

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

The pastor, evangelist, Bible teacher, or simply a Christian who desires to know and serve the Lord better, can greatly benefit from being able to correctly interpret the Bible and then apply it in their lives and the lives of others. No one can apply God's word unless they know it and that begins with an accurate interpretation. God cannot bless His word that is incorrectly interpreted which makes biblical interpretation vital. He has not left us in the dark as to how to interpret His word. The Lord explains "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*" (2 Peter 1:20) Our Creator has given us a precise method that anyone can apply with a little understanding and effort.

The purpose of this book is to take the mystery out of interpreting the Bible and show God's method of interpretation. By applying God's principles of interpretation, a person develops the skills needed to rightly know what God has said. This is letting God interpret His revelation to us.

This book is the companion book to *Biblical Principles for Interpreting God's Word*. They have been used in several schools and colleges in their Biblical Interpretation courses. It is written on a level that anyone can understand and apply.



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Expository Bible Study Course

Cooper P. Abrams, III

Expository Bible Study Course

Lesson and Sermon Preparation



Cooper P. Abrams, III

EXPOSITORY BIBLE STUDY COURSE

**LESSON AND SERMON
PREPARATION**

By

Cooper P. Abrams, III

Disclaimer

The author of this work has quoted the writers of many articles and books. This does not mean that the author endorses or recommends the works of others. If the author quotes someone, it does not mean that he agrees with all of the author's tenets, statements, concepts, or words, whether in the work quoted or any other work of the author. There has been no attempt to alter the meaning of the quotes; and therefore, some of the quotes are long in order to give the entire sense of the passage.

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It is possible that some information within this study is not credited to its source. This was not intentional. This study began in 1980, as a Sunday School teacher training course at Calvary Baptist Church in King, North Carolina. Thus, the first material was in the form of study notes meant for teaching that class. The course proved to be well received and has been taught many times since. This provided the need for a more useful form of the notes for the students, and this began the formal compiling of this material in this study. This study has been revised many times over that past years. An attempt has been made to go back give credit to sources in the form of footnotes. However, some may have inadvertently been left out. If notified the oversight will be promptly corrected in future printings. Thank you for understanding.

Special thanks to:

My faithful wife, companion and friend,
Carolyn

SAMPLE

PAGES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	5
PREFACE	9
WHY USE THIS METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY? ..	9
PROCEDURES AND METHOD.....	13
The Objectives of the Expository Bible Study Method	15
The objectives of the method are:.....	15
The procedures of the method are:.....	16
Recommended Bible Study Helps:	16
CHAPTER ONE	19
EXPLANATION OF THE WORK SHEET	19
Introduction	19
OUR PRAYER SHOULD BE:	21
CHAPTER TWO.....	23
A GUIDE TO BIBLE STUDY HELPS.....	23
Where to Buy Study Helps and Reference Materials.....	23
A List of Study Helps and Reference Books	24
Bible Handbooks.....	24
Bible Dictionaries	26
A Concordance of the Bible	27
Word Study Books	29
Commentaries	30
Study Bibles.....	32

CHAPTER THREE	35
BEGINNING YOUR STUDY	35
To Begin:	35
STEP 1 CONTEXT	36
(1) Who is the Book Addressed to or Who is about?	37
(2) Who is the Chapter About or Addressed to?	40
(3) What is the Historical Situation of the Passage?	42
(4). What is the Major Subject?	43
(5) Who is the Author of the Book?	44
(6) Record any parallel references.	45
STEP 2 DEFINITION OF WORDS:	46
STEP 3 INFORMATION ON NAMES, CITIES, AND PLACES:	48
STEP 4 ACTION AND RESULT!	49
STEP 5 PRINCIPLES NOTED:	53
STEP 6 PROPOSITION (or APPLICATION).	58
STEP 7 & 8 HOW AND WHY:	59
STEP 7 HOW?	61
STEP 8 WHY?	62
STEP 9 YOUR OUTLINE:	63
CHAPTER FOUR	67
FOLLOWING IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOUR OUTLINE MIGHT LOOK LIKE:	67

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONCLUDING REMARKS:.....	73
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	75

SAMPLE

PAGES

SAMPLE

PAGES

PREFACE

WHY USE THIS METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY?

This course is a companion to the book “**Biblical Principles of Interpretation**” written by the author. This course presents a practical application of these principles.

Many books have been written on the subject of how to study the Bible. This method's value is that it teaches the expository method of studying Scripture, which focuses on an exegetical investigation of the Bible and shows the individual how to study the Word of God for himself.

