

Sermon Title: Study for Life**Sermon Text:** 2 Timothy 3:14-17, Psalm 119:1-20**Additional Scriptures:** Luke 1:1-4, Proverbs 29:18, Psalm 81:12, Galatians 6:7, Proverbs 22:17-19, Psalm 141:4-5, Proverbs 1:29-31, Proverbs 12:1, Luke 11:13, 1 Corinthians 10:12, 1 Timothy 4:7-8, Psalm 119:24, Matthew 6:21, Psalm 119:147-148, James 1:22, Proverbs 2:1-11, Proverbs 3:1**Sermon Summary** - This message deals with the important spiritual discipline of study! The sermon begins with a brief look at the origin of Scripture. More information on this will be available at the end of the sermon notes. We exercise the discipline of study with an eye towards application of God's Word in our lives. With this in mind, four stages of study are explored: Discerning the reasons for study, Developing the desire to study, Discovering the art of study, and Doing is the result of study. In other words, before you can apply Scripture you've got to know it. Before you can know it you've got to read it. Before you read it you've got to want it. Before you want it you've got to understand why you need it.**Full Sermon Notes:**

"You gave Your life for us, And we are amazed - we stand in awe! For we have been changed by the power of the cross!" When you've been changed and eternally saved by what Jesus did on the cross, it's only natural that you would want to get to know your Savior better. It's only natural that you would want to study His every word and allow that salvation to work out into every area of your life! Let's pray and ask God to teach us how to study for life! Pray!

I wish I had five weeks to talk about today's discipline, study! It is that important! In fact, so important that I'll be including in this week's sermon notes on our website, extra information you can go to for additional study! There will be two main passages of Scripture this morning. One Old Testament and one New Testament. But before we get into the actual discipline of study we're going to talk a moment about the origin of Scripture. If we are to have credibility and intellectual honesty, we must know the origins of the book we claim to be the Word of God! It is the culture of our world today to question all authority. This is not always a bad thing. Our youth need to question things that are presented to them. There's a lot of lies out there and if we don't have a reasonable suspicion about the claims people make then we are vulnerable to being duped and deceived. Seeking and discovering truth is a noble enterprise! If we are going to reach this generation we must be able to give them the rationale for our faith. Peter said this...

1 Pet 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

Paul told young Timothy this in our text...

2 Timothy 3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,
2 Timothy 3:15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The late evangelist Billy Graham wrote...

"Millions of people today are searching for a reliable voice of authority. The Word of God is the only real authority we have. His Word sheds light on human nature, world problems, and human suffering. But beyond that, it clearly reveals the way to God. The message of the Bible is the message of Jesus Christ who said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'"

I couldn't agree more! It is sad to me that many institutions of higher learning in this nation, and many others, no longer view the Bible as an authority on anything. In fact it is sometimes ridiculed in the classroom. This past week, California public schools adopted a curriculum in which they will teach children that Christian missionaries commit "Theocide" against indigenous tribes, killing their gods and replacing them with Christianity." (City Journal March 10, 2021).

We must step up our prayers for our nation. A lot of radical changes are happening in our educational system. But I want to take you back to one of the most influential English professors of Yale University, William Lyon Phelps, who taught English there for 41 years, before retiring in 1933. He said this:

"I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible."

So true! I want you to know the more I learn both the content and origin of the Bible, the more convinced I am it is indeed the very Word of God to humanity. If you are going to exercise the spiritual discipline of study, it's important to know what you are studying. I want to first point out that the Bible is different from other religious writings in this major fact. Instead of a single book written by one person and claiming inspiration, it is a collection of books written by many authors over many years. The Bible contains 66 books, written by 40 authors, covering a period of approximately 1,600 years. It took over 700 years to build up the divine library of the Old Testament alone. The Old Testament is the story of God's revelation of Himself to the world through a nation called Israel. The New Testament is the story of God's revelation of Himself to the world through a man called Jesus. It is interesting that the art of writing was well established when Jesus came to the earth. However, for 30 years or so after Jesus ascended back to heaven, His teachings and ministry were handed down orally through stories from the eyewitness accounts of His disciples, who were "living books!" But the disciples began to age and there needed to be a way to make sure the message of Christ continued to spread. So they began writing things down. There's at least three main reasons to trust the reliability of the original oral telling of the Gospels...

1. The quality of ancient memory was far superior to our memory today. They did not have the convenience of Libraries, note pads, I-pads, computers, or Google. If they didn't commit it to memory, it was gone for good.

2. The life, stories and teaching of Jesus were constantly being told and retold. It has been said: "For the material of the life and teaching of Jesus, we are not dependent on single individuals: we are dependent on the memory of the Church."

3. Because of the familiarity of the rules of oral tradition. Bible Scholar William Barclay states: "any deviation from the known and loved form of the story is at once noted, and correction and retelling are at once demanded."

Listen to the words of Luke...

Luke 1:1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,

Luke 1:2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

Luke 1:3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

Luke 1:4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

There's so much more on this, so I would encourage you to go to Northshorechurch.net and get the sermon notes with the additional notes this week. I have pages of information on the origin and reliability of Scripture. Now as we proceed with confidence that what we have in our hands is a very reliable and trustworthy source of God's Word to us, we have a big problem on our hands...

