



Contact Us:

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Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study9:45 AM
Worship10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service N/A
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class N/A
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Mike Bannister

Billy Chism... Johnny McCaghren

Deacons:

John Barnum Don Smith

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
World Bible School

Five Characteristics of Bad Bible Study

It's no secret that Bible illiteracy is through the roof, both in the world and in the church. People don't know Bible basics in the way they used to. That fact was our motivation behind the upcoming issue of *Think* magazine, but we also don't want to make a blanket endorsement of "Just open your Bible and start studying." If we're going to do it, we're going to do it right. Because even in the small minority who do know the Bible somewhat and spend time in it these days, a significant segment of those have all kinds of wrong ideas about it due to poor study habits. We need to know how to study the right way (as discussed in the rest of this issue), but we also need to know how not to study God's Word. This list is not exhaustive, but in this article we'll look at five common errors that often arise in bad Bible study.

Bad Bible Study Ignores Context

With the Bible being divided up into easily cited verses, we can end up treating it unlike any other written text. Imagine taking letters from your spouse and dividing them up line by line, then grabbing individual lines out of each letter and recombining them to make up a whole new paragraph. Yeah, it would be factually true to say she wrote those words. But she didn't write them in that order, and may not mean them the way they come across when recombined that way. We realize it would be absurd to do that with letters from a spouse, and yet it's the primary way many (if not most) study the Bible.

The Bible was not written as a series of disconnected verses to be strung together as we choose. Every verse is placed within multiple layers of context for a reason, and it cannot be properly understood unless it is understood in the light of those contexts.

Before you can assert the meaning of the verse, look at the immediate context (2-3 verses before and after). In Philippians 4:13 Paul did say he can do all things through Christ who strengthened him. But without context we end up defining "all things" the way we want to rather than the way Paul meant it. A quick scan of the immediate context shows he was talking about enduring any situation in life with Jesus' help.

After the immediate context, zoom out a bit and look at the context of the section. The section can range from a couple of paragraphs to a few chapters, depending on the book. In Philippians 4 Paul is talking about having the right mindset of peace and joy. So, 4:13 continues in that theme and loses its intended power if it is made to be more broad than intended.

Then, look at the context of the book. In Philippians Paul is speaking about the joy that results when Christians unite for the Gospel, a needed message for a church who was divided (4:2-3). He speaks of the sacrifices Jesus made for us, along with the sacrifices Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus made for the Gospel. 1:21 is key – "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." When you're living in service to

Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

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Christ, with the promise of being with Him when you die, you can get through anything. Thus, the foundation is laid for 4:13.

Philippians 4:13 is maybe the most well-known of verses taken out of context and therefore the easiest to diagnose, but the truth is we can stumble into this mistake with virtually any verse in the entire Bible. The Bible student must engage in the work of exposing the context in order to understand a verse correctly.

Bad Bible Study Assumes Everything Is Directly About Me

The Bible was certainly written for me and you but that doesn't mean it was written to me and you. Jeremiah 29:11 may say "I know the plans I have for you..." but the "you" God was talking to there isn't the high school graduate receiving a Hallmark card and \$20 from the sweet older lady at church. Looking at the (you guessed it) context tells us who the "you" is, and once we understand that we can understand what the verse was truly intended to mean.

The other way to insert ourselves into the text is to read the Bible's "you" individualistically. Our southern brethren use language more effectively than the rest of us when they divide "you" and "y'all," and the King James Version has a similar distinction with its use of "you" and "ye." The commands and promises given to "you" in the Bible are generally given to a people, not to a person. Yes, God wants us each to obey those commandments, but they were given to all of us to do together, helping each other along the way. And yes, He has great promises in store for each of us, but those are promises we share with all of our brothers and sisters, and we would do well to emphasize the shared nature of what we have in God.

When we read ourselves into the Bible, we end up with an individualistic religion that elevates ourselves and misses the text's intended meaning.

Bad Bible Study Pits the Bible Against Itself

"1 Peter 3:21 says baptism now saves you."

"Oh yeah? Well Ephesians 2:8-9 says we're saved by grace through faith and not works."

"But James 2:17 says faith without works is dead."

"Yeah but Romans 3:28 says we're saved by faith apart from works."

