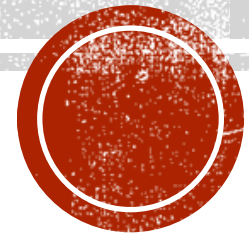


BASIC TRAINING IN THE BIBLE

Andrew Stepp | Session 1: Introduction



AGENDA:

- Introduction → Why can it be so difficult to understand parts of Scripture?
- Why does this class exist?
- Why is it important to me?
- What should you expect?
- What do I expect from you?
- What is my hope for this class?
- Key Resources
- Tips and instructions for this week's readings



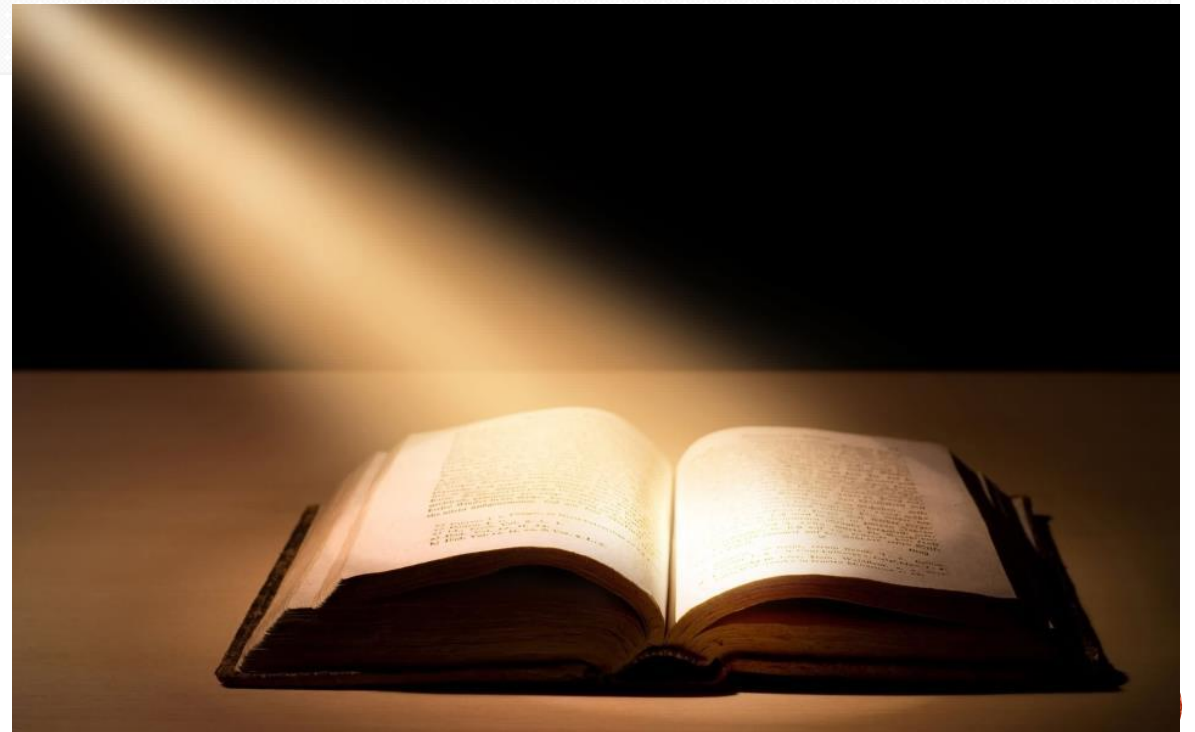
“BIBLE READING DESTROYS THE CHURCH”