We must explain why we have a book we believe whole-heartedly to be the Word of God, yet many of us rarely read it, or truly study it and even fewer live it. In fact listen to the words of Brennan Manning...

"The greatest source of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips but deny him by their lifestyles. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable."

Why don't we read, study, meditate, memorize, embrace, follow, exercise and share the Word of God? Some are afraid the Scripture may expose areas of their life that are inconsistent or don't line up with God's Word! Some are simply too busy (care's of this world)! Some are just not interested in what God's Word has to say! Some are afraid of what God's Word might require of them! So what's the answer to all of these excuses? We must come to understand if we applied Scripture to our lives, it would be really good for us! But if we don't believe that or we fail to see through proper study how the Word of God applies to real life, we will miss the whole point. There are four practical stages that will move our study towards application. We will find these in both our New Testament passage in 2 Timothy and our Old Testament passage in Psalm 119. Let me say it like this:

Before you can apply Scripture you've got to know it. Before you can know it you've got to read it. Before you read it you've got to want it. Before you want it you've got to understand why you need it.

So let's look at stage one of the application process of study...

Stage 1

Discerning the Reasons for Study

The reasons to study the Word of God are numerous and should be somewhat obvious. The Word is truth, It guides, It protects, It teaches us about our relationship with God and with one another. You will notice in our New Testament text that the purpose of God's Word is two fold:

Soul Salvation
Life Salvation

Remember Paul told Timothy that the Word was given...

2 Tim 3:15 ...to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 3:17 ...so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work

When we study the Bible everything points to Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith, the Savior of our souls! And when we study the Bible we are pointed to the principles that can literally save our earthly lives!

Our Old Testament Text is found in Psalm 119 where we also see two related reasons to study God's Word: Avoidance of evil and Embracing the good!

We Study to Avoid Evil

Psa 119:1 Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD.

The only way to live a blameless life is to walk according to the law of the Lord. I'm not talking about earning your salvation! I'm talking about living the life an individual who is saved ought to live. In order to walk according to the Word of God you must know it. What happens if you don't know it? Proverbs says...

Prov 29:18 Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.

Without an understanding of God's Holy Word to us we are inclined to cast off restraint. That means anything goes. There are no boundaries. The depths to which we can descend are both

astonishing and tragic! Sometimes God is put into a position of having to say these very tragic words...

Psa 81:12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.

How many times in my ministry have I had to watch people suffer consequences of their refusal to listen to God's directives for their lives. Even saved people! Sometimes I want to reach out and help them, but when I tell them they need to bring their lives into alignment with God's principles, they are offended. All I can say is that God cannot and will not bless dis-obedience. It's as simple as not rewarding awful behavior. We don't reward our children's bad behavior, why should our Heavenly Father reward ours? And we must remember that while we can be forgiven for any sin, that does not take away the consequences of our sin! Scripture is clear on this...

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

But not only do we study God's Word to avoid evil, we study to embrace the good.

We Study to Embrace the Good

Psa 119:2 Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.

Embracing the good is all about seeking God with all your heart. We seek to do good because it honors God! Doing good blesses you and those around you! However, in order to do good by keeping His statutes, you must know His statutes. In order to know them you must study them. A statute is a written law, a rule, a precept. The Psalmist went on to say...

Psalm 119:4 You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.

Psalm 119:5 Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!

Psalm 119:6 Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.

Psalm 119:7 I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws.

Psalm 119:8 I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me.

Psalm 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

And talk about living according to God's Word, our New Testament Scripture explains why God's Word is so powerful to live by. Paul said...

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...

Teaching

The Word of God touches and teaches on all areas of life, if not directly, in principle. Family Relationships, Financial Responsibilities, Business Practices, Morality, Ethics. The writer of Proverbs 22 said...

Proverbs 22:17 Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach,

Proverbs 22:18 for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips.

Proverbs 22:19 So that your trust may be in the LORD, I teach you today, even you.

Rebuking

Sometimes the Word just needs to reach out and smack us!!!

Psalms 141:4 Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies.

Psalms 141:5 Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it...

The Lord's rebuke is always motivated by His love for us and His desire to turn us from potential disaster to the good! Rejecting God's rebuke is prideful and will result in tragedy.

Proverbs 1:29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD,

Proverbs 1:30 since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke,

Proverbs 1:31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.

Correcting

Sometimes we are not in blatant disobedience, but simply need guidance and correction. Now I know it's not a pleasant thing to be corrected. We don't like it. It goes against the grain. It hurts our human pride. Listen to God's Word on this...

Prov 12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.

I don't know anyone who doesn't need the corrective advice of the Word of God in their life. If you think you have it all together let me just share with you one of my favorite verses, in fact it's my life verse...

1 Corinthians 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

I still like the old King James version of this verse...

1 Corinthians 10:12 Beware ye that think ye stand lest ye fall!

And the writer of Proverbs put it this way...

Prov 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Training

We need spiritual training as much and even more than physical training. Without spiritual training all areas of our life suffer. Paul told Timothy in his first letter to him...

1 Timothy 4:7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.

1 Timothy 4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Now that we've discerned some of the reasons for study, let's look at stage 2 of the application process of study...

Stage 2 Developing the Desire to Study

Psa 119:10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

Psa 119:14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Psa 119:16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Psa 119:20 My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.

