

**CONFIDENT
LIVING IN LIGHT
OF
THE TRUTH**

**Foundations
for LIFE**

STU KINNIBURGH
with **DR. DAN HAYDEN**

*Foundations for Life, Confident Living In Light of the Truth by
Stu Kinniburgh and Dan Hayden*

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*Contact the author at stu@stukinniburgh.com for details or visit
www.stukinniburgh.com*

*For more information and additional teaching materials, go to
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Acknowledgement

This is my passion: to help Christians understand that they can know the truth of the Gospel with enough confidence that they can boldly go into their workplace, home, school, and yes, Church and talk about their faith. I grieve when good people share with excitement about some book they found or some speaker they heard who persuasively argues for a theology different from that of Scripture. The Bible compares us to sheep that have gone astray. It is not saying that we are *supposed* to go astray, only that we often do!! I want to help people stay on the right path, avoid the detours that confound us, and finish strong. Dan and I have served in ministry together for many years, and we share the desire to encourage Believers. That is why we are offering this book – to help you accomplish these goals. I'd like to thank some very special people that have guided me in preparing this material.

First, my wife, Jill, for her support over the years as I've developed this program – even to the point of taking a Foundations for Life class to help me polish the course material. She was a particularly demanding student, but she is a loving and supportive wife!

To Dan Hayden, my dear friend and co-laborer in the Faith. He has dedicated his life to knowing God and his Word and helping Believers to live victorious lives in Christ. There is not a more gifted Bible teacher on this planet. It is a blessing beyond measure that he would partner with me to create this material.

To Pastor Ken Gentzler, who developed a course called Equippers that I took while in my first staff position in a church. His systematic study of the main aspects of faith changed my life. When I completed the course, I not only knew what I believed, I understood *why* I believed. Ken graciously gave me his work to start the process of developing my own course that is culminated in this book. Where I am today Spiritually is largely a product of his support and investment in my life.

To Pastor Renaut van der Riet, a dear brother who encouraged me to develop and teach this material within his fellowship. He is a great example of pastors in the Church who place a priority on teaching, doctrine and truth.

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To John, Mandie, Brody and Rachel for the ideas and suggestions to help me communicate my thoughts more clearly.

Finally, thanks to the many students who have taken these classes and provided such wonderful feedback so that I could continue to refine the material for the next group of students.

One other thing -

I’ve heard it said that treasury agents don’t study counterfeit money, they study the real thing and then when they see a counterfeit bill, they know immediately that it departs from the genuine article. I honestly don’t know if that is true, but it makes sense because that is how we need to operate within the Christian Faith. I think there is value in knowing some of the arguments used against biblical truth and so I included some of them in this material, but I am more interested that you know the truth so that anything else clearly stands out. You may not remember every detail of the things you read in this book, but you will have a grasp on the big picture enough to avoid being led astray.

In His Grip,
Stu Kinniburgh

Introduction

DON'T SKIP THESE FIRST PAGES!! This information will help you as you work on the book. First, read the following excerpt from a speech by Josh McDowell printed in the *Christian Post* in 2010:

The faith of most Christians, even that of many pastors, will not stand up to intellectual scrutiny, according to renowned apologist Josh McDowell. He has asked hundreds of Christians and leaders why they see themselves as Christians. No one gave him an "intelligent" answer. He has asked over 4,000 pastors, leaders and parents why they believe the Bible is true. A mere six "came close to giving an intelligent answer," McDowell noted.

Ninety-five percent of Christians gave disappointing responses when asked why they believe Jesus is the Son of God. Asked why the Bible is true and historically reliable, Christians replied that it was what they had been taught by their church or parents. A common response that most Christians gave to both questions was that it is "what I believe." McDowell responded: "That's voodoo thinking. Where did we ever get that crazy idea that something is true just because we believe it? "If that is true, then there will never be heresy. Everybody would be right."

On one occasion, 13 youth pastors at a large convention were unable to reasonably answer his question. Finally one young person stood up, walked toward him and told him he knew the answer. The young man promptly held up his Bible and said, "Because I believe it." And to McDowell's dismay, all the youth pastors applauded him. McDowell said, "Young man, do you know the difference between you, me and the majority of Christians in the world? "To you, it is true because you believe it. For me, I believe it because it is true."

