

# TWELVE RULES for Bible Study

*Why is the Bible the most misunderstood book in all history? The most twisted, distorted, maligned, misrepresented and lied-about book there is? Because people refuse to believe it means exactly what it says! Apply these simple basic rules and you will begin to really understand the plain truth of God's Word!*

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**W**HAT ARE WE? Were we put on earth for a PURPOSE? And WHAT is that purpose? WHY are human lives empty, discontented, unhappy? How may human life become HAPPY, filled with interest, ABUNDANT, successful, prosperous? WHAT is the real cause of wars, and THE WAY to world peace?

WHAT lies on after death — what is THE WAY to a happy, abundant, ETERNAL life? No book ever written, except the Holy Bible, reveals the answers to these fundamental questions of life!

Yet, why do we find such confusion — such disagreement as to what this Book says? WHY don't the hundreds of differing church denominations and sects AGREE on what their acknowledged textbook SAYS? WHY do so many individuals, capable of understanding almost any other book, say: "I just can't understand the BIBLE"?

## Study for Yourself

You yourself need to understand HOW to get the most out of God's Word.

You need to KNOW that GOD DOES EXIST — and you need to KNOW that THE BIBLE IS GOD'S INSPIRED WORD! If you are in any doubt about these two basic points, write immediately for our free booklets *Does God Exist?* and *The Proof of the Bible*. Before even beginning to seriously STUDY the Bible, you must realize that your Creator is its divine author.

In Bible study, as well as with anything else, there is a *right* and a *wrong* way to accomplish. There are certain rules which, if followed, will give you a more thorough understanding of God's

Word — leave you with fewer questions, begin to help you think and act as God does because you understand what He says in His Word.

The following rules are not necessarily in order — they are certainly not *all* the rules of Bible study — but they are *basic* and *important* and will help you gain the Truth from God's Word.

## Pray for Guidance

First, before you even open the Bible, you must ask God in PRAYER to open your mind to His Word in the study that you intend to make. David was a man after God's own heart — he studied that portion of God's Word which was available to him in his day. He meditated, thought about and considered God's laws and His ways. He was close to God in every way, and yet many times throughout the Psalms we read how David ASKED God to *guide* him in his study, to *open* his mind, to *reveal* His Truth.

"TEACH ME, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. GIVE ME understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. MAKE ME TO GO in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. INCLINE MY HEART unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. . . . STABLISH THY WORD unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. . . . Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: QUICKEN ME in thy righteousness" (Ps. 119:33-40).

Without sincerely and believingly asking God's *direction* in your Bible study — without seeking God's Kingdom and His righteousness first (Matt. 6:33) — Bible study of itself would be

futile. Just as you can worship God in vain (Mark 7:7), so you can study His Word in vain! Many wise and intelligent men have made a life study of God's Word in its original languages, and yet did not understand the depth of its meaning.

Men like Moffatt, who translated the *entire Bible* from Genesis to Revelation, certainly studied God's Word, but did not get the Message, did not understand the Gospel.

Even in the introduction to his translation, Moffatt explains how he feels the Old Testament is a compilation of Jewish literature! Adam Clarke wrote six volumes of a commentary on *every last verse in the Bible* — yet not by any stretch of the imagination could he be construed to have understood God's Plan.

The study and work that men of this intelligence have contributed CAN be helpful to us. But not because of any special intelligence that we may have — only because we have asked God to open our minds and give us His understanding of His Word.

## Formal Education Not Necessary

Do not feel that you have not had enough education, or that you are *not intelligent enough* to really study God's Word. God tells us plainly that it is not the wise, the mighty or the noble that He is calling to an understanding of His word now — read I Corinthians 1:25-27.

Take for granted that you do not know of yourself how to understand the Plan of God — that's why you must ASK Him to make it plain!