I seek, I rejoice, I delight, I am consumed...We talked about this last week, but what do you seek? What makes you rejoice? In what do you delight? What consumes your time, your energy, your resources? If you do not desire God's truth enough to seek it, rejoice in it, delight in it, and even be consumed with a longing for it, you will by default, seek after, rejoice, delight and be consumed by other things! Now I know what some of you might be thinking. This sounds radical and even border-line fanatical. Yep! You got it! It is!

Fanatic: a person filled with excessive and single-minded zeal

Before you judge my fanaticism, let me point out a few things to you. Human beings are created with an innate desire for purpose in life. And just in case you haven't noticed, the world is fanatical about a lot of things which can end up out of balance or even destructive. We've seen examples of this on the news even this week. Human beings are created with an innate desire for purpose in life. If we don't find that purpose in God's Word we will search for it somewhere else. You've got to come to the place where you say: "I'm tired of being lost, confused, miserable, hopeless, and without purpose!" If you're there I've got great news for you...being consumed with a passion for God's Word will lead you to embrace God's truths. Embracing God's truths will lead you to experience God's divine design for your life and it's better than anything the world can offer you! As you begin to experience the truth and reality of God's Word in your life you will get excited to discover more, to learn more and to apply more of it to your life. It's addictive in a good way, or, should I say, in a God way? The Psalmist puts it this way...

Psalms 119:24 Your statutes are my delight; they are my counsellors.

And we must not forget what Jesus said...

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

So you've got to discern why it's important to study God's Word and develop a desire to study God's Word. And what's one of the best ways to do that? We find this in stage 3 of the application process of study...

Stage 3 Discovering the Art of Study

I just talked to an artist friend of mine yesterday. He does some of the most amazing art I've ever seen. Every artist is different and has different styles and that's what makes them unique! When it comes to studying the Bible there is not a one size fits all approach. There are certainly tried and proven methods, but your style and art of study will be unique to you. You bring different talents and personality traits to the table, so it's not as much about how you study, but your willingness to use your tools and develop your talent to study! You may be a morning person or a night person, so your study times will be different. The length of your study will also depend on your temperament and your situation in life. I had a friend who would get up at 4:00am and study until 9:00am. He enjoyed digging into the Greek language and super minute details. His name was Dan and I always wanted to be like Dan, but 4 and 5 hours of Greek study just didn't work for me! But I will tell you that I have grown in my love and passion for God's Word down through the years and it has revolutionized my life! In our text the Psalmist said...

Psalms 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalms 119:12 Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.

Psalms 119:13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

Psalms 119:14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Psalms 119:15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

Psalms 119:16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Did you notice the Psalmist talks about hiding God's Word in his heart? That's memorization! Learn it and even memorize it. That's so hard for me, but there are many tricks and techniques like: repetition, note cards, and listening to recordings. The main thing is to learn the principle and get the point in your heart!

Did you notice the Psalmist asked God to teach him? That's being teachable!

We must ask God to inspire our time of study with His Holy Spirit. Ask Him, he will answer. Jesus said...

Luke 11:13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Practically speaking, you must set aside some time. Whatever works for you. Set aside a place. Whatever works for you. We're going to have a whole message in a few weeks on the discipline of Solitude, which will help you with this.

Did you notice the Psalmist said he would recount the laws that come for the mouth of God? That's repetition! Think about them every chance you get. Look for applications as you go about your day. Ask yourself what Scripture applies to the situation you're facing right now, or the Scripture that applies to what some other person is going through who you're trying to help. What an exercise! It will help you remember God's Word!

Did you notice the Psalmist said he would meditate on God's precepts. What is meditation? We had a whole sermon on that just a few weeks ago.

meditate |'medə,tāt| verb

To think deeply or focus one's mind for a period of time

Foster defines meditation as...

"...the ability to hear God's voice and obey his word."

Meditation is where we concentrate on comprehension.

"Without comprehension a person will read words that are devoid of meaning. Church history teaches us that Christianity has been fraught with examples of those who knew the right words, but understood nothing of their real meaning or significance." Itm

Foster says...

"Reflection brings us to see things from God's perspective...Jesus speaks often of ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see. When we ponder the meaning of what we study, we come to hear and see in a new way."

Did you notice the Psalmist said he would not neglect God's Word? That's attentiveness! If we do not make and keep a commitment to study God's Word, neglect will happen. The Psalmist was committed to the Word...

Psa 119:147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word.

Psa 119:148 My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.

And what is the point to all this study and meditation?

Stage 4

Doing is the Result of Study

Psa 119:17 Do good to your servant, and I will live; I will obey your word.

Psa 119:18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

We must commit to a life of obedience. We must ask God to open our eyes so we can see the wonderful things in God's law and apply them to our daily lives. James said...

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

A few years ago our youth went on a mission trip where they helped low income people repair their homes. Similar to what our youth are going to be doing this summer. Here's what one of the crew chiefs said: "We are basically putting hands and feet to God's love!"

The response of the homeowner...

"They are such nice people, they really are...I was jumping for joy, saying, 'Thank you Jesus, what a blessing'"

As you apply The Word of God to your life on a daily basis you will discover that the Bible is the greatest book of wisdom ever written. You will discover that its promises are real and powerful. It will change your life and those around you.