Another response the apologist received was: Because I have faith. He commented, "Where did we ever get the crazy idea that faith makes something true? That's idiotic. "God doesn't use

faith to create truth. He uses truth through the Holy Spirit to create faith.”

Christians, the apologist stressed, are called to explain their faith when asked. They are set free by the faith in the truth. Yet others say Christianity is true because Jesus changed their lives. Even this will not stand up to scrutiny, McDowell argued. “Lies change lives; cults change lives,” he said. McDowell concludes: “We owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our children, we owe it to our neighbors, we owe it to the lost, to tell them not just what we believe but why do we believe it.”

Does the indictment above describe your level of confidence in what you believe about your faith? Have you found yourself backing down in a discussion when issues of faith are mentioned? Do you hear or read things and wonder if they represent truth in the Bible? Do you ever defend your beliefs with the words “I think it is in the Bible somewhere...” or “Let’s get the pastor to answer these questions...”?

This book offers a biblical explanation for the basics of what a Believer should know about his faith. If you read and answer the questions in each chapter, you should be able to answer and defend the essential questions of what Christians believe.

You may not agree with everything you read in this book. You may be tempted to put it down when you learn something that is different from what you have been taught. Let me encourage you to complete the chapters. Where you disagree, find a biblical reason for your perspective that does not violate the basic principles of reading Scripture. Don’t hold on to your beliefs because you learned them in church or from family members or because they make “sense” to you. Hold on to them because the Bible teaches them! On some of the more controversial issues, this book will explain some of the views in question and try to demonstrate why people believe them. In each case, you will learn what the Bible teaches and why, then you can draw your own conclusion. Unlike many attempts to teach doctrine today, this book tells it like it is.

These are the same basic subjects taught in Bible Colleges and Seminaries all over the world, but the information is directed at the Believer who simply wants to know what the Bible teaches about some very essential issues of life. If you decide that you want to go into any of these topics in greater depth, check out the reading list in the back of this book or get suggestions from your Pastor . For those who complete the book, you will be included in that small number of Believers that Josh McDowell found who could answer his basic questions. If you want to be sure, then take the evaluation at the end. Don't think of it as a test – tests have a way of frightening people into uncertainty. Think of it as a way to prove to yourself that your efforts have paid off! Most people who have taken this course share that they did much better on the evaluation than they thought they would, and many even enjoyed it! Know that by working diligently on this course, you will fulfill the command in 1 Peter 3:15 to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

You will start with the Scriptures, because the basis for everything you will learn is in the proper method for reading and understanding the Bible. From there, you will build on your understanding by studying topics that cover every important aspect of life.

When you read a question in the chapter, take the time to answer it in writing. Some of these questions will seem very simple and will ask you to recall something you just read. There is a method in this process that is time tested, so please answer the questions as you go. Answers to the questions are listed at the end of the book.

You will also find an excellent resource at Appendix D called Mindful of the Truth. This was developed by nationally known Bible teacher, speaker and radio personality, Dr. Dan Hayden. It is one of the best Scripture memorization tools available, and you can do it yourself. The most effective way to use this book is to combine it with a regular program of Scripture memorization.

Either select a book and begin memorizing from the beginning using Dan's technique (1 John or James is a great start) or select a series of Scripture verses you like.

Also, it will be helpful for you to have a Bible as you work through this book. You will learn the strengths and weaknesses of various kinds of Bibles in the chapter on the Scriptures, so if you do not already have a good Bible, you can wait until you complete that chapter, then make an investment that will last a lifetime and purchase a very good Bible.

Finally, thank you for entering into this training. In addition to the blessing you will receive by going deeper into God's Word, you will feel the amazing power that comes with fully understanding why you believe the things you do. It will give you a confidence that you only imagined and equip you for all aspects of your life. It may also do one more thing. It may create a hunger to continue studying God's Word to build on your understanding that will lead you into a life-long love of God and Scripture.

Studying the Bible

To begin a study on what a Christian is to believe, there has to be a common basis for truth. Without this basis, discussions about complicated issues often become nothing more than people sharing their opinion about what seems to make the most sense to them. Most of what we know has been assimilated from our family upbringing, our schooling, thoughts and ideas expressed by friends or by people in the media. When asked, most people are unable to cite exactly why they believe something to be true, they simply accept it because they “learned” it at some point.