If all that was needed to understand



God's Word were *brains*, then a vast number of the people of the world would have a thorough understanding of God's Word! God says, "... They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jer. 4:22). As long as you know *how to read*, you can get down on your knees and sincerely ask God to guide you in a study of His Word. He will open your mind to understand things that the most intelligent minds of mankind have not been able to understand. *Prayer* will open to you an understanding of God's Word that Einstein did not have. *Prayer* will open your mind to understand God's Word in a way that the graduates of the great universities of the world are not able to understand.

PRAYER — your contact with God — is important in the beginning of your study of His Word — His contact with you — or you may spend endless hours of studying His Word like a Pharisee. The time spent, the verses covered, your understanding of the depth of the Greek, your memorization of how many verses there are in the Bible, will be of NO AVAIL at the return of Jesus Christ! *Only that part of His Word which you have made a part of your very character will be of any account!*

HEART-FELT PRAYER for God's guidance in your own personal Bible study will insure success!

### Attitude Must Be for Self-Correction

This SECOND rule really goes hand-in-hand with the first. Before you rise from your knees in prayer, you should fully recognize in your own mind and heart that your *purpose* for this Bible study is not just to gain academic knowledge, not only to prove or disprove a certain doctrine or fact — but to get you closer to the stature of the fullness of the very character of Jesus Christ. The only way this can be done is for the *carnal you* to BE CORRECTED!

God's Word is written directly to each of us as an individual — it is personal, direct — and as far as our achieving salvation is concerned has nothing to do with anybody else on the face of the earth!

Therefore your attitude should be the

same as Jeremiah's. In fact, since you're going to be *studying* the Bible, turn to Jeremiah 10:23 and read two verses there meaningfully and as part of your prayer! "O Lord, I know that the way of man is *not in himself*: it is NOT IN MAN that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, *CORRECT ME*, but with *judgment*; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing."

Don't just go through this mechanically, really mean it! Don't just do this because this article *says* to do it, but because *you want correction from your Creator!*

In order for your attitude to be proper in your approach to God's Word, turning to one other scripture would clearly aid you in understanding what your approach should be — in educating your attitude to be right before you begin. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that *ye* build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but *to THIS MAN will I look*, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and TREMBLETH AT MY WORD. . . . Hear the word of the Lord, *ye that tremble at his word*"! (Isa. 66:1-2, 5.)

This Bible that you are studying is the *very MIND and THOUGHTS of your Creator God!* It is not to be argued about. It is not meant to be a club to chastise OTHER people with! In other words, if you are a husband, DO NOT use Ephesians 5:22 as a weapon against your wife — or, if you are a wife, DO NOT use Ephesians 5:25 as a weapon against your husband! But each of you as husband or wife apply that scripture which refers to *YOU to yourself and YOURSELF ONLY!*

### Prove All Things

This THIRD rule is in a way an extension of the proper attitude of rule number two. Your approach to God's Word should be *completely POSITIVE!* The example given by the Bereans in Acts 17:11: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily*, whether those things WERE so" — this

was a *positive* attitude! The Bereans were not searching the Scriptures to prove Paul was *wrong!* They were NOT negative, angry, bitter.

So if you have heard something about the Bible that you do not fully understand, your approach in your own personal Bible study should be to prove that it is so.

The common *misunderstanding* of I Thessalonians 5:21 which says, "Prove all things," is that this *proof* must entail a deep research into the Hebrew or Greek backgrounds, and into encyclopedias and historical references, lexicons and musty historical records. This is erroneous. If your research takes you into references of this sort, and you are endeavoring to *prove POSITIVELY* God's Truth, this is perfectly all right — but it is *not always necessary*.