See the problem here? The Bible does say all of those things, it's true. But to engage in what I call "Scripture Wars" like this makes a big implication that I don't think we want to make – namely, that the Bible contradicts itself. The key is to (you guessed it yet again) put each verse in its proper context.

Ephesians 2 and 1 Peter 3 are both necessary to the plan of salvation. We are saved by grace through faith, which Paul emphasized to show that it is God's gift we receive by trusting Him rather than working for it. And, we are also saved by baptism, which Peter pointed out to emphasize the washing away of sin that sparks the new life. What does James mean by "works?" Read James 2 and you'll see he was discussing the kind of actions that will naturally flow from the heart of someone who has faith in God. What did Paul mean by "works" in Romans? He was clearly taking aim at works of merit done to try to earn God's favor.

Using one verse against the other to score a rhetorical point is shamefully disrespectful to God's Word. He did not contradict Himself. Our understanding of what He wants must be an understanding that does not depend on making one verse fight another.

Bad Bible Study Never Opens the Bible

This one seems like an oxymoron, but it's sadly not all that uncommon. This happens when we start understanding the Bible based on what we think it says rather

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Television

In Search of the Lord's Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:00am on KTAB

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

God's Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Reading Schedule

video.wvbs.org/access/interactive-bible-reading-plan/

May 23	Exodus 34—36; Psalm 142
May 24	Exodus 37—40; Psalm 143
May 25	Lev. 1—2; Psalm 144 (video)
May 26	Leviticus 3—4; Psalm 145
May 27	Leviticus 5—6; Psalm 146
May 28	Leviticus 7—8; Psalm 147
May 29	Leviticus 9—10; Psalm 148
May 30	Leviticus 11—12; Psalm 149

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

(2 Timothy 2:15)



Visitation Meeting

- ◆ Last week **20** contacts were made.

Announcements

- ◆ Thank you to everyone who attended the congregational meeting last week. Please remember to return your completed **Work Assignment Sign-up Sheet** to Johnny or Mike by the end of May.
- ◆ We are thankful to have **Dr. Charles Hall** with us today in Johnny's absence. We are thankful for all that Charles and Donna do for the cause of Christ.
- ◆ There will be a **baby shower for Jayce and Dex Dennard** after evening services June 13th. See bulletin board for details and needs. Also, Cindy Fuller will be posting a sign-up sheet for the food.

Upcoming Events at 4th & Stewart

- ◆ August 10—We host Summer Youth Series
- ◆ October 17-20—Fall Gospel Meeting w/ Ross Haffner

Upcoming Area Events

- ◆ June 7-9—Vacation Bible School at Bangs (9:00—11:00am).
- ◆ June 8—**Summer Youth Series** begins (Each Tuesday evening through the summer [except camp weeks]; see flyer on bulletin board for schedule and topics)
- ◆ June 27—July 1—**Junior Camp** (applications available)
- ◆ July 18-23—**Senior Camp** (applications available)

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than what it actually says. Consider, for example, how much has been said about money being the root of all evil. What Paul actually wrote is that the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil. That's a pretty big difference, no? While that example is a less consequential one, there are plenty of opportunities to make the same mistake with more impactful teachings, too.

When we get into this habit, it's a short trip to get to saying things like "I don't think God would prohibit women from preaching," or "God wouldn't tell some people they aren't allowed to be married," or "Jesus wouldn't care about (insert pet issue)." Don't get in the dangerous habit of drawing conclusions about God without consulting His Word.

Bad Bible Study Starts With a Conclusion and Finds a Way to Support It

Robin Hood didn't become good at archery by shooting arrows at random and then drawing a bullseye around them wherever they landed. Neither will we become good Bible students by coming to the text with a conclusion and then drawing a bullseye around it by finding a way to make the Scriptures say what we want.

One of the best ways to guard against this error is to apply two of the previous steps: keep everything in context, and don't pit the Bible against itself. Finding what the Bible says rather than what I want it to say requires me to dig deep into the context of the verses in question. That way I can understand them the way the original writer (and, more importantly, the Holy Spirit) intended before applying them. If I come looking for a conclusion, on the other hand, I can simply pull out a concordance and look up any verses that talk about my topic of interest and then string them together to say what I want them to.

