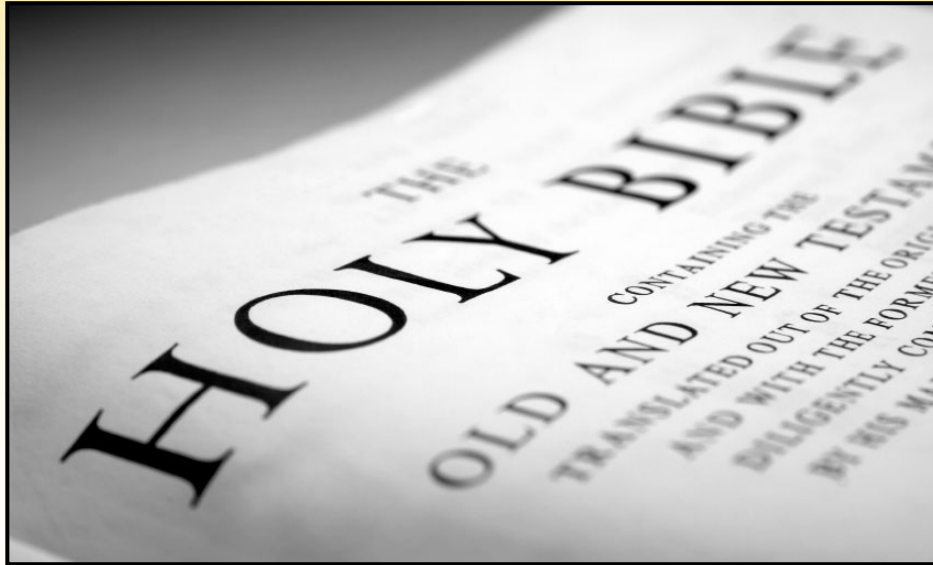


# RESIST STUDIOS

## BIBLE STUDIES

# APPROACHING GOD'S WORD



I want to start off with some great ways to approach the Word of God when studying or simply reading it. First, let me say that I'm not a Bible Scholar. I don't hold a doctorate degree in Theology, Hebrew, Greek or Bible History (yet). In fact I'm late in pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Media Arts and Animation at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh Online due to my military service. That's right! I'm not even attending seminary or a "Christian" university. So, aside from books I take the time to read and study along with websites I may visit and study...I have no "official" training in these subjects. I should also continue to be honest and admit I am currently taking time to read the Bible all the way through for the first time. I mean from cover to cover. Sure, I've read Genesis, Revelation, the Gospels, 1st & 2nd Samuel thru 1st & 2nd Chronicles, Daniel, Job, you get the point. I've bounced around, but never thoroughly read God's Word from Genesis to Revelation in its entirety.

Why am I telling you all of this? Well for a few reasons:

- I am beginning this study in humility before you and the Lord. I'm doing this by showing you that according to society's standards, I am by no means an "expert" and we'll touch on the ideas surrounding experts a little later.

- If the honesty in my confession regarding my "official" education and "official" experience in the Word, Hebrew, Greek or Middle Eastern Culture, etc. etc. or lack thereof upset you or drove you away, then you may be "full of yourself." That is if you feel like you are above me in any of these areas and I'm an ignorant brainwashed Christian or a carnal Christian. However, you may just be one of the poor manipulated individuals caught up in the hype of the "experts."

Simply put the reasons are to show that we are to first approach the Word of God in humility and not pride as well to show you how your defenses went up at the mere mention of a lack of "worldly" education. Also when I said you may be full of yourself you probably thought, "How dare he...I went to

to (insert university here) and studied (insert major here) so I'm far more qualified than he is on any of these subjects." Or if you said, "Well he hasn't even read his entire Bible! There's no way he's qualified to blog about Bible studies. He's even admitted he has no education and he isn't even a Pastor of a church...he has no right doing this. Plus I've read my Bible (insert number of times) and I feel I'm more spiritually mature than he is in my walk with the Lord." If you've said any of these to yourself... guess what? You've already proven both of the initial points to yourself, but I doubt you will admit that and I'm even amazed you're still reading this far. I can only praise God on that.

