

LESSON 20

Learn to Study the Bible Like a Pro

8: Studying the Bible

Executive Summary

Studying the Bible is both an art and a science. Sound interpretation means reading Scripture literally, accounting for historical, grammatical, and cultural context, and trusting the unity of God's Word. The basic principles are Observation (what does it say?), Interpretation (what does it mean?), and Application (how should I respond?). With practice, every believer can become skilled at understanding God's Word.

Key Terms

Observation	Carefully noticing the words, structure, details, and relationships present in a biblical passage.
Interpretation	The disciplined work of understanding what Scripture means before applying it to life.
Application	Responding to the true meaning of Scripture with concrete belief, repentance, obedience, or worship.
Context	The literary, historical, grammatical, and cultural setting that helps reveal a passage's intended meaning.

Key Verses

English Standard Version (ESV)

2 Timothy 2:15

15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

2 Peter 1:20-21

20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Application Questions

1. What are the three basic steps of Bible study taught in this lesson?

2. Why is it important to understand what a passage means before deciding how it applies to you?

3. Which part of Bible study—observation, interpretation, or application—is hardest for you?

4. What short Bible passage would you like to practice studying?