A father once gave his son the following advice concerning the Word of God...

Prov 2:1 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,

Prov 2:2 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding,

Prov 2:3 and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding,

Prov 2:4 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure,

Prov 2:5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

Prov 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Prov 2:7 He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,

Prov 2:8 for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

Prov 2:9 Then you will understand what is right and just and fair--every good path.

Prov 2:10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

Prov 2:11 Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

Prov 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart...

Extra Notes on the origin and reliability of Scripture follow...

As I said in the message, the Bible is different from other religious writings in this major fact. Instead of a single book written by one person and claiming inspiration, it is a collection of books written by many authors over many years. The Bible contains 66 books, written by 40 authors, covering a period of approximately 1,600 years.

Origins of The Old Testament

It took over 700 years to build up the divine library of the Old testament. What does this say about the integrity of the Scriptures of the Old Testament? A lot! The Old Testament is the story of God's revelation of Himself to the world through a nation called Israel. The New Testament is the story of God's revelation of Himself to the world through a man called Jesus. The Old Testament is the Old Covenant or the Old will of God in regards to His people. The New Testament is the New Covenant or the New Will of God in regards to His people. One of the most intriguing facts of all is this, the Muslim faith is based on the writings of Mohammed, the Buddhist faith is based on the writings of Buddha, Confucianism is based on the writings of Confucius. Jesus didn't write a book. The only thing we know Jesus once wrote were a few words in the sand, and we don't know what He wrote. Others wrote their testimonies about Jesus. And while He never wrote a book, we do find these words about His life...

John 21:25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

How did the Bible come to be? How did the collection of 66 books happen? Let's look at the intriguing, and amazing way in which God gave us His Word. It was not a flippant process. It was not a popularity contest. It was not a "well it was on the national best seller list." Before something was allowed the status of Holy Scripture, it had to be tested and proven over time to be accurate and powerfully transforming. William Barclay, a Lecturer in New Testament Language and Literature at the University of Glasgow put it this way...

"We come to see quite clearly, when we study the formation of the Canon of Scripture, that the Bible and the books of the Bible came to be regarded as the inspired word of God, not because of any decision of any Synod or Council or committee or Church, but because in them men found God. The supremely important thing is not what men did to these books, but what these books did to men. The books, as the story plainly shows, became Scripture, because nothing could stop them doing so. Their unique inspiration was self-evidencing through their ability to meet the needs of the human heart especially in times when life was an agonizing thing."

We see this principle in a powerful way with the first book written and accepted as Holy Scripture: Deuteronomy. Written by Moses, Deuteronomy was intended to remind the people of God's law, His guidance on their journey to the promised land and His desire for a loving relationship with His children. However, the nation of Israel neglected this book. They forgot God's Holy Law. They forgot all He had done for them and they broke the covenant they had made with God. Deuteronomy was written shortly before Moses' death in 1406 b.c. but was so neglected that it was lost and not discovered for almost 800 years when a young king named

Josiah called on the nation to once again seek God in 621 b.c. Neglected 800 years! They were getting ready to do some renovations and cleaning of the temple, when they found the book. Listen to the impact its words had on the king...

2 Ki 22:10 Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

2 Ki 22:11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes.

2 Ki 22:12 He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant:

2 Ki 22:13 "Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us."

It was out of this pivotal experience in the life of Israel, that the written record of the law was first considered the sacred and revealed Word of God. After the discovery of Deuteronomy interest in the written word grew. There were two very similar records of Israel's Epic history that were brought together. Named J And E. In J God was called Jehovah and in E, God was called Elohim. Then there was the introduction of the Holiness Code found in Leviticus 17-26. Instructions for life! Later the religious practices of Israel began to be recorded and written down for posterity.

Deu 11:18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

Deu 11:19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Deu 11:20 Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates...

So the first part of the Old Testament is the five books of the law. Genesis, exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The second part of the Old Testament is the Prophets. One scholar stated that the law without the prophets is a body without the soul. The prophets interpreted and explained the law in practical ways. They used both history and prophecy to lead the people of Israel to understand God's divine purpose in giving the law in the first place. In history they could see the truth and reality of God's principles. In prophecy they were warned of the consequences of disobedience and promised the blessings of obedience. There are many reasons the books of the prophets were accepted as Sacred Scripture. They had existed for many generations and had been the devotional reading for devout Jews. During the dark days of exile in Babylon, the writings of the prophets had brought both conviction and comfort to the true believers. In other words, they had a proven track record of inspiration.

The third part of the Old Testament includes the writings. These books include the proverbs, Psalms, Job and others. These writings were also proven, tested and tried over time. They were written by such notables as Moses, King David, Samuel, Solomon and Ezra. Josephus, a

Jewish historian who wrote around a.d. 100, stated the following concerning the authenticity of these books...

“There is practical proof of the spirit in which we treat our Scriptures. For although so great an interval of time (since they were written) has now passed, not a soul has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable; and it is the instinct of every Jew, from the day of his birth, to consider these books as the teaching of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to lay down his life for them.”

Biblical Scholar William Barclay stated...