This word "*prove*" is POSITIVE. That is the one main point of this particular law of Bible study. But the word itself means, *to put to the test*. There are *proving* grounds on which the modern automobiles manufactured in Detroit are *tested*. In the parable Jesus Christ uses regarding the wedding supper, there is a reference to a man who had just bought five yoke of oxen. The excuse he gave for not coming to the supper was that he wanted to *prove* these oxen (Luke 14:19). This is the *same Greek word* as used in I Thessalonians 5:21. Yet this man did not mean that he was going to go to his local library and look up in some dictionary a description of oxen to find out for sure *whether they WERE oxen* — it meant he wanted to be excused from the wedding supper so that he might take the oxen out to the field, yoke them up, hook a plow behind them and find out whether they would be able to do what oxen are supposed to be able to do! This is basically what God means in I Thessalonians 5:21.

For example, God commands us in the book of Malachi to prove Him in tithing. What He wants us to DO is *not* to technically search lexicons to find out Greek and Hebrew derivations, but — just as the principle is throughout the entire Bible — to DO *what He says to do*. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and PROVE ME [TEST ME]



now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). This is a **POSITIVE going forward**, a finding out of what God **DOES** say, not a search for *error* or *disproof*.

### Bible Never Contradicts Itself

If you have difficulty in understanding any particular scripture — if it *seems* to say something different from another scripture, you may just need to study further. Always remember beyond any shadow of a doubt the principle of rule *four*: that *God never contradicts Himself*. Therefore, either your understanding of the particular scripture or the translation that you are reading is incorrect or misunderstood.

Malachi 3:6, "For I am the Lord, I **CHANGE NOT**; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," **MEANS** what it says. Hebrews 13:8 — "Jesus Christ *the SAME* yesterday, and to day, and for ever" — **MEANS** what it says.

The very *source* of truth is God's Word (John 17:17) — and unless your approach to it, your study of it, is from this point of view you will never gain any understanding from it.

Let's notice an *apparent* contradiction appearing in Proverbs 26:4, 5 — verse four reads "**ANSWER NOT** a fool according to his folly." Yet, the very next verse tells us, "**ANSWER** a fool according to his folly."

Actually, these two verses are not contradictory — **BUT COMPLEMENTARY**! The use of either verse — that is, its principle applied to a particular use — depends on the *set of circumstances*. Both these verses contain gems of wisdom that each one of us needs to learn to properly apply in answering other people's questions.

The **LAST PART OF EACH VERSE** holds the **KEY** which unlocks the meaning of these verses — and shows them to be *practical, usable and wise principles*.

Verse four reads, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, *lest thou also be like unto him*." The last part of the verse holds the **KEY**: Don't degrade yourself by descending to **HIS LEVEL** in an **ARGUMENT**! Don't harangue — don't bite back, don't try to "argue

*back*" — with someone who is obviously trying to stir contention.

The perfect example of this is found in Luke 20:1-8. Here Christ was teaching in the temple. The Pharisees came to Him with these words: "Tell us, **BY WHAT AUTHORITY** doest thou these things? or **WHO** is he that gave thee this authority?"

Quite obviously, they weren't interested in learning anything — they weren't coming as humble individuals hungering after new knowledge. **THEY WERE THERE TO ARGUE WITH CHRIST!**

Notice how Christ handled the situation.

"And he answered and said unto them, I will also **ASK YOU ONE** thing, *and answer me*: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"

"And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?"

"But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

"And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.

"And Jesus said unto them, **NEITHER TELL I YOU** by what authority I do these things" (Luke 20:3-8).

Christ answered their question *with a question*! To answer their question directly would have only resulted in a verbal battle. An argument would have ensued. Christ avoided strife by **NOT answering them according to their folly**.

Now, understand verse five in Proverbs 26. Again, the last part of the verse holds the **KEY**: "Answer a fool according to his folly, *lest he be wise in his own conceit*."

In this case, if you don't answer his question — if you don't accept his challenge — he is going to **THINK HIMSELF** to be wise!

The Apostle Paul had this problem. *False apostles* in Corinth were claiming **THEY WERE the true apostles** of Christ. The congregation was being **LED ASTRAY**!

Now was not the time for silence, or clever questions! Now was the time to **SMASH** the contentions — to **ANSWER** these false apostles!

