

THE FOREST HILL NEWS



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Barry M. Grider, Pulpit

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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Tips for Better Bible Study (Part 2)

Kevin D. Beard

Keep the context in mind. Ignoring the context is a dangerous pitfall in Bible study. People often end up believing something the Bible does not teach because they forgot to notice the context of what they have read. Every Bible passage has at least three contexts to remember: the general context, the specific context, and the historical context.

The general context includes the whole Bible. How does the passage you are studying fit in with the rest of the Bible? What other Bible passages address the same or similar teachings as the passage you are studying? Keep these things in mind with every part of God's Word you read. Remember, the Bible, though comprised of 66 books, is one complete whole, without contradiction.

The specific context includes the book in which you find the passage, or even more specifically, that section of that book you are examining. Bear in mind that those men whom the Holy Spirit inspired to write the Bible would have written in complete and logical thoughts, just like anyone else would have written. If you look at a particular verse and realize that the way you are interpreting it does not fit at all with the general thought of the things that are after it, you probably need to reconsider your understanding of it.

The historical context involves the time frame in which the text was written, and the time the events recorded actually happened. W. B. West, who was highly respected for his study and knowledge of the book of revelation, used to implore his students to examine that book through "First Century glasses." Though the Bible is relevant and applicable to people of all ages, we must remember that it was written in a specific time in history. Therefore we need to be as mindful as we can of how the original readers of the text would have understood what was said.

Keep an open mind. Too many people shut themselves off from the truth because they make up their minds about what the Bible says and never consider any other possibilities. Ask yourself whether the Bible really says what you think it says. This is not giving up on your foundation or understanding or looking for something no one else has ever thought of. It is merely an open-minded investigation of what the Bible

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Tips for Better Bible Study (continued from page 1)

truly means. If what you already believe about the Bible is false, you will soon discover what you have been missing all along. Whenever someone thinks he has something completely figured out, he will stop studying it. Don't do this with the Bible.

Look for key words in the text. If you start reading a chosen text and the first word is the word "therefore," that tells you something very important that you do not need to overlook. What is about to be said is based on the things that had been said previously. Without going back in the text to understand what was said previously, you will not fully understand what you are about to read. The word "for" is another very important word. It is often used in the sense of the word "because," and as such, it often answers the question, "Why?" So, if you see the word "for" or "because," go back and see how it relates to what was said previously. Look at the previous verses and turn them into a "why" question. Then read the answer to your "why" question in the verse that begins with the word "for" or "because."

Remember chapter and verse division as well as section headings were developed by men, not God. Our Bibles are divided into chapters and verses as a convenience for being able to find the passages we are looking for. Many Bibles also contain section headings that identify the events or discussions contained in those sections of verses. Many times these divisions are helpful; but sometimes they can be misleading or (in the case of section headings) even wrong. Though a new chapter or verse begins at a certain point, that does not mean that the thought under consideration necessarily ends with the previous verse. Here is a case in point. Peter said we were begotten again to a living hope "to an inheritance incorruptible and

undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4). But who are the "you" Peter identifies? If we ignore the verse division there and continue reading, we see that it is "you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5).

Trust your own ability to understand the text. Commentaries can be very helpful. However, there is a great temptation to allow the person who wrote the commentary to do your thinking for you. Too many people read a difficult passage and think, "Hmm. I wonder what that means?" Then they go get their favorite commentary. Read what the writer thought, and accept it as true. Do your best to figure out what the text means on your own. Make up your mind what you think about it before consulting a commentary. You will be much less likely to be led astray this way.

Always interpret a difficult passage in light of what simpler passages say. There are some very difficult passages in the Bible. Because of this, people sometimes develop some pretty unusual ideas about what they mean. If you are not sure about what one verse means, find some other verses that address the same teachings. If those verses are clear and easy to understand, let them shed light on what the difficult passage means.

There certainly could be many more suggestions given for improving your Bible study; however, these should be helpful to anyone who truly wants to become a better student of God's Word. The most important thing is to develop a genuine desire to grow and to devote the time necessary to learning and understanding the precious Word of God.

NORTH SIDE GREETERS

Floyd and Carolyn Hayes (Front)

Gary and Sandra Grove (Side)

March 2009

Coordinating Elder: Harold Mangrum

SOUTH SIDE GREETERS

(Front) Randy and Mary Elliott

(Side) Robert and Dawn Trull

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>1</i> Tony Callahan Myra Martin	<i>2 James Bobbitt</i> Jim Crowe Allan Hart Nancy Price	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> Ann Caldwell	<i>5</i> Lisa Howard	<i>6</i> Preston Duff	<i>7</i> Adam Maund Sweetheart Banquet
<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> Carol Mangrum	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i> Matt McBrayer
<i>15</i> Laura Black	<i>16</i> Leonard Watson Kris Rodgers	<i>17</i> Melinda Braddock Ashley Jeter	<i>18</i> Matilene McGuire Caleb Myers	<i>19</i> Judy Conley Work Team Reorg	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i> Daniel Cain
<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i> Gene Gordon	<i>25</i> Dianne Callahan Eli Myers	<i>26</i> Hugh McCarter	<i>27</i> Jordan Mangrum	<i>28</i> Quinton Hicks Helen Palazola YOUTH DAY
<i>29</i> Holly Myers LECTURESHIP	<i>30</i> Trey Post LECTURESHIP	<i>31</i> Hazel Eskew Sandra Grove LECTURESHIP				

****Birthdays are in Italics**

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