To continue, the point of this study is to show what I've learned thus far in my walk with Christ and how **I TRY** to approach his Word when I open it up for study or daily devotion. Again the first thing to do is humble yourself. Stay away from the "know it all" mentality. We humans tend to approach things as if we've already had some detailed experience and already know the answer. I know because, regrettably I'm one of these people. I find that occasionally in the past I had a tendency to talk down to others. I didn't intentionally do this to belittle people; it's just I felt more qualified in an area than they did. One good long time friend told me this in a heated debate about lukewarm Christians and real Christians. He told me I was "bullheaded" and sometimes I didn't tend to listen. At the time I felt he was just being a bit defensive because the Word of God was striking at his heart like the two edged sword it is. This may have been the case but I should have taken his words to heart considering my approach. Maybe I was right...maybe I wasn't. Don't get me wrong because there are times when we need hardcore fired up preachers telling it like it is whether feelings get hurt or not. That's not what I'm talking about...see you can tell it like it is but still be humble enough to get a lesson from the situation. For instance, there was an altercation at work with a co-worker sometime ago dealing with a small graphics job another co-worker and I took on. The client (our co-worker) had some harsh words for the product we produced and didn't understand our point of view about how we tried to approach the situation upfront and get as much information from him as possible. He just wanted us to come up with something and when we did he didn't like it. Well words were exchanged and I felt compelled to defend our work and tell him to back off because he was getting rather abusive verbally. During the altercation he mentioned that I have a certain way of talking to people. At the time I didn't hear his words because I felt the situation had degraded to an unprofessional level and I was just trying to end it in a professional Christian manner before everyone became too angry with each other. Not only that but recently my wife and I have been blessed with a 4th child. Unfortunately my wife may be suffering from depression due to various issues and I failed to properly humble myself before her and the Lord to help in the situation. Especially in the earlier years of our first child...I had a view of how a family should be and so did she and we are now learning that we need to regain proper communication between us as a couple. The Lord has been showing me that humility is always important in all things.

Again, why am I divulging so many personal experiences to you? They serve as examples that I have been there...I've placed myself up on that pedestal and sometimes it came crashing down when God felt it was necessary. Sometimes it's not pretty. I also want to show that I firmly believe that any teacher of God's Word should be willing to humble himself before the flock. We tend to forget that although a person may have a doctorate degree in Theology, Hebrew or Greek; it's going to be irrelevant when we stand before Christ. We tend to forget Bible Scholars, Ministers, Prophets and Pastors are still part of the flock although they are ordained as temporary leaders. They're still sheep just like the rest of the flock.

So, once again, the first way to approach god's Word is in **HUMILITY!**

Let's move on to the second:

Sometime ago as I began reading the book, “Conspiracies at the Cross” by Dr. Timothy Paul Jones, I came across a short collection of statements which bothered me. Here’s the quote with my emphasis added in bold:

“...I’ve heard multitudes of well-meaning Christians provide the same two reasons for their faith in Jesus.

The first reason runs something like this: ‘I just know Jesus is alive because I’ve felt His presence—that’s the only proof I need!’ The other one is usually in these terms: “**The Bible is God’s Word; so, if the Bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it.**”

I respect these believers’ sincerity; I really do. But may I be blunt for just a moment? **These are rotten reasons to believe in Jesus.**

Just because you’ve felt something that you identified as god’s presence doesn’t mean that what you felt was true.

**And how do you know that the Bible is God’s Word?** Is it simply because the Bible claims to be inspired by God? Unless **there’s a firmer foundation for the truth of Scripture than the Bible’s own claims about itself, the fact that ‘the Bible says it’ doesn’t settle anything.**”

*Conspiracies at the Cross pages 5-6*

And this is from a Christian Scholar? I mean come on! While I do agree with him about emotional feelings taken as truth...I vehemently disagree with his approach on genuine believers in the Word and it’s claims of Divine Inspiration. I’ll be fair and say that in defense of Dr. Timothy Paul Jones, he was trying to point out that Christians need to grow in their understanding of the history, origins and culture of Christianity and the Bible to readily defend the faith against some of the popular claims against the Bible and Christianity. While I firmly agree with his point, let me repeat that I strongly disagree with his view on people who JUST BELIEVE BECAUSE GOD SAID SO.

Where am I going with this?

Jesus Christ said himself:

*(My emphasis in bold)*

**Matthew 18: 2** And Jesus called the little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them. 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, **Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.** 4 **Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child,** the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6 **But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**

You can’t maintain the belief and humility of a child when you amass a mountain of head knowledge which causes you think that simply believing on Jesus because the Bible says so is a rotten reason to believe in Jesus can you? Don’t get me wrong, I’m quite sure there are thousands upon thousands of Christians with layers of degrees and they still maintain the faith of a Child and they will still make it

The point I'm trying to make is the point Jesus made in scripture. When we get too full of ourselves... it begins to cloud our spiritual judgment and understanding of the Lord and his Word.

*(My emphasis in bold)*

**1 Corinthians 2: 1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom,** declaring unto you the testimony of God. **2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.** 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: **7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of the world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

**1 Corinthians 3: 18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.** 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. 21 **Therefore let no man glory in men.** For all things are yours...