Notice II Corinthians 11:23 — and how he answered these *foolish* men.

"Are they ministers of Christ? (**I SPEAK AS A FOOL**) I am more; in labours *more abundant*, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one . . . In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

Paul showed the people *HE* was their true minister! He *answered* and *debunked* the claims of these other men.

There is no contradiction! But rather much wisdom in these two verses. Wisdom we need to **APPLY** in *our daily lives*!

### What DOES the Bible Say?

This **FIFTH** rule of Bible study often solves many problems. Many times our misunderstanding comes from the *confusion that this world causes* — from a misinterpretation, a direct *twisting* of a scripture to conform to false doctrines.

"Woe unto them that *call* evil good, and good evil; that *put* darkness for light, and light for darkness; that *put* bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are *wise* in **THEIR OWN eyes**, and prudent in **THEIR OWN sight**!" (Isa. 5:20-23.) Many who *claim* to be representatives of God, the *interpreters* of His Word, **TWIST** and **WREST** that Word to their own destruction and the destruction of their hearers.

So always remember to ask yourself — *and, answer* — the question: "What *does* the **BIBLE** say?"

John 3:6 is a good example of this. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This is a very clear scripture, explaining that flesh is flesh and spirit is spirit! That's what the Bible says! But that's not what *people say* the Bible says!

Sometimes you may have to refer to a reference work (which we will cover under a separate rule) for scriptures such as I John 5:7.

Or perhaps a note in the *margin* of your Bible will help you understand a scripture that *seems* to contradict what you know to be the truth. Take the example of Luke 17:20-21 — "The



kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, *the kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU.*" Here, the Bible *does* say, "The kingdom of God is *within* you." But here it is only the King James *translation* which says this — not necessarily God's exact Word. So, since it is not clear in the *King James* translation, other aids are necessary to find out what it does say.

This leads automatically to the next rule of Bible study, rule number six.

### Check the Context

Context means, con — *with*, text — *text*. In order to check the context you merely read the *texts which come WITH* the text that is in question. You read the texts *BEFORE* and the *texts AFTER*. In this example of Luke 17:21, you need to also ask yourself a number of questions regarding the context. The text that is with (*con*) Luke 17:21, is Luke 17:20! This verse *just before* answers the question regarding verse 21, but in order to *answer* that question you must *ask* yourself the question, "WHO?"

In other words you must ask yourself, if "the Kingdom of God is *within* you" — WHO is the YOU that the Bible is referring to? In this case verse 20 explains that it is the *Pharisees!* Certainly you KNOW Jesus Christ wasn't saying that the Kingdom of God is inside of PHARISEES! Therefore, the *con* (*with*) text helps you to see that there must be a *mistranslation* in this particular verse.

And sure enough, when you check the margin of your Bible you will find that the word "within" should be better translated "among" — referring to Jesus Himself as a Representative of God's Kingdom who was at that time "among" the Pharisees!

In order to understand any scripture thoroughly, in its context, you need to ask yourself — and answer for yourself — all the following questions: WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? WHY? WHO? HOW? When you have answered these questions regarding any particular text, and you have read all of the accompanying texts, *with* the text in question, *you will have GOD's answer to the problem.*

Many people misunderstand Mark

7:19 — thinking that in this place unclean meats were cleansed by Christ — simply because they do not read the context. In this case the context is the *entire chapter*. You must go back from verse 19, until you begin to find the subject about which verse 19 is talking. That subject has to do with whether or not to wash your hands ceremonially before you eat, and has nothing to do with whether the food you eat is clean or unclean according to the laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

There are even *lies* written in the Bible, and you have to be careful that you ask yourself *exactly* what the Bible says in the *entirety* of the context of any one statement. *The Bible says*, "Ye shall NOT surely die" (Gen. 3:4). This is a *Biblical* statement! But in order to find out whether it's true or not you have to find out WHO said it. In this particular case the same verse explains that Satan the devil said it, but in order to find out whether it is true or not (because sometimes even Satan tells the truth) you have to go back in the *context* until you come to Genesis 2:17 where the Creator God is quoted as saying, "THOU SHALT SURELY DIE"! Then you know what the *Bible, in its ENTIRETY and in its truth, DOES SAY!*

This brings us to rule number seven.