The expository method of Bible study seeks to present truths, concepts and principles that are taught by a Scripture passage. God has given us His method of interpretation of His word. God method does not impose a meaning on a passage, but seeks the meaning from the words and gramma of the passage. The basis of true expository Bible study is a thorough "exegesis" of the passage. In exegesis, one seeks to investigate the literal meaning of each word of Scripture. The definition of each word is considered with its relationship to the other words in its context. ("context," refers to the verses before and after a verse and involves the environment, situation, and background in which you find a word or verse)

In using this method of Bible study, you will be researching and gathering material about passages of Scripture. This method will help you to develop a systematic plan to follow in studying the Bible. It centers on completing a work sheet where the information is recorded. In completing the Work Sheet, you will be amassing much information about the passage you are studying. All this accumulated information will help you to determine the correct meaning of a portion of Scripture. Knowing the meaning of a passage will enable you to discover the spiritual truths God wants revealed and their practical application in life.

At the heart of this study is the Biblical truth of the "verbal plenary inspiration" of Scripture. The doctrine of "verbal plenary inspiration" teaches that every word of Scripture is inspired by God. God used human writers who He directed through the Holy Spirit to record His Word. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they wrote what God wanted said without error. What they wrote in the original manuscripts was exactly what God wanted to say.

The Bible proclaims this truth in these passages:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

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PROCEDURES AND METHOD

The true child of God has a longing to know the Bible. He needs to learn how to study the Bible for himself. This is vital! Our philosophy of Biblical education today appears to be what could be called "spoon feeding." The believer depends on his pastor, Sunday School teacher, or writer of a book to feed him spiritually. However, preaching, teaching and reading books about the Bible should be only part of one's spiritual diet.

Each child of God, in addition to being taught by others, should be able to study the Bible and learn its principles for himself. Modern disciples of the Lord Jesus should be able to go to God's Word and spiritually feed themselves and be able to defend his convictions from Scripture.

We all should be students of the Bible, and hone our skills in the Word of God that we might be better instruments to reach others for Christ. God has commanded each of us to be Bible students and teachers. Our responsibility is to **KNOW** the Word ourselves, that we might be able to feed our own spiritual souls by feasting on the sincere meat of God's Word.

The love of God is the best motivation for the believer to follow Christ. This love comes from knowing God. We can only know Him from His Word, which is the Bible. This is the power of the expository method of Bible study. This method

teaches the pure Word of God as the Holy Spirit guides, inspires and nourishes us as we study.

The emphasis of expository Bible study is in verse by verse examination of the Word of God. By using this method, after your study is complete, the correct interpretation and application of the verses will become clearer. You will be less likely to impose YOUR meaning on the Scripture or a meaning that is not correct. You will be letting God interpret His Word, and you will understand what God truly said and meant.

As you read this material - pray, ask God for strength, and for wisdom. Then make a personal commitment to put the amount of time and dedication into this study that will allow God to shape you into a more useful servant.

Remember, this method is not easy or quick. It is not a short-cut to Bible training. It will require time. Before you begin, realize that this could be the turning point in your becoming a better, more skillful Bible student. It could have an eternal benefit in the souls and lives of the ones God sends your way!

All Christians are teachers. We teach at home, work and in daily routines of life. Some Christians have the privilege to teach from pulpits; some in classes such as Sunday School and in Bible Study Classes. No matter where you are teaching this method will be of help to you. (See 2 Timothy 4:2)

For those without formal college training this course can teach them how to study the Bible. It will help the pastor whose training has been limited to topical sermon preparation learn the expository method. The Sunday School teacher after learning this method of study will be better able to teach from the Bible and be less dependent on prepared lessons. It will teach the believer to feed himself from God's Word and become confident in their knowledge of the Bible.

This book is divided into two sections. Chapter One will instruct you in use of the Expository Work Sheet that will guide you step by step toward learning the expository method of Bible study. Chapter Two, will deal with the literal method of interpreting Scripture. It will teach the principles which are the basis of the expository method of Bible study.

The Objectives of the Expository Bible Study Method

This is a practical, hands on course designed to develop Bible Study skills by learning how to research expositively a verse or passage of Scripture.

The objectives of the method are:

1. To teach how to study and correctly interpret the Scriptures.

2. To teach how to develop a Sunday School lesson, devotional, sermon, or for personal study.
3. To become familiar with Bible study helps such as dictionaries, handbooks, and concordances.
4. To build confidence in one's ability to understand the Bible and to teach others.

The procedures of the method are:

1. The chief activity will be personal study and practice using the Work Sheet and course instructions to guide you.
2. You will be studying passages of Scripture in detail to decide what they are saying.
3. Practical hands-on use of Bible and Bible study helps will help build confidence.
4. You will learn how to start a good Bible reference library.

Recommended Bible Study Helps:

1. A Study or Reference Bible
2. A Bible Dictionary
3. A Bible Concordance
4. A Bible Handbook

PREFACE

5. Word Study Books.

(A detailed list of these books is found on pages 23-32)

May God richly bless you as you study.

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CHAPTER ONE

EXPLANATION OF THE WORK SHEET

Introduction

The Work Sheet is your guide to properly studying a passage of Scripture. If you follow the outline of the Work Sheet, your study will naturally develop. Do not omit any section. This course will refer to the product of your study as a lesson or sermon. This course's primary goal is to teach the expository method of Bible study. It is an added benefit that it also teaches how to prepare a Bible lesson or sermon. Sometimes lessons are one sided, being either all application or all technical information and background. This course will teach how to use both to develop a well-rounded lesson that will be interesting and easier to teach.