As Christians, we believe that God has revealed His thoughts so that we can know absolute truth. Actually, God provided three important ways that we could know him. First, we can know Him through His creation that is all around us. (This will be covered more in depth later.) Second, we know Him because of the person and work of Jesus, the Living Word. And third, we know Him through the written word that was provided so that man could understand what God wants us to know about him, and His creation... the Bible. Through study of the Bible, therefore, Christians are given the opportunity to truly know what they believe and why.

Studying the bible is much like studying any other discipline. In general terms, there are three aspects to a foundational study.

Observation

The writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created one of the most memorable characters in English literature, the detective Sherlock Holmes. Holmes could walk into a crime scene that had been studied by police detectives and others and within minutes, notice clues the others had missed that would help him solve the crime. It was Holmes' use of observation that allowed him to see things where others did not. This same concept helps students of the Bible to study Scripture. Without any other tools, a Believer can observe many things from a passage of Scripture. What is happening? When is it taking place? Who is involved? Have we read about these people previously? What words are being used? Are comparisons being used with other Biblical concepts?

Interpretation

Once Sherlock Holmes observed a crime scene, he was able to make determinations that yielded clues using his observations. This is the essence of interpretation, an explanation of the meaning of an observation or fact. For Holmes to do this well, he needed a wealth of information from which to draw his conclusions. In one case, he looked at two impressions left by bicycle tires and says, "I am familiar with forty-two different impressions left by tyres. This, as you perceive, is a Dunlop, with a patch upon the outer cover." For the Believer, the ability to correctly interpret Scripture is a function of our knowledge of God and His Word. You will be reading more about how to correctly interpret Scripture in a few pages.

Application

Sherlock Holmes uses his observations and interpretations to a singular end: to catch the criminal. For the Believer, the application of our study is the life we live that is dedicated to honoring Christ. With that, we are able to make decisions, help others, work and play with the knowledge that our actions are right. The guide for this knowledge is the Bible.

The Bible is the most amazing book ever written. It is not one book; it is an ancient collection of writings, comprised of 66 separate books, written over approximately 1,600 years, by at least 40 distinct authors. The Old Testament contains 39 books written from approximately 1500 to 400 BC, and the New Testament contains 27 books written from approximately 40 to 100 AD. The original Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, with some Aramaic, while the original New Testament was written in common Greek. The next chapter will provide greater detail about the authority, accuracy and authenticity of the Bible, but as we start working on the truth within the Bible, there are a few main points to consider.

Three Basic Assumptions

As you study the Bible, there are a few ground-rules that will be helpful to consider. These rules, or assumptions, provide the basis for any study of Scripture.

1. The Bible Is God's Word (Inspiration)

There are many books written about many things by men. Some men are brilliant and insightful; others are... well... not all that brilliant. You can learn from both kinds of writers, but when it comes to understanding the things of God, it is essential to read and study what God, Himself, has to say. The very reason for studying the Bible is that it is inspired by God. The literal meaning of "inspired" is "God breathed" and the basis for this belief is the Bible's own testimony. II Timothy 3:16 clearly states that the words in the Bible are inspired by God and useful for teaching and training. Believing in Divine inspiration of the Bible by one Divine author means that we recognize that each passage only has one correct interpretation, obviously the one God intended.

2. The Bible is Clear and Understandable (Perspicuity)

This does not mean that the Bible is simple or that every passage is intuitively clear to interpret. A passage may say something that was quite clear to the readers of the day that is puzzling to us because of our ignorance of a multitude of things. The more we learn from archaeology about the history and culture of the times, the more these passages begin making sense.

To some who ignore this principle, the scriptures are like a piano. They sit down and play whatever they wish on it. This is what we do when we impose our thoughts on the Bible rather than letting it impose its teaching on us.