“Somewhere about a.d. 90 at Jamnia, which was also called Jabne, and which was near Jaffa and not far from the sea, an authoritative council of the Jewish Rabbis and scholars met, and at that council the books of the Old Testament were at last finally settled, and the number was laid down as we have it today...The divine library of the Old Testament had taken more than seven hundred years to assemble.”

This being said, Barclay reiterates his previous comments:

“The books of the Old Testament took their place as sacred Scripture, not because of the fiat or decision of any council or committee of the Church, but because history and experience had manifestly and effectively demonstrated them to be the word of God. These were the books in which men had met God in the times which tried men’s souls, and in which they had discovered the strength and the comfort of the Almighty. When any council gave any decision in regard to any book or books of the Old Testament, it was simply repeating and affirming that which experience had already proved. Such councils did not make these books into sacred Scripture and into the Word of God; they simply recorded the fact that men had already mightily found them so.”

Now you need to know a little about the procedure the Jewish people used when they were making copies of Scripture. Some believe Scripture to have been copied so many times that there must be major differences between the originals and what we have today.

Let me tell you just a little about the rules the Scribes used when copying...

Each copy had to be made on a brand new writing surface

Each copy had to be written in a certain number of columns of thirty-letters width, with a certain number of lines to each column

Each copy had to be written in a certain color and quality of ink. No letter could connect with or overlap another letter. The distance between each letter was measured. Every letter of every page and book was counted and compared against the original. The number of times each letter of the alphabet occurred in a book was counted and compared against the original. The middle letter of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament, the law) and the middle letter of the entire Hebrew Bible were computed and indicated in the text. If one of these calculations was incorrect, the copy was discarded.

The Psalmist said...

Psa 119:152 Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever.

The Prophet Isaiah said...

Isa 40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

Jesus made the following statement about the Word of God as found in the Old Testament law...

Mat 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

The New Testament is equally amazing in its origin. Suffice to say God has protected the integrity of His Word down through the ages. There are many ancient documents, but none are as accurately preserved and widely attested than the old and new testaments. I encourage you, I implore you, if you are looking into another religion, whether it be one of the Eastern religions or a major deviation from mainline Christianity, that you look long and hard before you discard the long accepted truths God has so painstakingly preserved and presented to us through The Holy Scripture of the Bible.

The Origins of The New Testament

It was over 300 years after Jesus died before we have a listing of the books of the New Testament as we have them today. Why this long process? Several reasons. The very first Christians were Jews. They had the books of the Old Testament. They were very satisfied with this because they completely understood Jesus to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the law.

Mat 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

And not only that, they saw Jesus all over the Old Testament. He was the suffering servant in Isaiah. He was the Redeemer , the hope of Israel, The Lamb of God, The coming King, The promised Messiah!

Reliable and trustworthy

As we come to this most important of spiritual disciplines, we must come to understand what it is that we study. If we are to have credibility and intellectual honesty, we must know the origins of the book we claim to be the Word of God! There are people who dedicate their lives to the study of such things. They are Textual Critics and Form Critics. These are literary sciences which utilize Linguistics, history, and archaeology.

One of the most intriguing aspects of a study of the Bible is this: It has been, is and always will be debated. Isn't it interesting that you rarely, if ever, see a special on Discovery Channel, Science Channel or any of the networks that calls into question whether or not the teachings of Buddha actually were his teachings, or whether or not the teachings of Mohammed were really his teachings, or Confucius or those of other religious leaders. Now there may be debate as to whether or not their teachings were correct, good, Godly, or a multitude of other things, but the authenticity of their writings are not generally questioned. Why? I think it boils down to this fact: Their writings were their own and like them or not their opinions were their opinions! There's really nothing to debate.

Jesus was different. He presented His teachings in a ministry that spanned only 3 1/2 years, but never wrote them down. Others gave testimony about what they heard Jesus teach and what they saw Jesus do. In fact it wasn't until His closest disciples were aging that they realized the need to write things down for others. Most scholars believe the gospels were written 70 ad - 90 ad. That would be about 30 years after the death of Jesus. In a moment I'll tell you why I think it was 30 years before things were written down. Let me first share this quote with you by Professor M. Montiero-Williams, who spent forty-two years studying Eastern books...

"Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table; but place your own Holy Bible on the right side--all by itself, all alone-- and with a wide gap between them. For ...there is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the east which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever.... a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged."

Josh McDowell and Bob Hosteller put it this way:

"The Bible is a miracle of literary accomplishment. Some books take a lifetime to write; the Bible was composed over a period of roughly sixteen hundred years. Some books require the collaboration of a team of scholars; the Bible is the work of more than forty authors from every walk of life, including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, and scholars. Portions of the Bible were written in the wilderness, in a dungeon, in a palace, in exile, in wartime and in peacetime. The Bible was written on three continents in three languages on hundreds of controversial subjects. It contains flashes of inspired poetry as well as detailed history, captivating biography, letters, memoirs, and prophetic writings. Yet this astoundingly diverse book speaks with astonishing continuity. There is one unfolding story from page one to 'The End'"(God's work to restore His relationship with humanity.)"

Again, I think it is intriguing the Bible is the one book that so many want to debate. That fact alone should tell you something! Let's examine the question of the reliability of the New Testament. When this comes up, there are many, many things that show the validity and reliability of New Testament Scripture. Once again Josh McDowell and Bob Hosteller have compiled some amazing info. Listen to their words...