BY PAUL PENLEY

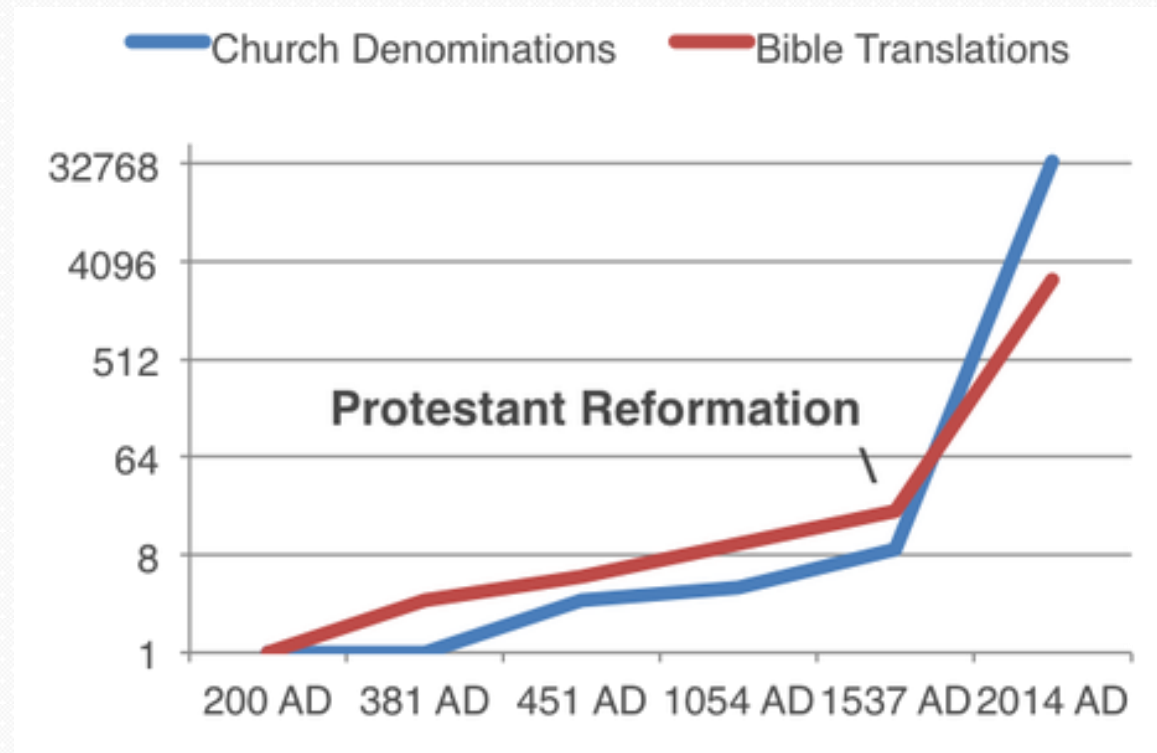
*Would Jesus promote personal Bible reading?
You probably never thought to ask yourself that
question.*

“Christian donors pump hundreds of millions into Bible translation and distribution every year...”

“...Is all this cash and energy well spent? History says ‘no.’”



Jesus had a dream. He envisioned a community of followers who embraced his way and each other. He prayed, “may they be one” (John 17:21). 34,000 church denominations later, his prayer goes unanswered.



The Protestants hastened Bible translations into German, French, Spanish, English, etc. More Bibles in everyone's home meant more individuals could determine what was biblical. So they started new denominations. The Protestant motto *Sola Scriptura* unwittingly excused any man's opinions about the Bible from the checks and balances of trusted interpretive traditions and a community of gifted Christian leaders. Me, Jesus and the Bible devalued elders and community. Me, Jesus and the Bible created a divisive dynamic.



- Luther: “I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.”
- Johann Eck: “Martin, there is not one heresy which has torn apart the bosom of the church, which has not derived its origin from some interpretation of Scripture. The Bible itself is the arsenal from which every innovator has drawn his deceptive arguments.”
- Individual Bible translation → Judges 21:25



Should we stop promoting personal Bible reading because it has dashed Jesus' dream of unity? Let me qualify my answer. If we don't promote anything else to quell the confusion of "biblical" truths, then the answer is yes. *Bible engagement is not inherently a good thing...*

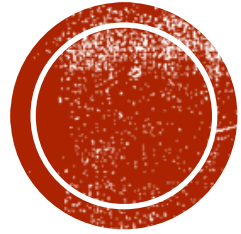
The Protestant principle of *Sola Scriptura* is an illusion, or at least an impractical ideal. Martin Luther's conscience was not "captive to the Word of God" as he claimed at the meeting in Worms, Germany. The Word of God was captive to his conscience. What he felt it rightly meant controlled its message.



A GOOD THING GONE BAD...

- Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”
- “Judge not... lest ye be judged!”
- Divorce
- “Slavery, women in ministry, and homosexuality are all the same...”
- Jacob – “What does this verse mean to me?”