There are **three forms of interpretation** that do not hold to the clarity of the scriptures:

Allegorization

Allegorizing is finding a mystical or symbolic meaning based on the use of one's imagination. It literally changes the meaning of the text and is not based on the natural, normal, or customary sense of the word meanings or context. An example of allegorization using the story of the Good Samaritan: A Traveler (Adam) from Jerusalem (Heaven) going to Jericho (World) is attacked by robbers (satan). A Priest and a Levite (law and prophets) pass but a Samaritan (Christ) helped him – took the traveler to an inn (church) and promised to return later (second coming). As interesting as this type of interpretation might be, there is no indication that these ideas were intended by God and so they are a fabrication by man. The danger is that allegories often seem good, but usually break down at some point and can end up teaching some false doctrine.

An allegory can be a legitimate form of teaching or writing. Some of the parables used by Jesus are allegories that help us to understand a complicated truth with ideas we can understand. Also, Galatians 4 clearly indicates the allegorical nature of the text, with verse 24 stating “These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants...” and so on through verse 27. The great writer, C.S. Lewis, made extensive

use of allegories in his stories to help people understand Biblical truth. The caution mentioned here is that we must learn to recognize where allegories are being used, and where we are imposing them on the words in Scripture.

Culturalization

Understanding culture is an important aspect of studying scripture, but culturalization is different because it implies that the text, while having a specific meaning and application in the day it was written, no longer has meaning, or has a different meaning today due to the fact that the culture has changed. An example of culturalization would be to say that I Timothy 2:12, which tells women not to exercise authority over men, applied in Paul's day, but no longer applies today.

Spiritualization

To spiritualize scripture is to give a spiritual meaning that is not intended within the context. Those who spiritualize scripture believe they can go to the Bible to receive specific guidance and direction for the preference decisions of the day. Obviously this form of interpretation involves the famous flip-and-point method of decision-making. An example of spiritualization would be: God knocked down the walls of Jericho and wants to knock down the walls of your life today, or Jesus calmed the sea and He wants you to live a calm life, too. Believers do receive spiritual guidance from Scripture, however we must be cautious to ensure that the guidance we receive is consistent with all that is taught throughout the Bible.

3. The Bible is Harmonious and Consistent

The scriptures are completely harmonious. There is only one system of truth contained in the Bible, so all doctrines must be consistent and agree with all other doctrines. No two passages can disagree. This means that an interpretation of a passage cannot contradict the rest of the teaching of the scriptures. This

is the basis of the principle "Scripture should be compared with Scripture" which we will study later.

Understanding that the Bible is clear, understandable, harmonious and consistent does not necessarily mean that it is easy to comprehend. One of the most amazing things about Scripture is that there is an incredible richness to the text. Do not be frustrated to hear that you might not immediately grasp deeper meaning in Scripture. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand things as we are able, and there are sometimes difficult lessons being taught that are not immediately clear. Rather than being frustrated, realize that God designed the Bible in a way to encourage us to continually study and seek increased depth and meaning to the message that He has for us.

What three forms of interpretation do not hold to the clarity of the Scriptures?

What are three basic assumptions we must understand before we can study the Scriptures?

Basic Principles of Interpretation

Now that we know what Biblical interpretation is and understand the assumptions we often make, we are ready to study the five basic principles or rules of interpretation. Another term you might hear used for this is hermeneutics.

1. Scripture is to be Taken in its Natural, Normal and Customary Usage.

Scripture is to be taken at “face value”, employing the most natural use of the words. A language is an accumulation and combination of words that groups of people use as the expression of their thoughts. Words only have meaning as people recognize and agree on a meaning. Therefore, to understand the language of a Biblical writer, it is first necessary to know the meaning of the words they are using. Our job then is to determine the original meaning of the words as we study: what did the word mean when it was used? A modern-day example of this would be the adjective, “gay”. While it once meant a positive and happy state of mind, there are much more complicated meanings of the word today. Tools to help understand this use include dictionaries, lexicons and Bible word-study books.

2. All Scripture is to be Interpreted Within the Context of the Passage

The word "context" is a Latin word made up of two parts: con, meaning together, and textus, meaning woven. Thus it means something that is woven together. Relative to a written document, it means the connection of thought that runs through every passage on a given topic. The context of a word can carry more weight than the definition found in a dictionary or lexicon. All passages in the Bible are in a context and it is essential that we look at the context of a passage in order to understand it.