So what does this tell you? The second way of approaching God's Word piggy backs off of humility because the second way deals with approaching God's Word as a Child would approach any subject. You approach it like a sponge that soaks up water, as a beginner would any subject, as an infant taking his/her first steps. It doesn't matter how much head knowledge you amass in the scriptures...it would be wise to approach the scriptures as if you "don't know anything." Why? Because you only know a tiny portion of what God knows despite how much scripture you memorize or how affluent you are in the Biblical languages and culture. I know what you're thinking....you're going back to that first thought, "How dare he" right? Well take a look at this:

**1 Corinthians 13: 12** For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

When we get to heaven we will know more, but now we only "know in part" because "we see through a glass darkly." We don't know everything no matter how much we soak up...we won't know everything. Let me ask you a question. What was Peter and Andrew's profession when Jesus recruited them as disciples? They were fisherman, beginners to what was to come. They were children to Christian Theology. Sure they probably knew the Mosaic Law front and back, but they had no hands on knowledge of Jesus, who he was and what he would do aside from Old Testament prophecies. What I'm getting at is they had no means to pull the prophecies together and apply them readily. They just dropped everything and followed the Lord. I'm of the mind that they believed instantly on Jesus, but even during their walk WITH THE LORD there were things they did not understand. These things would not be understood until the Lord ascended into heaven after his resurrection. Check this out:

**Matthew 4: 17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. **18** And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. **19** And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fisher of men. **20** And they straightway left their

nets, and followed him.

Granted it's possible Peter and Andrew heard of Jesus, but this event occurs after John the Baptist baptized the Lord and after the temptation in the wilderness. Jesus began preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and it's quite possible Peter or Andrew heard him and believed. However...they still did not have in depth knowledge of any Christian Theology aside from the Mosaic Law and the words of the prophets. They were fishermen...blue collar workers if you will, but they were saved by BELIEF and not head knowledge.

Furthermore we need to understand that people speak different languages. Do you think the underground church in China really has a need or care for the original Greek or Hebrew while hiding from government persecution? What about Christians under fire in African countries of heavy Muslim influence or Christians in Middle Eastern Muslim Countries? Do you think they take the time to dive into a Strong's concordance while living in holes in the ground or fleeing from their enemies? I even wonder if they have something like that. Maybe they do! However, when they're facing death do you think they quote scripture in Hebrew or their original language? I'm betting they do it in their original language.

Now up to this point, I probably sound like I'm against higher education and deep word studies in the scripture. This isn't the case. I've been trying to drive home two of the most important points when approaching the Word: Humility and Child-like Faith/Belief in the Word and Jesus Christ.

I cannot deny the fact that the Word commands us to grow in our walk and move beyond a basic understanding of spiritual things to a deeper understanding of the Bible. We are supposed to do this while maintaining a childlike faith and belief. **NOTHING** or **NO ONE** should derail our ability to simply BELIEVE. Therefore there is ABSOLUTELY nothing wrong...nothing, zip, zilch, NOT A THING WRONG with answering, "I believe the Bible is God's Word, and the Bible says so, so that settles it for me." HOWEVER, there is also nothing wrong with learning the deeper things of the Word. In fact we are told to move from milk to meat:

*(My emphasis in bold)*

**1 Corinthians 3: 1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, nether yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?**

Now this passage is of course talking about carnal Christians who still walk the path of a sinner. They don't want to learn the deeper things of God. They are satisfied with the basics, but the scripture is two-fold in its application as it is also talking about those sincere Christians who become stagnant in their walk with the Lord and do not grow at all. Let's check out another passage:

*(My emphasis in bold)*

**Hebrews 5: 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong**

**meat belongeth to them that are of full age**, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

**1 Peter 2: 2** As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that **ye may grow** thereby...

So what does that tell you? It's okay for Christians to go to a University and earn a degree in Middle Eastern history, Ancient Greek, Ancient Hebrew and whatever else pertains to growing in the Word. That's all fine and dandy I am not against that. I believe God leads men to gain higher education to glorify his kingdom. There are many old and new books on my shelf written by Bible Scholars. I'm not against this at all. However, these passages are dealing with the deeper doctrines of the Bible and how to apply it to life. Understanding those abominations of the Old Testament and that they do still apply today...of course the death penalty for certain actions no longer applies but some of those things in the Old Testament still bring judgment upon people and nations. They include witchcraft, sorcery, homosexuality, bestiality, human sacrifice, idolatry, etc. This is what the passage means when it says "that ye may grow..." and "who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." How can discern and teach if you don't know? You don't educate yourself from the Bible then allow yourself to point it out in the world, stray away from it and warn others. Again, this is why the passage says that at "the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first principles." This means at the time you should be out there teaching others the basics and more...you need to learn the basics yourself because you don't know them and you need to learn them and grow in the Word and in your walk with Christ.