"Two factors are most important in determining the reliability of a historical document: the number of manuscript copies in existence, and the time between when it was first written and

the oldest existing copy. When you compare the New Testament with other ancient writer's works, its reliability is immediately obvious."."

Another issue of reliability surfaces when people question the passing of 30 years after Jesus' death before the first Gospel was written. Why the wait? We must remember that during the early years after Jesus' death, the Old Testament was the Bible for Christians. The disciples compared His claims, actions and teachings to what they had studied in the Old Testament. They were Jews. They were very satisfied with using the Old Testament because they completely understood Jesus to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the law. They remembered the words of Jesus...

Mat 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

And when you read Isaiah 53, you begin to see how perfectly Jesus fulfilled the prophets...

Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isa 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Isa 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Isa 53:8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

Isa 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

The early followers of Jesus saw Jesus all over the Old Testament. Not only was He the Suffering Servant, He was the promised Messiah, The coming King, The Lamb of God, The redeemer and hope of Israel.

In the Jewish worship service, there were three sections:

Prayer and worship

Reading of Scripture

Teaching of the Law

The Christian Church embraced the second of these three in a powerful way...

1 Tim 4:13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Since they had the Scriptures of the Old Testament and they so clearly pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of those Scriptures, there was no hurry to write the gospels. Another reason for the wait was the fact that the Apostles were living books. They were eyewitnesses to the things Jesus had said. I guess if I could hear Peter talk about his experiences with Jesus, I would rather do that than read about it. And that's what was happening in the New Testament Church. Listen...

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Barclay wrote...

“ The first age of the Church was far more an age of the Spirit than an age of books. As Filson puts it: ‘God was writing the gospel on the hearts of the converts to the faith...’ The message was being demonstrated and passed on far more by persons than by pages in a book.”

One other reason the disciples had not written things down earlier was their expectation of the soon return of Jesus. They believed it would be during their lifetime. It wasn't long however, that the disciples began to age. There needed to be a way to make sure the message of Christ continued to spread. It is said that John wrote “when he realized that the day of his departure had come.” The “living books,” the ones who had been with Jesus, began to realize the urgency of recording their experiences with Jesus. Here's the question: Had the story of Jesus been distorted, elaborated, or falsified during this 30 year delay?

There's at least three main reasons to trust the reliability of the Gospels...

1. The quality of ancient memory was far superior to our memory today. They did not have the convenience of Libraries, note pads, computers, or even Google. If they didn't commit it to memory, it was gone for good.

2. The life, stories and teaching of Jesus were constantly being told and retold. “For the material of the life and teaching of Jesus, we are not dependent on single individuals: we are dependent on the memory of the Church.”

3. Because of the familiarity of the rules of oral tradition. Barclay states: “any deviation from the known and loved form of the story is at once noted, and correction and retelling are at once demanded.”

Listen to the words of Luke...

Luke 1:1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,

Luke 1:2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

Luke 1:3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

Luke 1:4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Once a book was written it had to undergo a rigorous test to be considered in the collection of Holy Scripture...

1. It had to be widely read among believers.
2. It had to be accepted as useful for life and for doctrine
3. It had to make its way into the public worship of the church.
4. It had to win acceptance not simply locally but throughout the whole Church
5. It had to be officially approved by the voice and decision of the Church.
6. It had to be apostolic. In other words, it had to be written by one of the apostles or an immediate and close associate of an apostle.

Some have asked about the books in the Catholic Bible that are not in the protestant Bible. They are called apocrypha. "Meaning "things that are hidden," apocrypha is applied to a collection of fifteen books written between about 200 B.C. and A.D. 100. These are not a part of the Old Testament but are valued by some for private study. The word "apocrypha" is not found in the Bible. Although never part of the Hebrew Scriptures, all fifteen apocryphal books except 2 Esdras appear in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. They were made a part of the official Latin Bible, the Vulgate." Holman Bible Dictionary.

One of the things that pushed the Church to decide formally what books were truly inspired was a heretic named Montanus, who appeared on the scene between a.d. 156-172. He began claiming divine inspiration. He had two "Prophetesses" and together they would go around foretelling future events. He made a statement that he was the Father and the Son and the Paraclete." At this, God moved on the church leaders and they decided that Scripture was closed. Once again I quote William Barclay: "Two of the greatest scholars of the early Church made deliberate investigations into the status of the various New Testament books in their day, and the results of these investigations have come down to us."

Origen A.D. 182-251 and Eusebius of Caesarea a.d. 270-340.

Other issues are sometimes brought under the guise of "Discrepancies." A few words on this from the Institute for Christian Apologetics, which is an arm N.O.B.T.S.

"The gospel authors, particularly John, did not always write chronologically, but neither did other ancient historians. Ancient biographers did not follow the same conventions as modern biographers. Exact quotations or verbatim transcripts are rare in ancient writings--summaries were standard--as long as they did not distort the original meaning. The folks who try to discredit the New Testament, many times spin the facts to make their case look good. Example -

Sometimes they will state that there are 138,000 words in the N.T. and around 300,000 variants in the N.T. That would seem to say there are more discrepancies than actual words. Here's the truth: There are over 5,700 Greek manuscripts (MSS) of the N.T. dating from the 2nd Century AD. There are over 10,000 Latin MSS, and many other languages dating from the 3rd century. A single misspelled word, or added/deleted article repeated in 1,200 mss counts as 1,200 variants. A fair accounting reveals only 1% of the New Testament Text is subject to serious question and much of these differences don't affect translation or meaning."