The main reason we teach and study is to make a practical application of Scriptures in our lives. Often in a lesson or sermon, the context, technical information, and background of a passage is ignored. The result is the true application is missed, because the passage is not fully understood. With a proper understanding and presentation of the context, technical information and background, often the passage usually teaches itself. It is interesting and more important,

if presents God's truth in a way that can be applied to our lives.

Another added benefit of this method is that it gives the teacher and Bible student confidence. When you stand before the class to teach or in your personal study of Scripture, you KNOW what the passage says and means! You know what God wants you to know.

Each step in the "Explanation of the Work sheet" corresponds numerically to the Work Sheet. The Work Sheet is a guide to lead you in fully examining the passage of Scripture you are studying. It may seem at first awkward, but as you continue to use it, you will begin to see its value. Remember this is not a short cut or quick method of Bible study - it requires time. Christ said, "Seek and you will find." This method of Bible study is for the "**seeker**" - who, by the way - will reap the blessings of being a "**finder**."

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee . . . I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. . . I will delight myself in thy statutes . . . I will not forget thy word." (Psalms 119:11, 15-16).

OUR PRAYER SHOULD BE:

*"Open thou mine eyes, that I may
behold wondrous things out of thy
Law" (Psalms. 119:18)*

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CHAPTER TWO

A GUIDE TO BIBLE STUDY HELPS

This course will use Bible Study helps in investigating various passages of Scripture. The following is a list of recommended reference helps and a brief description of each one. We are very fortunate to live in this age when we have so many valuable aids to Bible study. These books will be a good addition to your library.

Only a few of the study helps available are listed below. If you were to have these books as a beginning library, you would have an excellent start on building a useful library.

Do not be discouraged if you do not have all the reference books listed. If all you have now is a Reference Bible, you have a great resource available to you. It would be a good investment to purchase at least one book in each category listed below. In time, you might like to have several Bible handbooks, dictionaries or commentaries. Building a library is a lifetime endeavor.

Where to Buy Study Helps and Reference Materials

There are many sources for Christians books, including local Christian bookstores. At Christian

bookstores you will normally pay full retail price for the book. Compare the prices of several sources before you buy and look for sales. Buying used books, such as offered on Amazon.com will save you money. We need to be good stewards of the money God gives us to use. The following two companies consistently offer reference materials at reduced prices:

Amazon.com, Amazon Books,

<http://www.amazon.com/books-used-books-textbooks/b?node=283155>

Scripture Truth Book Company, P.O. Box 339,
Fincastle, VA 24090.

<http://www.scripturetruth.com/shop/custom.aspx?recid=1> - 540 992-1273

Christian Book Distributors, Box 3687,
Peabody, MA 01961-3687-

<http://www.christianbook.com/> .- 508 977-5000

A List of Study Helps and Reference Books

Bible Handbooks

Halley's Bible Handbook, Henry H. Halley,
Zondervan Publishing House

Unger's Bible Handbook, Merrill F. Unger,
Moody Press

A Bible Handbook is arranged according to the Books and Chapters of the Bible. It contains a wealth of information about the Bible. It includes, as the title page of Halley's Bible Handbook states, "A General View of the Bible, Heart thoughts of the Bible, Remarkable Archaeological Discoveries, Notes on Each of The Bible Books, Miscellaneous Bible Information, Notes on Obscure Passages, Related Historical Data, An Epitome of Church History, Suggestion on Church-Going."¹ This information is invaluable in understanding the historical situation of the Scripture you are investigating.

There are many pictures, charts and diagrams found throughout the handbook that greatly aids in understanding the historical situation of portions of Scripture. For example, the reference to Genesis 10-11, gives a great deal of information concerning Egyptian history, including the Egyptian dynasties, past wars, and chronology of the period. This

¹ **Error! Main Document Only.** Halley's Bible Handbook, by Henry H. Halley, Zondervan Publishing House, 1965, Title Page

background information will help you to understand the period of time between the Flood and Abraham.

Bible Dictionaries

Unger's Bible Dictionary, Merrill F. Unger, Moody Press, Chicago.

Zondervan's Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible, Merrill C. Tenney, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Herbert Lockyer, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Camden, New York.

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Chad Brand, Archie England and Charles W. Draper.

A Bible Dictionary is an alphabetical listing of all the major words found in the Bible with their meanings. A Bible Dictionary is more like an encyclopedia than just a simple word dictionary. For example: it will list all the proper names found in the Bible, with not only its pronunciation and meaning, but also will give information about the various persons in the Bible that had that name with related Scripture references. A Bible Dictionary will furnish information on such things as money, tools, customs, geography, cities, towns and countries. It will list each Book of the Bible with