So let's review where we're at so far:

- 1) Approach the Word in Humility
- 2) With a Child-like faith and Understanding
- 3) With the will and intent to grow in the Word and in your Walk with Christ

This fourth point should be practiced before and after you approach God's Word. By now, you may know what I'm going to say. The fourth point is prayer. Prayer is most important while using your sword. We should constantly pray...ALWAYS. We should take the time to ask the Lord to show us what HE WANTS US TO UNDERSTAND AND LEARN as it PERTAINS TO US and our relationship with Him. For instance, I used to frequent Yahoo answers and other sites to answer questions from unbelievers. I thought this helped me study and remember the scripture. While I was able to memorize scripture and gain experience answering certain questions...I was not applying the Word to myself. You see all these points go hand in hand. I failed to humble myself and actually absorb the Word to apply it. I failed to allow it to edify me. Instead I only gained head knowledge and used the Word to try to get a one up over the atheists, neo-pagans, Muslims or whoever else was taking shots at the Bible or Christians. I felt I was a defender of the faith...in some ways yes, but in other ways I was being arrogant and brash. I wasn't letting the Lord speak through me with his Word, I was trying to show my Knowledge of it. Kind of like a "Nan-Nanna-Boo-Boo I know better than you do" mentality. I should have approached these situations in prayer and allowed Go to use me and teach me his Word and how to relay it to these people. Don't get me wrong, I believe in giving the blunt truth from scripture. I don't believe in sugar coating anything...but my reasons were all wrong. My heart was deceiving me into believing I was doing good when in reality I was only serving my flesh and ego.

**1 Colossians 1: 9** For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; **10** That ye might walk worth of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in

every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness...

Plus, all throughout scripture you find examples of saints in the Bible praying when they required understanding of a situation. Think about Moses. How many times did he pray to the Lord in a dire situation where he needed to know what to do? What about David? The Psalms are full of prayers in the form of songs to the Lord. Also remember Ephesians 6: 18:

**Ephesians 6: 18** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints...

The fifth point is occasionally fasting to gain a deeper fellowship with the Lord. Fasting is not a requirement for Christians but if we apply the Bible and the principles therein then fasting is a good way to grow closer to the Lord and strengthen our prayers. Notice this passage on Daniel:

**Daniel 10: 2** In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. **3** I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. **4** And in the fourth and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; **5** Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: **6** His body also was like the beryl and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Daniel fasted for three weeks and had a vision of Christ. (Cross reference with Revelation 1: 11-16) Why did Daniel have a vision of Christ? Well, Christ himself answers this in Daniel: (My emphasis in bold and underlined in red)

**Daniel 10: 12** Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for **from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.**

Honestly, Daniel 10: 12 could be the text for this entire study. First, let's expound upon the fasting part and we'll close with the rest of this verse. Daniel chastened himself before the Lord. You see that right? Chastened himself...What does Christ mean? Go back to Daniel 10: 2-6 and that's what Christ meant. Daniel fasted and therefore the Lord answered his prayers and appeared before him to give him understanding about the latter days. (See verse 14 and Daniel 11: 6) Daniel was also a believer which allowed God to use him as well.

In closing, Daniel 10: 12 summarizes this entire study. Daniel "set his heart to understand" meaning he first humbled himself, believed as a Child, and sought to grow, then he chastened himself before the Lord and his words were heard and the Lord came for his words. He fasted and prayed. So let's review. How do we approach the Word in study and devotion?

- 1) Approach the Word in Humility
- 2) With a Childlike faith and Understanding
- 3) With the will and intent to grow in the Word and in your walk with Christ
- 4) In prayer before and after daily devotionals and study
- 5) And occasionally in fasting.

So there you have it...five Biblical ways to approach study and daily readings of the Bible. Let me clarify a few things here in the end. I'm not against education as long as it doesn't derail a believer's faith. If you find your curriculum is heavy in anti-God/anti-sincere Belief propaganda...I have advice for you...walk away. While I do believe all Christians need to grow from milk to meat I don't believe the Lord wants you to sacrifice your ability to simply BELIEVE. Also, God's Word should always come before the commentary, interpretations and opinions of any individual or. Make sure all things are aligned with scripture. If it doesn't match God's Word, then it's probably not of God. I'm also not against learning the ancient languages of the Bible or cross referencing in concordances or lexicons so long as you understand those were the work of men and some of them may not have been believers. Bottom line...put your TRUST in the LORD and he will see you through.

I'll leave you with this:

*(My emphasis in bold)*

**John 8:** 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word**, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

God Bless and I pray this has edified you in some way,

*Brother Roy*