WHY CAN SCRIPTURE BE SO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?

2 Challenges:

The Nature of the Reader

The Nature of Scripture

THE NATURE OF THE READER

Every reader is at the same time an interpreter. We invariably bring to the text all that we are, with all of our experiences, culture, and prior understandings of words and ideas.



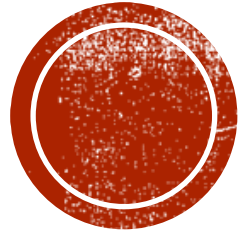
THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

“Because the Bible is God’s message , it has eternal relevance ; it speaks to all humankind, in every age and in every culture. Because it is the word of God, we must listen and obey. But because God chose to speak his word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written.”



- God chose to use almost every available kind of communication: narrative history, genealogies, chronicles, laws, poetry, proverbs, prophetic oracles, riddles, drama, biographical sketches, parables, letters, sermons, and apocalypses.
- God's Word was communicated over a 1500 year period, as it was expressed in the vocabulary and thought patterns of those persons and conditioned by their culture and circumstances. **God's Word to us was first God's Word to them.**





**WHY DOES THIS CLASS
EXIST?**



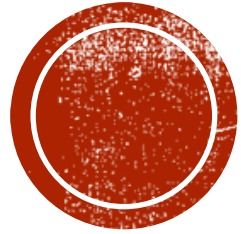
We have a value that Scripture is God's authoritative word, but we have not matched that value with the skills to truly live into it.



We need training, and we need the community. Those are powerful tools in the hands of the HOLY SPIRIT!

- **This is a training ground.**
- **This is an invitation to dig into God's Word.**
- **This is an opportunity to build a framework that can help us**
 - 1) **To mine familiar texts for the deeper treasures**
 - 2) **To equip us to wade through the deeper, more challenging texts.**





**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT
TO ME?**





“God is calling me to be a missionary!!!” – Me

Get a Grip
on the
Bible

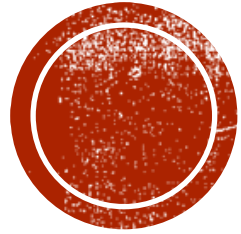


Bible in 90
Days



???????



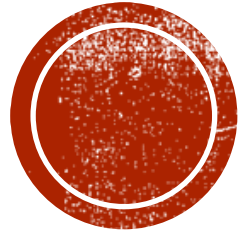


**WHAT SHOULD YOU
EXPECT?**



- Weekly includes an overview of each book, tips on what to look for, and a reading plan for the week.
- Opportunities for you to give me feedback
- Opportunities for you to shape the curriculum.
- Community – “This is NOT a discussion class... but it doesn’t mean we can’t be friends.”