There are so many other things I could say to defend the accuracy and authenticity of the Bible as we have it today. However, I will close with a quote, a statement, and a Scripture.

The Quote...

"Without question the books which are Scripture and which are truly the Word of God have about them a self-evidencing quality. They carry their uniqueness on their face. To read them is to be conscious of being brought into the presence of God and truth and Jesus Christ in a unique way. They have always exercised, and still exercise, a quite unparalleled power upon the lives of men." William Barclay

The statement...

Read the Bible and let it speak for itself. If after reading the Bible you choose not to believe it to be the Word of God, I would thank you for giving it an honest look!

Here are some very important additional insights on learning the discipline of Study from another sermon I presented on this topic several years ago...

Many say they have tried to read the Bible but do not understand it. It's either too deep or confusing, or they fail to see the relevance for today. Paul told Timothy this...

2 Timothy 3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,

2 Timothy 3:15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

2 Timothy 4:4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Timothy 4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Okay, here's the question. How do we avoid false doctrine and myths? How do we keep our head in all situations. How do we discover sound doctrine? How do we properly study, interpret and apply the Bible to our lives? First of all our prayer should be "teach me Your word, Your truth, Your will, and Your ways! If we truly seek God's truth, we must be willing to read and study scriptures. If we are willing to read and study, we must learn how to study properly.

2 Tim 2:15 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.

How do we do this? We must seek three things...

The inspiration

The interpretation

The application

Seeking the Inspiration

Psa 143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

As such we must ask God to lead, teach, give understanding and inspire our reading and study of the Bible! The Bible is many things, it is history, poetry, songs, letters, but it is first and foremost a spiritual book. Now notice I said it is a spiritual book, not a book of magic. While it is a book filled with examples of God's supernatural activity in the lives of men and women, it is not a book of incantations! But sadly that is the way many try to use the Bible today. If you want something you just say the magic verse or verses, claim it, and you've got it! And many claim the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as they teach such things. How tragic. Paul told Timothy...

2 Tim 4:4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

In fact Paul's closing words to Timothy in his first letter said...

1 Tim 6:21 which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you.

God's Word is filled with Godly principles and with God's promises to those who are willing to exercise those principles in their lives. But it was never intended to be used for selfish gain and gratification! When we decide to study the Bible we must ask God to teach us His truth and to enlighten us by way of His Holy Spirit! Listen to Jesus' word to His disciples...

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

What Jesus said in this verse will determine whether or not you end up in truth or in terrible falsehood. Notice He said the Holy Spirit “will remind you of everything I have said to you.” The Holy Spirit will never teach you anything or ask you to do anything that contradicts what God’s Word has already said. Just because someone claims to be inspired by the Holy Spirit doesn’t necessarily mean they are. John gave this warning in his first letter...

1 John 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Some people, claiming inspiration of the Spirit, have led many to walk away from the truth and right into the lies of darkness. While few ever reach the catastrophic nature of the Jim Jones mass suicide where over 900 people died, there are thousands in this country today who are involved in cults of one kind or another. That is why it is critical that we seek the Holy Spirit’s guidance as we pursue the spiritual discipline of study. This leads us to the next important thing we must seek as we study...

Seeking the Interpretation

2 Tim 4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Keep your head. Some think when they read Scripture they’ve got to look for the hidden meaning or find some new formula that’s never been taught. This kind of thinking can lead to horrible mis-interpretation and mis-use of God’s Word. If you don’t use proper, proven, and tested methods of interpretation you can easily fall into this trap. Some, thinking themselves to be wise and committed to God, have prayed and told God they would literally do whatever He says and then they close their eyes, open the Bible and point their finger at a verse. There’s all kinds of problems with this kind of Bible study. Now I’m not saying you can’t just open the Bible and hear God speak to you. That happens all the time. You pick up the Bible and God has led you to just the right verse for what you needed that day! I’ve had that happen so many times in my life. When I was a young Christian, I went through a time of great doubt as to whether or not I was even saved. I got on my knees and asked God to show me in His Word the truth. I opened my Bible and God led me to read ...

Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:11 As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

Romans 10:12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

God's Word does speak in principle to whatever situation you may be facing. No matter what it is! The beautiful thing is that He has given us principles of interpretation to follow. Let's go back to a Scripture I mentioned a moment ago...

2 Tim 2:15 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.

First, we must seek to understand what a particular Scripture meant back then. In order to do this we must ask some questions. The big question is what did it mean back then? Always remember this: Scripture will never differ in principle from its original meaning. Never! Application may not be exactly the same, but the principles of God's Word are timeless. To discover what Scripture meant back then, we must do a little research and ask some other questions...

1. Who was the original writer?
2. Who was he writing to?
3. What type of literature did he use?
4. What was the context?
5. What was the content?

1. Who was the original writer?

We have already established our belief that God inspired the writers of the Bible to pen the words they wrote. However, I do not believe God put them in a trance and dictated to them word for word. Some do believe this, I don't. I believe God used their personalities and their experiences as a tool to communicate His Word.