### Get All the Scriptures

No one scripture can *of itself*, taken *OUT of context*, be used to establish the Truth. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any *private* interpretation" (II Peter 1:20).

God has put His Bible together in a very unusual manner. He has written it so that men could study it intricately in its original languages, poring over its pages for their entire lifetime — *and yet never come to a knowledge of the truth.* Many people have memorized great sections of the Bible and yet not come to realize what those sections mean. You must take the whole Bible in its entire context, getting *all of the scriptures* in that Bible *on any one subject* BEFORE you can come to the knowledge of that particular subject from God's point of view.

"Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from

the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. . . ."

That is how the converted mind is to study the Bible. Yet, when the unconverted study God's Word a little here and a little there they are *STILL not able to understand* the Message of God's Truth because they do not have His Holy Spirit guiding them. That Holy Spirit — the very mind and understanding of God — is the power that inspired those words in the first place, and *WITHOUT THAT SPIRIT TO INSPIRE THE UNDERSTANDING, THE DOOR TO THE WORD OF GOD REMAINS SHUT!* (The Holy Spirit is given *only* to those who OBEY God — Acts 5:32.) Continuing from Isaiah: "... But the word of the Lord *was* unto them [those who DISOBEY] precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isa. 28:9-10, 13).

Oftentimes people think that the Bible is *contradicting* itself when actually all it is doing is *supplementing* itself. A good example of this is found in Matthew 27:37 as compared to Luke 23:38. Here Matthew and Luke *appear* to contradict one another in their statements as to what was written on the sign affixed to the stake upon which Jesus Christ was crucified.

Now while you're going through this article, just take time to *get your Bible* and *USE* this example to *PROVE* that getting *all* of the scriptures on any one subject *WILL* give you God's understanding on it. In order to find out *what* was written on that sign, *who* wrote it, and *how many* languages it was written in, you will need to put at least four scriptures together, not just two. So turn first to Matthew 27:37, and *write down* what the Bible says was written on that sign. Then, *go right on* to Mark 15:26 and write beneath what you have written what *Mark* says was written on that sign. Then do the same with Luke 23:38 and also John 19:19. Put them all together and you will see what was written on that sign.

If *one* of these scriptures were left



out you would not know that it was *Pilate* who did the writing. If *two* of these scriptures were left out you would not know that the writing was originally done in *three languages*. These four bits of information, each from a different author, supply us with a complete record of what was written there originally. No one scripture contradicts the other — each only serves to complement and round out the information of the other.

### Let the Bible Interpret the Bible

So many people write in to *The WORLD TOMORROW* and comment how much they enjoy *Mr. Armstrong's interpretation* of the Bible. Over and over again you will hear Mr. Armstrong explain to the radio audience that it is *NOT his interpretation* that is being heard over *The WORLD TOMORROW*, but only PLAIN BIBLE TRUTH!

In your edition of the King James Bible the book of Revelation will probably be entitled "The Revelation of *St. John the Divine*." This is an excellent example of MAN's *interpretation*. Now in order for you to understand *what* the book of Revelation is — *whose* revelation it is, *to whom* it was written and *what* it is about — all you have to do is read the first few verses of THE BOOK ITSELF! In fact the very first words of the very first verse *directly contradict man's interpretation* of the Bible with the plain Bible statement that this book is "THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" (Rev. 1:1.)

Romans 3:4 is a good clear principle to live by in this EIGHTH rule of Bible study: "... Let GOD be true, but every man a liar."

