

Bible study (Christianity)

In Christian communities, **Bible study** is the study of the Bible by ordinary people as a personal religious or spiritual practice. Some denominations may call this **devotion** or **devotional acts**; however in other denominations *devotion* has other meanings. *Bible study* in this sense is distinct from *biblical studies*, which is a formal academic discipline.

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Personal Bible study

In Evangelical Protestantism, the time set aside to engage in personal Bible study and prayer is sometimes informally called a Quiet Time. In other traditions personal Bible study is referred to as "devotions". Catholic devotions and Anglican devotions both employ the *Lectio Divina* method of Bible reading.

Christians of all denominations may use study Bibles and Bible reading notes to assist them in their personal Bible studies. However, the use of such aids is discouraged in many churches, which advocate the simple reading of Bible passages. In some cases, the practice of reading through the entire Bible in a year is followed, this usually requires readings each day from both the Old and New Testament. This practice, however, has been widely criticized on the basis that the understanding gained of each specific passage is too vague.

The association of Bible study and prayer is an important one. Christians do not merely study the Bible as an academic discipline, but with the desire to know God better. Therefore, they frequently pray that God will give them understanding of the passage being studied. They also consider it necessary to consider what they read with an attitude of respect, rather than the critical attitude which is frequently followed in formal study. To them, the Bible is not just a sacred book, but is the very Word of God, that is, a message from God which has direct relevance to their daily lives.

Inductive Bible study

Inductive Bible study is a means of studying and exegeting a biblical passage. Richard Krejcir describes it terms of "interviewing a passage" without preconceptions or agendas.^[1] Inductive Bible study involves examining the ideas and words of the text, which leads to the meanings and then the interpretations, which in turn lead the reader to conclusions and applications.^[1] In inductive study, the reader will read a passage and then ask questions of how they personally interpret the verse(s). These questions can range from what the verse(s) literally means to how it applies to the believer's present personal circumstances. The purpose of these questions is to go deep enough into the text to extract the meaning and then to apply that gained knowledge to their personal life in order to create change for their own or other people's benefit.^[2]

Exegetical Bible study

In this type of study, the believer also goes beyond the surface value of the text. However, the purpose is not so much for personal application as gaining information. Exegetical study is used most often by pastors, theologians, writers, professors, and church leaders in order to prepare for sharing lessons with others. It is often categorized as advanced Bible study and is meant to extract the ideas found in the text for the primary purpose of teaching.^[2]

Small groups

Bible study groups within congregations are sometimes known as cell groups, though many different names exist. The Bible is often studied in informal small groups, and groups within parachurch organizations. During these study times, groups will set their main topic to be biblical studies. Though there may exist some form of worship and prayer, the purpose of Bible study is to collectively grasp an understanding of God through His Word. These groups become small communities often sharing this personal journey to discovering the meaning of the passage.

Some Churches encourage the formation of small groups while others form casually or due to shared interest or common circumstances (such as a singles small group or a newly wed couple group). These groups range from young children, normally middle school and up led by an adult, to elderly people. These groups can even interact with other small groups.

In recent years many successful church growth attribute the effectiveness of cell groups, groups can be formed based on age group e.g. youth, young adults etc., or by profile –singles, married couples, by gender male or female homogeneous grouping.

Catholic Bible study

Providentissimus Deus, "On the Study of Holy Scripture", is an encyclical letter issued by Pope Leo XIII on 18 November 1893. In it, he reviewed the history of Bible study from the time of the Church Fathers to the present, spoke against the errors of the Rationalists and "higher critics", and outlined principles of



Martin Luther studying the Bible on the banner of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland.

scripture study and guidelines for how scripture was to be taught in seminaries. He also addressed the issues of apparent contradictions between the Bible and physical science, or between one part of scripture and another, and how such apparent contradictions can be resolved.

Divino afflante Spiritu, ("Inspired by the Holy Spirit"), is a papal encyclical letter issued by Pope Pius XII on 30 September 1943 calling for new translations of the Bible from the original languages, instead of the Latin Vulgate of Jerome, which was revised multiple times and had formed the textual basis for all Catholic vernacular translations until then. It inaugurated the modern period of Roman Catholic biblical studies by encouraging the study of textual criticism (or *lower criticism*), pertaining to text of the Scriptures themselves and transmission thereof (for example, to determine correct readings) and permitted the use of the historical-critical method (or *higher criticism*), to be informed by theology, Sacred Tradition, and ecclesiastical history on the historical circumstances of the text.

The general theme of the "Word of God" was covered by the Second Vatican Council in November 1965 in its Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Dei Verbum.

The 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church describes principles of Bible Study in paragraphs 101-141 and other sections. For Catholics, the Word of God is not a "dead letter" but is incarnate and living. Christ must through the Holy Spirit open minds to understand the Scriptures.^[3]

Verbum Domini (English: The Word of the Lord) is a post-synodal apostolic exhortation issued by Pope Benedict XVI which deals with how the Catholic church should approach the Bible.^[4] He issued it following the XII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which had met in October 2008 to discuss "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church."^[5] *Verbum Domini* is dated September 30, 2010, for the Feast of St. Jerome, the patron saint of Biblical studies.

See also

- Eisegesis
- Exegesis
- Hermeneutics
- Sunday school

References

1. Krejcir, Richard J. "Why Inductive Bible Study?" (http://70030.net/ministry.com/articles_view.asp?articleid=31555&columnid=3801). Retrieved 7 March 2012.
2. Krejcir, Richard Joseph. "How to Study the Bible?" (<http://www.orthyword.org/pages.asp?pageid=53488>). Retrieved 29 October 2013.
3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 108 with allusion to Luke 24:45 (<https://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Luke%2024:45&version=nrsv>)
4. November 11, 2010 Catholic Culture : Latest Headlines : Pope Benedict issues major document on Sacred Scripture (link to full text) (<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=8243>)
5. Synod of Bishops - Index (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/index.htm)



The prohibited reading by Karel Ooms (1876)

External links

- [Bible Lessons Online \(https://biblelessons.online/twor\)](https://biblelessons.online/twor)
 - [bibletruthandprophecy.com \(http://bibletruthandprophecy.com/video/video-study-series/\)](http://bibletruthandprophecy.com/video/video-study-series/)
 - [Bible Study Radio \(http://www.biblestudyradio.org/\)](http://www.biblestudyradio.org/) by Bible Study Radio
 - [Bible Studies - Staying in the Word \(http://www.stayingintheword.com/\)](http://www.stayingintheword.com/)
 - [Useful Bible Studies \(http://www.usefulbible.com\)](http://www.usefulbible.com)
 - [Into Thy Word's Bible Studies \(http://70030.netministry.com/pages.asp?pageid=56850\)](http://70030.netministry.com/pages.asp?pageid=56850)
 - [Daily Portions Bible \(https://web.archive.org/web/20130428155635/http://dailyportionsbible.com/\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20130428155635/http://dailyportionsbible.com/)
 - [Bible Study Notes \(http://www.biblestudynotes.org/\)](http://www.biblestudynotes.org/)
 - [Small Groups \(http://70030.netministry.com/pages.asp?pageid=53497\)](http://70030.netministry.com/pages.asp?pageid=53497)
 - [The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies \(http://place.asburyseminary.edu/jibs/\)](http://place.asburyseminary.edu/jibs/)
 - [Bible Study Topics \(https://en.easternlightning.org/tag/bible-studies-topics/\)](https://en.easternlightning.org/tag/bible-studies-topics/)
 - [Bible Studies in EasyEnglish \(https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-studies/\)](https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-studies/) by MissionAssist
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