“Let Us Run With Endurance The Race That Is Set Before Us”

Hebrews 12:1-3

Class Number 5d – How to Study a Book and Chapter
If I had only four minutes to perform a life-saving operation, I would take at least one minute to consider how best to do it.

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"How to Read a Book" Mortimer Adler identifies three essential steps to effectively reading any book. We will apply the principles to the Bible.

**Pigeonholing** - is identifying what kind of book you are about to read. This is important because the Bible contains several different kinds of books.

- Traditionally The Old Testament Is Broken Down Into These Five Types Of Literature:
  - 1.) Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
  - 2.) Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I & II Samuel, I&II Kings, I&II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
  - 3.) Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
  - 4.) Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

- Another way of looking at the Old Testament is to see it written in three distinct periods of history.
  - **Genesis** - Joshua, Priestly books;
  - **Judges** - Song of Solomon, Kingly books;
  - **Isaiah** - Malachi, Prophetic books.
  - God uses each to equip His people as Priests, Kings & Prophets.
The New Testament Consists Of Four Types Of Literature:

1.) Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
2.) Acts
3.) or Letters (to churches or individuals) Romans  Jude
4.) Revelation

Before undertaking the study of any book of the Bible, it is generally helpful to find out:

- when it was written,
- to whom it was written
- and for what general purpose it was written.

This kind of background information can be found in most study Bibles, or Bible handbooks.
How to pigeonhole --- The title sometimes gives insight into the kind of book you are dealing with.

- Psalms - A book of songs and prayers.
- Genesis - The title means *beginnings*.
- Exodus - The title means *to go out or exit*.

The introductory or concluding section may give you a clue.

- Proverbs - What does the intro say about its purpose? (1:1-7).
- Revelation - The prophetic nature is explained in the opening (1:1-3) and closing (22:6).

Sometimes you may have to skim over the entire book to gain a sense of its content.
X-raying - after figuring out what kind of book you are dealing with, the next thing a skilled reader does is look for a **skeleton**. Every book comes **clothed in many words, but within** those pages is the skeleton or structure.

- (It is often helpful to print out the book you are studying and delete all the chapter and verse divisions. Leave yourself a good sized margin for making notes.)

- a.) Look for a Thesis or main theme the book is seeking to convey.
  - Write down, **in your own words, what the book’s primary message seems to be.**
  - **You will often discover the** theme in the opening or closing sections:
    - Job - The prologue explains the book's purpose.
    - Ecclesiastes - Solomon says he is seeking the answer to the meaning of life.
    - John - The key to the book is found in 20:30-31.
    - Romans - 1:16 states the book’s thesis.

- b.) Outline the book.
  - Identify the different sections within the book and describe their contribution to the book as a whole as well as how they relate to the other parts.
Outlining is saying, "The theme of this book is..."
- The author accomplishes this in three major parts I. II. & III...
- In part I, four points are made A. B. C. & D" and so on through the book.

You can find outlines of the books of the Bible in many study Bibles and handbooks, but NEVER begin your study with them.
- Instead, you should always read the book through (maybe several times) on your own and write down your own thesis and outline first.
- When we do our own work, imperfect as it may be, it will be of more and lasting benefit than skipping the process and looking at the most perfect outline prepared by someone else.
- There are great ah - ha moments awaiting those who will grind through this process.

When you have satisfactorily completed this task, then feel free to seek out the work others have done and make revisions as you see fit.
Here is an example of a thesis and outline for the book of Colossians: Colossians Outlined: Thesis: As the Fathers agent of creation and redemption, Christ is preeminent over all things. Because we are in Christ we share in His glory and must do ALL our thinking and doing in terms of our position in Him.


- I. Introduction 1:1-14
  - A. Paul's Greeting to the Colossians 1:1-2
  - B. Paul's Thanksgiving for the Colossians 1:3-8
  - C. Paul's Prayer for the Colossians 1:9-14
- II. The Preeminence of Christ 1:15-2:3
  - A. Christ Is Preeminent in Creation 1:15-18
  - B. Christ Is Preeminent in Redemption 1:19-23
  - C. Christ Is Preeminent in the Church 1:24-2:3
III. The Freedom in Christ 2:4-23
   o A. Freedom from Enticing Words 2:4-7
   o B. Freedom from Vain Philosophy 2:8-10
   o C. Freedom from the Judgment of Men 2:11-17
   o D. Freedom from Improper Worship 2:18-19
   o E. Freedom from the Doctrine of Men 2:20-23

Part Two: The Submission to Christ in the Church (3:1-4:18)
   I. The Believer's Position In Christ 3:1-4
   II. The Practice of the Believer 3:5-4:6
      o A. Put Off the Old Man 3:5-11
      o B. Put On the New Man 3:12-17
      o C. Personal Commands for Holiness 3:18-4:6
         o 1. Holiness in Family Life 3:18-21
         o 2. Holiness in Work Life 3:22-4:1
         o 3. Holiness in Public Life 4:2-6
   III. Conclusion 4:7-18
      o A. Commendation of Tychicus 4:7-9
      o B. Greetings from Paul's Friends 4:10-14
      o C. Instructions Regarding This Letter 4:15-18
      o (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright (c)1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)
By the time you have worked up an outline, you will be familiar with the contours of the book.
- Outlining gives you handles with which to work with the book in greater detail as we will consider in the next lesson.