"The fact that the revelation of which the Bible witnesses is both historically based and experientially given is what would be expected from the revelation of a personal God to personal beings who comprehend and act in a personal manner. Personal beings have experiences; functioning robots do not. The Bible is virtually the story of the great acts of God, a record of what God has done, a revelation through events -- events with definite dates and involving definite personal characters. God visits and meets His people, and a dynamic and personal fellowship is made possible." Dr. William Stevens

If we know who wrote a certain book, knowing a little about the person and character of that writer can aid your understanding of what God was trying to say.

2. Who was he writing to?

Was it Jewish exiles? Was it Gentiles who had no previous experience with the True God? Was it a group of Christians undergoing persecution? Background is important. What was the

situation? A little knowledge here can go a long way in helping you discern the underlying principles behind what a writer was trying to communicate.

3. What type of literature did he use?

Was it a poem, a song, a letter, a testimony, a record of history? Was it a parable? Was it literal or figurative? Let me give you an example. Jesus said...

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Matthew 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Was he being literal. Yes and no! He was using what is known as...

“Rabbinical Hyperbole”

Hyperbole - exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally

Does God want us to literally gouge out the eye? Let's read the verses one more time and look closely....

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Matthew 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

If the eye or the hand caused the sin, then, by all means, get rid of them. However, the hand and the eye aren't the cause, they simply follow the commands of the brain. If you take off the right hand there's still “old lefty” to deal with!! Jesus was teaching for us to get rid of the thoughts and the attitudes of selfishness that are the true cause of sin! It's internal spiritual surgery He's talking about. See how important proper interpretation is?

4. What was the context?

Historical context. writer, recipient, geographical location, time in history? Remember this: “A text can never mean what it never meant!” In other words, we start with what God originally meant, back then, and work our way to now. Literary context: Scripture verses were numbered many years after they were written to simplify our use of Scripture. Single verses are never to be taken out of their context. Remember a verse is a part of a chapter, which is part of a book, which is part of a Testament. This can affect meaning drastically. If you pull a verse out of its context, you can make the Bible say anything you want. And that is dangerous. If we want to rightfully interpret the Bible we must also ask...

5. What was the content?

This is the meat and potatoes! What is the concept or the principle that the writer was trying to communicate? What did this mean to the folks back then. What is the underlying principle? This is where it really gets fun. What was the writer saying and what does that mean for me today? How do I apply this amazing content to my life here and now?

What does it mean for me now?

That's the seeking application and that is the message we heard last week on Study for Life!

Let me end with this: if all this seems a little complicated, let me tell you, it's really not. You don't have to go to Bible college or seminary to properly interpret the Bible. In fact one New Testament scholar put it this way...

"The New Testament was not written by theologians; it was written by missionaries. It was not written by men who were in the position of a man writing a thesis in a study or in a library; it was written by men who had a message and who were desperately eager to communicate that message to the world at large...They were wrought out by men faced with an actual situation in which they had to find a way to communicate the gospel: and that gospel was not something for the scholars and the theological experts, it was something for the whole world." William Barclay

Here are some questions to ponder on the above notes...

1. Have you ever experienced a difficult Scripture that the Holy Spirit has helped you understand? If yes, explain what means God used to clarify things for you. John 14:26
2. Why is it so critical to understand the original meaning of a particular Scripture? Psalm 71:16-18 Proverbs 1:1-7
3. How critical to interpretation is an understanding of the type of literature used in a particular text? Matthew 5:29-30
4. Times are very different today from Bible times. What is it that transcends time and can still be applied today? Hebrews 13:7-8

Here are some questions to ponder on the origin and reliability of Scripture...

1. What part of the Bible's developmental history intrigues you the most? Why?
2. How can a better understanding of the origin of the Bible aid us in reaching this generation? 1 Peter 3:15
3. How does the origin of the Bible set it apart from other religious writings? 2 Peter 1:20-2:1 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5
4. Do you believe the record of Biblical truth as found in mainline translations can be trusted? Why or why not? Matthew 5:18
5. Do you believe the New Testament is a reliable source of truth for today? Why or why not?

6. The New Testament had its birth in the Old Testament. The Old Testament finds its fulfillment in the New Testament. What are some ways these facts indicate divine inspiration of Scripture?
Matthew 5:17 & Matthew 8:17

7. What do you think Paul meant when he said Scripture was “God-breathed”? 2 Timothy 3:16

8. How should an acceptance of the New Testament as truth impact the life of a believer?

James 1:22-25

Here are some questions on the sermon “Study for Life!”

1. God’s Word has been given to us for what purposes? 2 Timothy 3:15, Romans 15:4

2. Have you ever been reluctant to do Bible study because you knew it might expose behaviors or attitudes inconsistent with its teaching? Ephesians 5:8-11

3. Why is it so important that we have good study methods and practices when it comes to the Bible? 2 Timothy 2:15

4. What are some reasons you study the Bible?

5. Have there been times in your life when you had an increased desire to study God’s Word? Why? Psalm 17:5-9

6. What are some ways you’ve found effective for Bible study? Deuteronomy 6:5-9

7. Can you give examples of how God’s Word has been applied in your life? Share an example.
James 1:23-25