This book of Revelation has long been an enigma to the people of the world. GOD SAYS it is a book of *revelation*. *The world says* it is a book of *hidden mystery*. People have come up with many weird interpretations for the book of Revelation — yet the book of Revelation is VIVID in its own clear description and needs no interpretation! Continue in Revelation 1:

Take the case of the seven golden candlesticks that John saw in Revelation 1. You don't have to *wonder* what these seven golden candlesticks are — all you have to do is READ ON until you come,

in the *context*, to verse 20; and that verse tells you plainly that the seven candlesticks ARE the seven churches. In verse 16 it states that John saw *seven stars* in the hand of the Son of man. There is no need to go into great eloquent illustrations of what the seven stars are; because again verse 20 reveals the plain Bible truth — no interpretation necessary — that the seven stars ARE the angels of the seven churches. And so it goes through the rest of the Bible.

All you have to do is be patient and search God's Word and you will come up with God's clear answers to the muddled questions of mankind.

### Don't Put Vague Scriptures First

Perhaps a better general statement of this NINTH rule of Bible study would be: *Never establish a doctrine by a vague or difficult-to-be-understood scripture.*

Too many people *assume* that the vision which Peter had regarding the unclean beasts lowered to him on a sheet affirms that God "cleansed" unclean meat. Because they *take out of context* a verse, unclear of itself, that says, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). However, all they need to do is read on *two more verses* and verse 17 very plainly says that *Peter himself doubted* what the vision meant when he saw it. He didn't jump to any conclusions, but vague-scripture quoters are eager to! Further reading in the same chapter will explain what Peter finally came to understand about the vision — read verse 28: "God hath showed me [by means of this vision] that *I should not call any MAN common or unclean.*"

And, now consider the *tenth* rule.

### Use Several Translations

In Matthew 27:46 Jesus Christ, while hanging on the stake before He died, used the *Aramaic* translation of the first verse of Psalm 22. Even though the original Word of God was inspired in the Hebrew or the Greek, God has allowed it to be translated into nearly every language spoken by mankind. If we were going to be particular about which language we used or which translation, then we would all have to learn

Hebrew and Greek and study the Bible in its original languages.

The King James Version was written about 360 years ago. In the time since, the English language has undergone many changes. Sometimes those texts which are vague and unclear in the King James can be cleared up very easily by just reading a *more modern translation*, such as the Moffatt or the Revised Standard Version.

However, one note of caution should be brought out at this point. Modern translations such as the RSV, Moffatt version, and The New English Bible as well as paraphrases such as The Living Series (e.g., *Living Prophecies*, *Living Gospels*, etc.) should NOT be solely relied upon. The King James Version is still the standard by which to judge the accuracy of these other translations, versions, and paraphrases. These modern renderings will often clarify vague verses in the King James, but they are most likely in error when they *totally depart* from the KJV. Many of these modern versions have been rendered from faulty original texts. Further information about this vital point may be obtained by writing for our *free* article "Should We Use the New English Bible?"

But there is one thing to note about the King James translation, and that is regarding italics. This word *italic* is written in italics. Words that look like this in your King James Version are NOT in the original languages but are *supplied* by the translators. So everywhere in the King James Version where you notice words in italics they are supplied to help you understand the meaning of the sentence. However, the translators did not always supply the words correctly. So some of these words in italics are incorrect and do not help, but rather hinder, your understanding.

On the other hand, NOT *all of the words which ARE supplied* by the translators are in italics. Take I John 5:7 for instance, where the reference to three who bear witness in heaven is a completely erroneous reference inserted by a monk-copyist in the Middle Ages. The fact is this particular verse appears only in the King James Version and is in NONE of the other translations of the Bible.



Often these difficulties will be cleared up by merely reading another translation and comparing it to the King James. Any questions arising after a thorough reading through several translations of any one verse will be few, and can be handled by studying further in Bible helps.