Coming To Terms With The Author.
- This means recognizing the key words and phrases used by an author and assigning the same meaning to them as he does.
- Every field of knowledge has its own peculiar vocabulary.
- The learning curve is mostly about recognizing what is meant by all these new words or special uses of ordinary words. Biology, Physics, Philosophy, Medicine, Engineering, Sailing, etc. all have their own unique and esoteric language. Outsiders are intimidated by the "big" words.
- The truth is, that specialist just spend a lot of time in their field conversing in their language.

The Bible is no different. Be patient with yourself and keep on trying.
- Before you know it you'll be spouting words like propitiation, redemption and sanctuary like an old pro.
How To Come To Terms With The Author:

- **Identify key words.**
  - These words are often the ones that give you trouble as you read.
  - When you come across a word or phrase that you don't understand - take note of it.
  - Recurring words are often very important.
  - Even simple words that keep recurring may have special significance.
  - Mark them down!
Find out what the author means by these words.

- Context is the best means of coming to a common understanding with the author of his use of a word or phrase.
- You are basically solving a riddle, using what you do know to make sense of what you do not.

Again, Bible handbooks and in this case Bible dictionaries are very helpful.

- They provide definitions to the words as they are used in scripture. They will also cite several references where the word is used in scripture so you can look them up and see how they are used in different contexts.
- The best reference tools will specifically address how the author uses a term in various places and how his usage may either refer to some earlier usage by a prior bible writer or how he may be using the term in a very different way.
The average student will often derive the most benefit from their study by working through a chapter at a time. The chapter divisions of the Bible generally provide just the right amount of material to cover in the time allowed for a single study period.

- In about twenty minutes you should be able to read a chapter, outline its parts, note the key words or phrases, highlight verses of special importance and write a brief summary that includes an application for your life.
Keep a notebook on each book of the Bible you study.

- Write down your outline, key words, key verses and chapter summaries.

You should also write down words you don't understand as well as any questions that you want to follow up later.

What To Look For: And Questions to ask upon reading a chapter of the Bible:
- What is the **principle subject** of this chapter?
- Who are the **principle persons** in the chapter?
- How does this **chapter fit** into the greater theme of the book?
What To Look For: And Questions to ask upon reading a chapter of the Bible:

- Are there any **key verses** to note?
- Are there any **examples** for me to follow?
- Is there any **sin** to renounce?
- Is there any **duty** for me to perform?
- Is there any **promise** to claim?
- Is there any **prayer** I can echo?
Sample Chapters: EPHESIANS 1:1-14

I. Introduction (vv. 1-2).
   - A. The apostle Paul writing to the saints at Ephesus
   - B. Pronounces a blessing of peace and grace upon them

II. God is to be praised because he has chosen us in Christ (vv. 3-6)
   - A. He determined to do this before the foundation of the world (v. 4)
   - B. He has appointed us to sonship through adoption (v. 5)
   - C. He has done this in order that we might praise the glory of His grace (v. 6)
III. God is to be praised because He has dealt with us according to the riches of His grace (vv. 7-12)
   • A. He has forgiven our sins through the blood of Christ (v. 7).
   • B. He has given us wisdom to understand the mystery of His will (vv. 8-10)
     o A. His will is to reconcile all things in Heaven and on earth in Christ (v. 10)
     o B. We have obtained an inheritance as adopted children in Christ (v. 11)

IV. God is to be praised because He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit until we receive the full possession of our inheritance (vv. 13-14).
   • A. Upon hearing the gospel and trusting in Christ we were sealed by Spirit (v. 13).
   • B. The Holy Spirit is the down payment, who guarantees that we will received the full inheritance (v. 14).
Key Verse: Eph 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has* blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Key Phrase: To the praise of His glory (vv. 6,12,14)

Summary: From before the foundation of the world, God has had a plan to unite all things in heaven and earth in Jesus Christ. The disintegrating power of sin is being overwhelmed by the gravitational center of God’s love expressed in Jesus Christ. We, who have trusted in Christ, have been adopted as God’s children, forgiven of our sins and promised a full inheritance. The guarantee for this is the Holy Spirit with which we have been sealed. All of this is being accomplished in order that we might praise God for His glorious grace.

Application: As a recipient of God’s grace and as an adopted son in Christ, I should live a life of praise and devotion to God my savior. Ultimately, my life is not about me, I am here to bring glory to my Maker and Redeemer.
JOSHUA 1

I. The Word Of God To Joshua (VV. 1-9)
- A. I will be with you
- B. Be strong and courageous
- C. Obey my law
- D. You will succeed

II. The Word Of God Through Joshua To The Israelites (VV. 10-15)
- A. Prepare to conquer Canaan
- B. God is giving us this land
- C. Reubenites, Gadites & Manasseh to fulfill their duty

III. The Israelites Declare Their Allegiance To Joshua (VV. 16-18)
- A. We will follow you as we have followed Moses
- B. Be strong and courageous
Lesson Five: How To Study by Chapter...

- **Key Verse**: Josh 1:8 *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.* (NIV)

- **Key Word**: Courage - *Overcoming our fears and doubts to do what must be done.*

- **Summary**: Here is a leader who only speaks to the people after he has himself learned of God's will and committed to it. When God has spoken to him he goes before the people with courage and confidence. The people respond to him favorably and declare themselves loyal to God and to Joshua's leadership.

- **Application**: True strength and courage are the result of obedience to God's word. When I know for certain that I am standing in the will of God, I can be unafraid. I should verbally support those who God has called to lead me.