3. All Scripture Is To Be Compared With Other Scripture

This principle recognizes that scripture is our first guide for interpreting scripture. Stated another way, it says that the interpretation of a seemingly obscure passage must bear the weight of the rest of the scriptures. The interpretation of one verse cannot contradict the interpretation of another. For example, the lamp stands mentioned in Revelation 1:13 are later explained in verse 20 to be churches.

4. Contradictions are Only Apparent

Some who try and convince a Believer that the Bible cannot be trusted will point to apparent contradictions and use them show that the text is flawed. The basic principal here is that no interpretation of Scripture is valid that does not genuinely harmonize with other passages of Scripture. With so many words and so many stories, you are bound to hear someone tell you at some time that there is a contradiction in the Bible, and you must know and trust that this cannot happen. For example, some may question the way that Judas (the betrayer of Jesus) died, whether by hanging or falling down. Matthew 27:3-8 describes Judas' hanging and Acts 1:16-19 describes Judas' falling headlong, bursting open in the middle. Contradiction? A contradiction occurs when one statement excludes the possibility of another. It is not a contradiction to describe something differently: Judas was hung and Judas fell down. Both are possible because likely, Judas hung himself and then because of his weight or the earthquake at the crucifixion, the rope broke and he fell down and his bowels spilled out.

While this example is fairly easy to understand, there are others that are more complex. For example, we read that God is sovereign over all things and we know man is responsible for his own actions. These two ideas seem to be in conflict with each other. Consider Philippians 2: 12-13 where we are told in v. 12 to work out the implications of our own salvation, but then in v.13 it says that God is the one who works in us by affecting our will to do things that please him. Well, which one is it - do I do it or does God do it? Actually, it's both. Illustrations are sometimes dangerous because they are usually not perfect, but because of the complexity of this issue (God's sovereignty vs. man's responsibility), a possible illustration of this apparent contradiction could be the women's uneven parallel bars. These bars are the same, but parallel to each other with one bar higher than the other (God's sovereignty is always higher than man's responsibility). As the gymnast does her routine on the bars, she moves from one to the other, but is never able to work both bars at the same time - although the whole routine uses both bars

throughout the exercise. Now, we can work the bar of God's sovereignty and then we can work the bar of man's responsibility, but we can't work both bars at the same time - even though both bars come into play in the routine of our study. Some apparent conflicts in Scripture may seem to exist as separate ideas, but both are integral parts of the story and ultimately resolve in the mind of God. It is important to appreciate both ideas and not become frustrated because we can't put them together as we would like.

5. Prophecy is Recognizing The Near And Far Implications Of Scripture

When searching for the meaning of a text, it must be recognized that many prophetic passages of scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments, have both near and far implications and applications. In other words, prophecy often operates on two levels of fulfillment. On the first level, there is a divinely revealed near prediction relating to a soon-coming event. But on the second level, there is a corresponding far prediction that will be fulfilled at a later time, or in the events of the end times.

What are 5 principles for proper understanding of Scripture?

Materials to aid in the study of Scripture

1. Read a passage from various translations.

This can help by allowing the student to compare the way words and phrases are translated. Literal translations are best, but dynamic equivalent and paraphrase translations that are more thought oriented can also be helpful.

2. Use a concordance to do some cross-reference studying.

A biblical concordance is an alphabetical index of all the words in the Bible showing every contextual occurrence of the word and where to find it. Many Bibles have small concordances in the back to help a person find common references. Other concordances are stand-alone books or computer programs and contain every reference to every word in a given translation. There are also Topical Concordances that list all of the biblical references to a specific topic (like love, or hope, etc).

3. You can use a commentary to help you understand interpretations of passages or concepts.

A commentary is either a separate work or is integrated into a Bible and offers a person's (or group's) interpretation of selected verses and concepts. Commentaries are often helpful, however it is important to know the particular beliefs of the commentator so that statements can be put in that context. Good commentaries include: Matthew Henry, John MacArthur, Barnes, and Bible Gateway (available on the internet).

4. A Dictionary of biblical terms functions like a regular dictionary for language, except it focuses on defining biblical words and concepts. A popular dictionary is Unger's Bible Dictionary.

5. If you want to learn about a specific person, place or thing you can use a Bible Encyclopedia such as The Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible or the International Standard Bible

Encyclopedia. There are also specialized encyclopedias that address multiple interests, for example archaeological terms, people, or cultural information.