If there are *words* that you have difficulty in understanding, remember not only to look them up in an English dictionary such as Webster's, but if possible in a *Bible dictionary* or in a concordance so that you can see what the meaning of the word in the original is. Sometimes people will look up a word in a modern dictionary and find a definition that is not at all the *sense* of the word as used in the King James Version. Take for example the word "conversation" in I Peter 3. Conversation to us today means talking between two people. A modern dictionary will give this definition. However, in the time of King James this particular word meant *the entire conduct* of a person, and that is the usual meaning in the Bible of this word. In order to understand it then, you need to understand the meaning of the *original* word, and not just the meaning in a modern dictionary.

But this leads to our ELEVENTH rule.

### Don't Establish Doctrine With "Bible Helps"

*Clarke's Commentary* and the commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown are good reference works — as is *Halley's Pocket Bible Handbook*. Sometimes in the backs of Bibles there will be sections called "Bible Helps." Even the marginal references in your Bible, which *sometimes* prove to be very helpful, are often misleading. These "helps" may often lead you astray.

Therefore, all of these Bible helps should be used **ONLY** to establish historical or grammatical facts related to the Bible and **MUST NOT** be used *to establish doctrine or to interpret the meaning of the Bible itself*. In my Bible at Revelation 1:10 which says "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day..." there is a little *z* by "the Lord's day." In the margin column by the *z* there are two scriptural references — one to Acts 20:7 and the other to I Corinthians

16:2, which both refer to the *first day of the week*, but have nothing to do with the Lord's day, which is explained in the rest of the book of Revelation.

Yet to find out what the BIBLE says about what day Jesus Christ is Lord of, read Mark 2:27-28! "And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore *the Son of man is LORD also of the SABBATH.*"

So, with Bible helps you must remember to use them only for technical facts and not for interpretative facts. And now, rule TWELVE:

### Mark Your Bible!

Perhaps you have thought the Bible should not be marked. But realize that what is *holy* about the Bible is not the paper, ink and leather out of which it is made, but the *words of truth, the spiritual facts it contains!* Any *physical* tool you can employ — such as marking with a pen or colored pencils — to help you remember and apply the spiritual truths in your life, is right with God! He expects you to **USE** His written Word to worship HIM — not physical paper and ink! Sometimes we hold back from marking the Bible and think that we'll do it later — especially when we're listening to a point that we need to remember about a particular scripture — but we never seem to get around to it. It's always so difficult to get out the pencil and ruler, and have our hands clean. So I have found over years of experience that the best way to mark the Bible is to **JUST MARK IT!**

When you find out for instance that the word "conversation" in I Peter 3:1 ought to be "conduct," the thing you need to do is to **IMMEDIATELY WRITE DOWN** "conduct" in the margin and draw a little line and circle the word "conversation" in the verse. This way you will always remember.

Apply these twelve rules diligently, and your Bible study will be both interesting and rewarding.

### Ambassador College Correspondence Course

For more than a decade and a half, Ambassador College has been helping scores of thousands to become "Biblical

literates" through the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. This unique course of *Biblical understanding* has led nearly 200,000 students in nearly every country on earth to a greater knowledge and understanding of the least-read and most-misunderstood book in the world.

This course is a totally *different* method of Bible study. It makes it easy to understand the Bible, and shows how the Bible is **RELEVANT** to the Space Age! It is dynamic, down-to-earth — a course of understanding. It pulls no punches. It tells the truth straight from the Bible. Each 16-page, beautifully illustrated, monthly lesson of this 24-lesson course provides ample space to present a *very complete, in-depth study* of each topic.

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Will you let the Ambassador College Correspondence Course make the Bible 100 percent relevant to *your life* today? You can begin by writing us a letter requesting enrollment and dropping it in the mailbox today. You'll receive the first 12 lessons — *one a month* — after which we'll send you a renewal card to let us know whether you want to continue with the final 12 lessons.

Do it *right now* — lest you forget! You'll be glad you did. □

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