

NEW SERIES: HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IT SAYS.

Well, it didn't take long for me to make a decision on what to write next. I didn't expect to do anything today, but I guess I just miss you all. I will begin a new series of posts on how to understand the Word of God. It is taken from a short book I put together several years ago which is used for the Higher Ground Bible Ministry training classes in Africa. The subject is Hermeneutics which is the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation of literary texts, especially the Bible. I deliberately tried to make the principles of Bible interpretation easy enough for even young Christians to understand, regardless of their experience (or inexperience) in studying God's Word. Studying the Bible is right next to prayer when it comes to important disciplines in the Christian life. They go together. When we pray we talk to God; when we study the Bible, we listen as God talks to us. Both could be considered prayer, in that prayer is a conversation with God. Conversations go two ways. Growth in Christ involves the mind, as well as the spirit. They are related, but not the same. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23). Our minds are reservoirs of truth. They hold information until the Spirit is ready to teach us. We may "know" something a long time, before the Spirit teaches us. What the Spirit teaches us we never forget. It becomes a part of our spiritual DNA. Our minds are to be trained and disciplined to recognize truth when we hear or see it. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). The Scriptures are to be interpreted (II Timothy 3:15). There is only one true interpretation of any passage of Scripture. We look for the human author's original intention to understand the one meaning. That will be the goal of this series – to teach you how to arrive at the author's one intended meaning when he wrote the words of Scripture. The Scriptures are a completed unit of truth. Therefore, individual scriptures (and Biblical authors) can't contradict each other. Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures...these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). Jesus also said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Tomorrow I will begin with "The Importance Of Personal Bible Study." Join me in learning how to study the Bible and understand what it says.