6. Bible Handbooks are written to give extended synopses of each book of the Bible. Handbooks address customs, questions, book analyses, characters and a host of other ideas with the intent of equipping the reader with an increased understanding and perspective.

7. Introductions are written to help the reader get a better understanding of biblical backgrounds. An Old Testament or New Testament Introduction delves into authorship, recipients, culture, historical backgrounds and overall themes of each book.

8. Bible Atlases are prepared to give the student an overview of the geographical areas referenced in Scripture. With an atlas, you could see the actual route of Paul's missionary journeys, or the area involved in Jesus' ministry. Bible Atlases include helpful maps related to biblical studies.

What materials exist to aid the study of Scripture?

Translations

Different Bible versions represent the efforts of scholars to translate original manuscripts in a way that communicates effectively to a given audience or language group. It is important to note that they are not all “basically the same” as significant differences can change the meaning or intent of the original Greek and Hebrew. It is important to note the basic philosophy of translation that goes into the different versions of the Bible. This philosophy falls into two broad categories – word for word translations and paraphrase translations (sometimes called thought for thought). Word for word translations seek to define each word in the Hebrew or Greek and translate it accurately with respect to the context of the author. Because Hebrew and Greek are written in a different format than other modern languages, the order of the words must be adjusted to allow modern readers to accept the style, but this occasionally leads to a style that is different than the way people communicate verbally today. A paraphrase translation seeks to identify the thoughts taught in scripture, and then the words are chosen to express those thoughts in the most effective way possible. This allows a paraphrase to be directed to specific groups of people, including teens, students, children, adults, men, women and more. Understand that a paraphrase is the translator’s idea of what the text is saying and, therefore, includes a level of commentary.

Here are some of the most common versions of the Bible:

King James (KJV)

The KJV is the first version of Scripture authorized by the Protestant church and commissioned by England's King James I in 1611.

- Word for word translation of the original language

Sometimes difficult to understand

- Comfort means strengthen, “suffer” means “let” (Suffer the children...)

- Examples of the challenges of reading the KJV are seen in Psalm 5:6, Ez 27:25.

New King James Version (NKJV)

The NKJV was commissioned in 1975 using 130 respected Bible scholars, church leaders, and lay Christians who worked for seven years to create a completely new, modern translation of Scripture, yet one that would retain the purity and stylistic beauty of the original King James.

- Written with faithfulness to the original Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts,
- It uses the translations available when the KJV was written, not the older texts discovered later
- Some KJV enthusiasts feel that too many phrases were taken from other modern translations

New American Standard (NASB)

The NASB is written in a formal style, but is more readable than the King James Version. It is highly respected as the most literal English translation of the Bible.

- Word for word translation of the original language
- Not the best for reading out-loud
- Very accurate and excellent for study

New International Version (NIV)

The NIV offers a balance between a word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation and is considered by many as a highly accurate and smooth-reading version of the Bible in modern English.

- Combination of thought and word translation of the original language
- Some theological influences exist, so it is important to read critically
- Easy to read

English Standard Version (ESV)

The ESV Bible is a relatively new Bible translation that combines word-for-word precision and accuracy with literary excellence, beauty, and readability.

- Word for word translation of the original languages
- Published in 2008, still earning popularity

New Living Translation (NLT)

Using modern English, the translators of the NLT focused on producing clarity in the meaning of the text rather than creating a literal, word-for-word equivalence. Their goal was to create a clear, readable translation while remaining faithful to original texts.

- Thought for thought interpretation of the original language
- Better than other modern story Bibles (TLB) but still lots of interpretation included

Other Issues to Consider in Choosing a Bible

Purpose

Is the purpose for the Bible primarily study or reading? It is often wise to have several bibles in your home to use for different purposes.

Size

Some bibles are very thick and heavy, and others are designed to be thin and easy to carry. A thin bible may not have as many reference tools, but might be convenient to take with you as you travel or work. Your thick bible may be loaded with study material, but if you leave it behind because of a lack of space, it won't do you much good.