**WHAT DO I EXPECT FROM
YOU?**



- Be here! → Either physically or electronically

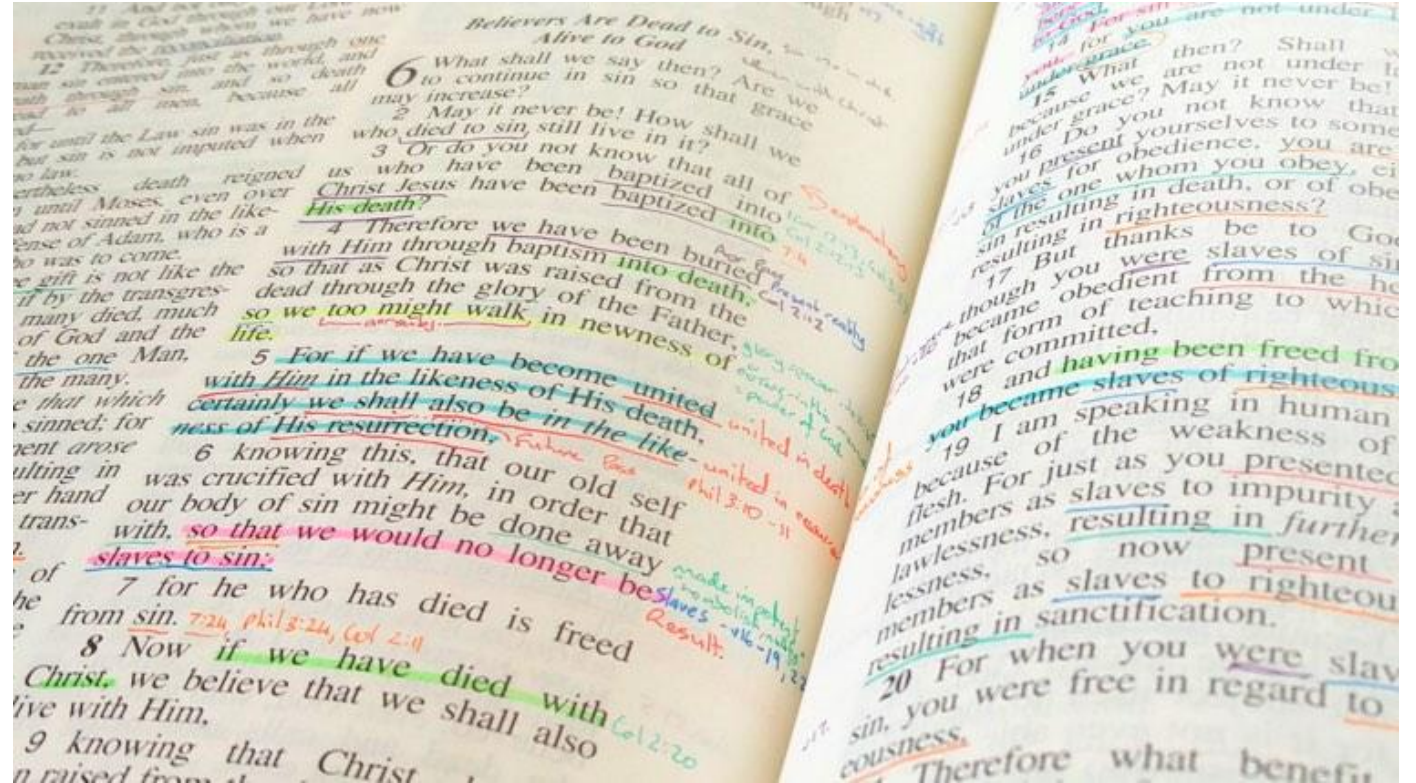
- Read your Bible!

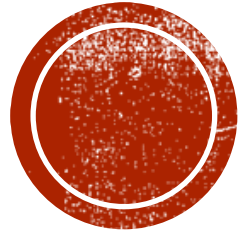
- Interact with the text →
Mark it up!

- Share with me what

you're learning – what's surprising, frustrating, comforting, exhilarating, confusing or all of the above!

