

How to Study the Bible (Hermeneutics) Or Herman Who?

From the book, Hermeneutics, by Henry A. Virkler

"The word hermeneutics is said to have had its origin in the name Hermes, the Greek god who served as messenger for the gods, transmitting and interpreting their communications to their fortunate, or often unfortunate, recipients."

"In its technical meaning, hermeneutics is often defined as the science and art of biblical interpretation."

The following is based on Knowing Scripture by R. C. Sproul.

LESSON 1 – Why Study the Bible Anyway?

Two Myths: (Reasons people give for not studying the Bible)

1. *The Bible is so difficult to understand that only highly skilled theologians with technical training can deal with the Scriptures.*
2. *The Bible is boring.*

The Clarity of Scripture:

In the 16th Century, the Reformers declared their total confidence in what they called the ***perspicuity of Scripture***. What they meant by that technical term was the *clarity* of Scripture. They maintained that the Bible is basically clear and lucid. It is simple enough for any literate person to understand its *basic message*. This is not to say that all parts of the Bible are equally clear or that there are no difficult passages or sections to be found in it.

The Problem of Motivation

It is important to note that the theme of this book is not how to *read* the Bible but how to *study* the Bible. Reading is something we can do in a leisurely way or even strictly for entertainment. But study suggests labor, serious and diligent work.

Here then, is the real problem for our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it's boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy.

A Biblical basis for studying the Bible:

Deut 6:4-9 & 2Timothy 3:14-17

1:1 Paul,
an apostle of Christ Jesus
by the will of God
according to the promise
of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy,
my beloved child:

Grace,
mercy,
and peace

from God
the Father
and Christ Jesus
our Lord.

3 I thank God
whom I serve,
as did my ancestors,
with a clear conscience,
as I remember you
constantly in my prayers night and day.

4 As I remember your tears,
I long to see you,
that I may be filled with joy.

5 I am reminded of your sincere faith,
a faith
that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice
and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

6 For this reason
I remind you
to fan into flame the gift of God,
which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

7 for God gave us a spirit
not of fear
but of power
and love
and self-control.

- 12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life
in Christ Jesus
will be persecuted,
- 13** while evil people and impostors
will go on from bad to worse,
deceiving and being deceived.
- 14** But as for you,
continue
in what you have learned
and have firmly believed,
knowing
from whom you learned it
- 15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with
the sacred writings,
which are able to make you wise for salvation
through faith in Christ Jesus.
- 16** All Scripture is
breathed out by God
and profitable
for teaching,
for reproof,
for correction,
and for training in righteousness,
- 17** that the man of God may be
competent,
equipped for every good work.