or accept
- **The instruction** = means chastisement, discipline, correction, rebuke
- **Of wisdom** = intelligence or being smart. It teaches us how to be smart enough to recognize sin in our life.
- **Justice** is that which is right; moral laws; it is the basics of right and wrong. Even people who do not go to church or don't know anything of the Bible, understand some basic moral laws like stealing and murder are wrong.
- **And judgment** is receiving the penalties for our mistakes. We have to live with the consequences of our actions.
- **And equity** = that which is equal and fair. When we do that which is not fair, eventually it comes back to haunt us.

In the original language, the words for *wisdom* are similar but **different** in proverbs 1:2-3



What does that verse mean?

It means when we read the Bible, we learn lessons from others mistakes and victories. We gain Godly wisdom and we learn to be fair and just.

<p>True or false</p> <p>I am fair at work. ___pay all my debts. ___I never cheat___</p>
--

The message of the Bible is to show us the self discipline that comes from:

- Being wise enough to recognize mistakes
- The lessons learned from moral laws
- Having to live with the consequences of our actions
- Seeing the effect of Godly verses ungodly lifestyle



Boy do I fall short. Maybe I'm not good enough or smart enough.

Studying the Bible will shape you to be Godly and wiser.

Proverbs 1:4

Proverbs 1:4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

- **To give subtilty to the simple** = is the ability to plan ahead, giving wisdom to the simple minded.
- **To the young man knowledge** = awareness, recognizing of things that a person has not experienced before. You might never have been hit by a train but you know you would not like the results.
- **And discretion** = invention and planning.

You can have a desire to do something but if you don't know how to do it, desire alone won't work. You need the knowledge.

First of all the Bible was given in layers.

Study the Bible like an archeologist studies the things he finds in the earth.

He knows that if he finds items in one layer, there could be other items in deeper layers.

Name and explain several things you have done and did not plan well

1

2

3

What were the results of these badly planned things? _____

Scripture will answer one or more of these questions:

Overview-

- **Sequence** = in what order it happened
- **Context** = why it happened
- **Scripture references** = how something similar happened
- **Thought flow** = how it affects other subjects

Word study

- **Language search** = How the meaning of particular words affect the application.
- **Command** = what to do about it

Layers

- **Principle** = what is the nature of the thing
- **Example** = how it happened before
- **Applications** = how to put it into practice in your life



That's a lot of points to remember!

*Just remember the three main points: **Overview**, **Word study** and **Layers**, or **OWL** for short.*

Study preparation

Before you get into deeper parts of study, it helps to start off with a basic understanding of the sequence of events. For longer passages this is especially important. Here are some questions to ask:

Who is present?

Where is the action taking place?

What is happening?

Why is this happening?

When did this happen?

How did it happen?

What if you knew Joseph went to prison but didn't know why? What if you knew the animals got on the ark but not why? Or that Jesus was beaten but not why it happened? You would be missing half the story wouldn't you? How much are you missing from other stories because you don't know the **why** behind the **what**? Don't be surprised if you get ideas or realizations before you get to a particular step.



Yeah, I have seen some Bible stories before but did not know the whole story. Maybe that is why it didn't make sense at the time.

Don't forget to ask those questions: who, what, where, when and why.

The main helpful tools in study are:

- A good study Bible
- A concordance
- A notebook and paper and pen
- A Bible timeline
- A Bible dictionary



What do you call a good study Bible? Photo by Michael Youngblood

One of my favorites is the Thomson Chain Reference Bible but there are many others to choose from. Ask an employee at any Christian book store for help with choosing one that is right for you.



OK, so what is a concordance? Sounds like a Mexican dish or something.

It's a book that lists biblical words in alphabetical order, so you can look up Bible verses easier.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when studying:

1. Memorizing a passage word for word is a great goal; however, it is a better goal to know more passages even if you don't know it word for word. This is because if you know at least one key word in a passage, it is a simple matter of a concordance search to find what you seek.
2. It is better to know the book and chapter than the verse number
3. God doesn't stutter, so if two verses seem to repeat almost the same message, God has used it to emphasis its importance.
4. The Bible has no contradictions. If two passages seem opposed to each other, go back and look at the root words that are given, or the context of the passage. (We will discuss this in detail later.)

How many of the study tools do you have? All ___ some ___ none ___



So you're saying don't get hung up on one verse, get to know the whole passage and the verse will be easier to understand.

That's exactly what I'm saying!

Here is an example of the way one study might precede.

While studying the judgment of Egypt, you realize that Israel was mostly unaffected by the judgments put on the Egyptian people. Then you remember that Lot was taken out of Sodom and that Noah was kept from the flood. At some point, God is going to come get us also.

There are many cases in which God chose to protect His people from a coming judgment. This evidence gives case for the pre-tribulation rapture.



So I might start with one idea, and end up on another subject entirely.

Yes! Sometimes God gives you an answer to a question you haven't even asked yet.

The first area we will look at is an overview of a passage. A passage can be studied easily in this order. Each step will lend information to help the next step. Though you can do any step at any

time you may miss out on beneficial information or a realization you would have gained going in relative order.

Overview:

- Sequence
- Context
- Scripture reference
- Thought flow

In this study we will explore two basic kinds of reasoning: deductive and inductive. **Deductive** is going from general to specific while **inductive** is taking the specific and categorizing it to the general. Scientist, most of the time, have to take the specific to find the general. But Christians have the Bible as our guide. God's wonderful Word tells of the principles that rule both the spiritual and physical realms.

Deductive would say all people eat (general),
Therefore you must have to eat eventually (specific).

Inductive says I see you eating (specific),
Therefore all people must need to eat (general).

In **deductive** reasoning you are looking at known relationships and figuring out the smaller details. With **inductive** you are looking at the details to figuring out the overall relationship.

Identify the following as inductive or deductive

All people sin_____	The wages of sin is death_____
The gift of God is eternal life_____	Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap_____

Overview

Chapter One Sequencing

Sequencing is simply putting things in order.

Why is an organized pattern important?

If you were going to put many items in a room, would you simply throw everything in one big pile, or would you have boxes and shelves in which to store those items? Our minds are like the room, and sequencing is like the boxes and shelves used for storage.

If you don't know the sequence of an event, anything you learn will simply be in a disorganized pile of bits and pieces of information which is mostly useless. This is one of the most common reasons people get so easily discouraged from studying the Bible. By sequencing out a passage, you are organizing what you have studied into a useful form. Sequencing is also a helpful step for other areas of study. There is no better source to learn from than the Bible and the first step in that learning is sequencing.



A messy room is like messy mind, yea sounds like mine alright.
Get a notebook for sequencing so you can look back on notes later.

- In Sequencing, you write down the main actions and statements of a passage to better understand the events and patterns.

Sequencing

You can sequence things in order of:

- Actions
- phrases
- Events
- any listing of persons, items, or things

You already know how to sequence; you just may not realize it.
Which one of these is in the right order?

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



The second one.
See that was easy. Let's try another one.

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