Memorization Resource

What is your go-to Bible for Scripture memorization? Many people find it helpful to learn scripture from one consistent translation, and it is then wise to use that translation as the Bible you normally carry. Be sure to go to the back of this book and read *Mindful of the Truth* by Dan Hayden. This Scripture memory system will get you on the road to an effective and life-changing habit of hiding God's Word in your heart.

A Living Word – Marking your Bible

A Bible with notes and comments from years of study and use is valuable! The idea that the Bible is God's living Word thus has a double meaning. As you study and learn the meaning of Scripture, it is wise to write, underline, emphasize or annotate as you might find helpful. Many people are hesitant to write in their new Bible, but those notes can be vital as your study continues in the future. One warning here is that many Bibles full of information use very thin pages that allow significant bleed-thru from marking pens. Test your pages before you obliterate the text on the other side of the page of your writing.

Other types of Bibles

In addition to multiple translations, there are other Bible types that aid in study. These include:

- Parallel Bible (Several languages or versions side-by-side)
- Amplified Bible (multiple word meanings listed)
- Greek and Hebrew Bible
- Interlineal Bible (integrated language and interpretation)

Study Bibles

- Combine many of the helps already discussed
- Convenient
- Many over-use the notes and don't study
- Subject to bias

Which Bible is Best?

Christians should develop a Library of tools including Bibles, commentaries, dictionaries and resources to aid in the study of Scripture. Many computer programs offer all this and much more in an inexpensive digital format, making searching and study easier. Even with a computer or on-line resource, having a few books helps when traveling or if you are somewhere without power or Internet connection.

One excellent choice for a Bible that contains nearly every important study resource in one convenient book is the Thompson Chain Reference in your preferred version (I believe

that NASB is best, but these are available in NIV or NKJV too).

The Thompson chain contains:

- 100,000 margin references for 8000 topics
- Concordance
- Index of topics
- Outline studies of books and events of Bible
- Character studies
- Illustrated guides and charts
- Extensive atlas and map section
- Archaeological supplement

A strength of the NASB Bible is

A strength of the NIV Bible is

A strength of the ESV Bible is

True/False – The thicker the Bible, the more useful it will be. _____

True/False – Writing notes in a Bible is a bad idea.

Studying the Scripture

There are many ways a person can study Scripture. Any Christian bookstore will have a section dedicated to Bible study with books and study helps you can purchase. If you would like a way to study the Bible on your own using all that has been mentioned in this chapter, a suggestion is provided below that may help you organize your efforts.

The ABCD method of Bible Study

This method allows you to study Scripture at your own pace and with the resources you choose. It is pretty simple, but that is the secret to its success. This method can take anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour, depending on what you have available. You must get a small book or notebook in which to write your thoughts. You don't need anything fancy, but you may elect to keep these books if you find this technique helpful. You could even use your computer, however I think you might regret it if you use an electronic means and then somehow lose months or years of work through a hardware glitch, so be sure to back up your work often if you choose this method. Each letter corresponds to a part of the study.

A – select a group of verses to read. Often, bibles are sectioned with headings provided by editors and compilers of a particular version. You can use these sections, or you can select a group of any length you like, from one to many verses. Read these verses to start your study. If you are able, read them several times. Each time you read them, you will begin to understand more in the verses than the previous reading. (This is from the Observation part of this chapter). Write the letter A on the top of your page, and write the verse references to the selection you chose. If you like, you can also put the date on the top of the page. This has the added advantage of allowing you to track the time you spend in study.

B – select the best verse in the selection. The best verse is the one that speaks most clearly to you at the time. It could be a summary of the verses or perhaps a message that speaks to you in a particular situation in your life. Write the letter B under the letter A, and write out the verse that you select as the best verse.

C – write what the reading communicates to you. This does not have to be a novel; it can be a few sentences (so a small book might help you keep your time focused) or whatever you think

appropriate. Write this out in the same way that you might journal your thoughts on the verses.

D – write a short prayer dedicated to God about how you could apply the message communicated to you. Again, this does not have to be long – it can be as detailed as you would like it to be.

That is it – the ABCD study method. I use it because it works. No matter where I am, or what I have with me, this system allows me to spend some productive time in the Word. It uses the techniques of observation, interpretation and application mentioned in this chapter. If you like, you can use any of the study resources you learned about to dig deeper into the words you read to understand them more completely. This may take more time, but you might find the effort rewarding.