Bad Bible study is all around us. The consequences of mishandling God's Word are frightful, so we must take great care to get it right. It's imperative that our hearts be in the right place when we come to Bible study, and it's equally imperative that our heads be in the right place for grasping God's Word on His terms. The right heart will make us determined not to insert our own wishes, and the right mind is the tool that can keep that from happening.

Jack Wilkie (focuspress.org)

Celebrate

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)

May Birthdays: Ian Barnum (5), Rosa ShaeLynn Fuller (6), David Milam (7), Pam Teague (14), Billy Chism (15), Gracen Hardy (30)..

April Anniversaries: Ryan & Tammy Rudloff (7).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	May 9, 2021	May 16, 2021
Bible Class	37	39
AM Worship	52	47
PM Worship	42	45
Wednesday PM	33 + [10]	41
Contribution	\$1,783	\$2,280

	This Week: 5/23/21	Next Week: 5/30/21		
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	<p>May 2021 Make Announcements: Don Smith Prepare Communion: Maninger Family Clean Building: Randy & Laura Huckaby</p> <p>June 2021 Make Announcements: Ken Maninger Prepare Communion: John Barnum Family Clean Building: John Barnum Family</p>	
Greeters	—	—		
Opening Prayer	Tom Wilcox	Ken Maninger		
Communion	Dex Dennard, Chase Churchwell Daniel Edwards, Ryan Settles	John Barnum, Kyle Duaine Randy Huckaby, Coyce Reed		
Closing Prayer	Rafe Smith	Dex Dennard		
Attendance Cards	—	—		
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	Song Leader: Tom Wilcox		
Opening Prayer	Mike Bannister	Ryan Rudloff		
Scripture Reading	—	—		
Communion	Dex Dennard	John Barnum		
Closing Prayer	James Fuller	Don Smith		
Wednesday Devotionals:	May 26 Don Smith	June 2 Prayer Night	June 9 John Barnum	June 16 Rafe Smith

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of May 23, 2021

Sunday Class Charles Hall
 Wed. Class TBD

What Is the Benefit of a Tract?

We have a tract printed each month for placement on the display tree stand in the foyer at Crockett Church of Christ. They are for anyone’s use. Now, what is the benefit of a tract?

There are several benefits. One, *it is small in size* and affords a quick reading and subsequent re-reading more readily (and more likely) than reading a full-size book on a subject. Verses are limited, and thereby, they are easily read or encourage follow up in the Bible to see the full context. Such is so helpful to discern real righteousness found in believing in Christ instead of resorting to our personal definitions of righteousness (Philippians 3:9). In this way, we can go back to the examples in the Book of Acts of the Apostles and see how they understood the message and obeyed to receive the righteousness of the Lord.

Two, *a tract sums up the subject*. The front of a tract usually reveals the subject matter and may even imply a biblical application of the truth about the topic. Sometimes, a tract may use a chart that shows how a person about whom we read in Scripture understood and obeyed the Gospel that he was taught.

Three, *a person can underline points to emphasize them*. Highlighters and pens work well for providing em-

phasis of information we don’t want someone to whom we give the tract to overlook. Marking or highlighting makes it possible to immediately revisit the major points. By encouraging a friend in study to give attention to the highlighted areas, the study may be taken to another level quickly and I have had people say, “I never saw that prior to your pointing this out.”

Four, of all the good a tract can do, *there is one thing a tract cannot do*. It cannot reach out and take anyone’s hand **to force a person to take a copy of the tract**. Sometimes, the subject is of great enough interest, it seems to cause the tract to *fly off the shelf* on which you have placed it to be seen and to be taken, but that’s the interest of the reader, not the tract forcing anyone to receive it or to read it.

Have you seen tracts as beneficial for you and your personal work with others? [Editor’s Note: Written literature is always ready when the reader is ready (unlike radio or TV), it has a long shelf life, it can go places we cannot go, and multiple copies of a tract can go simultaneously in different directions. Tracts are more affordable to produce and distribute than books, and they because of their comparative brevity are more likely to be read. A well-written tract provides the crux of any subject discussed therein. ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

Robert Rawson (Gospel Gazette Online, May 2021)