- Consider joining a small group





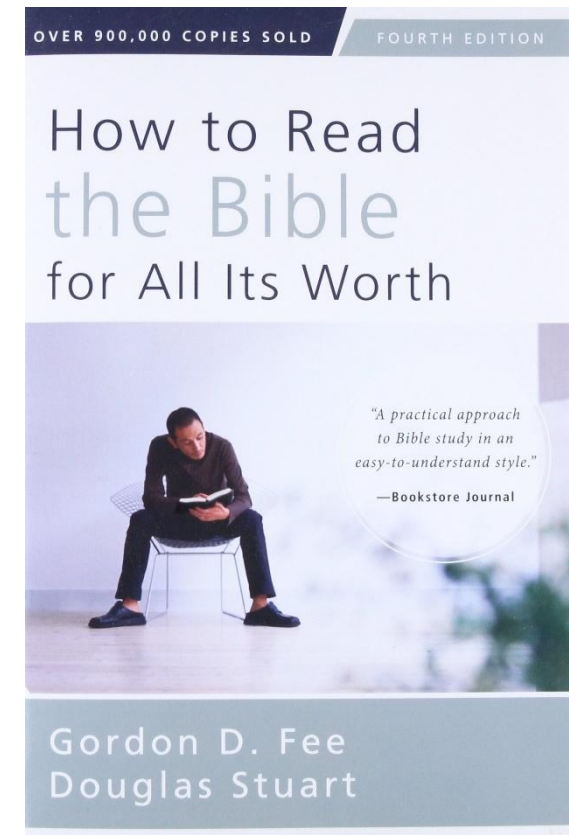
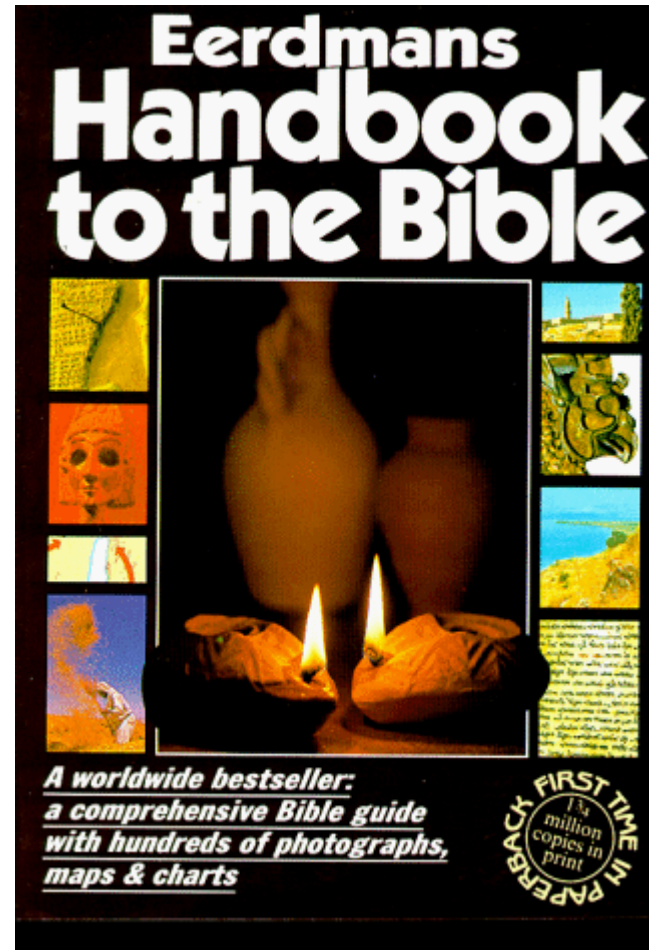
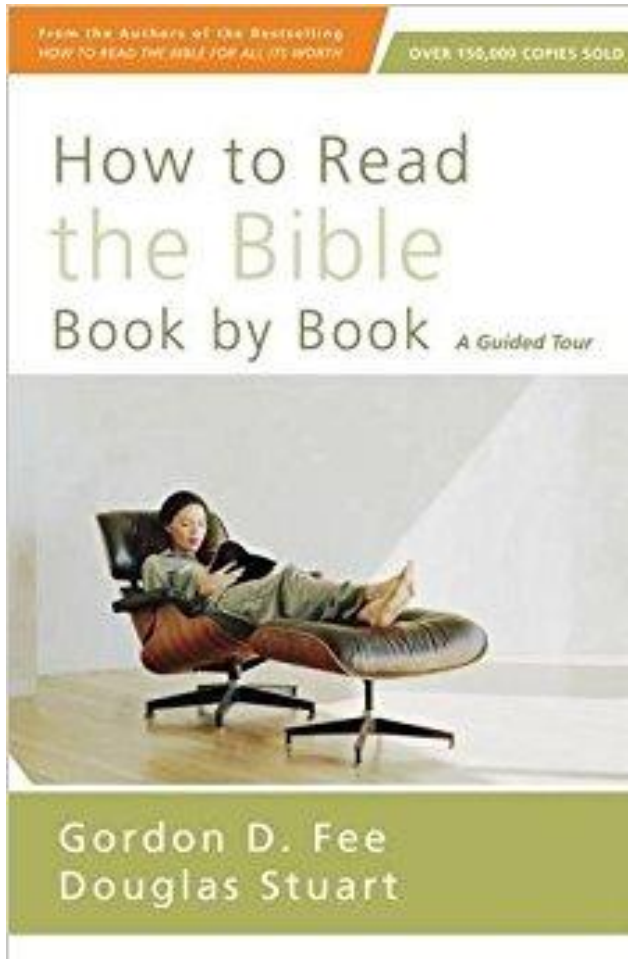
**WHAT IS MY HOPE FOR
THIS CLASS?**

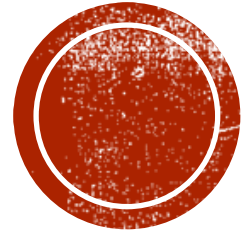


- For you to grow! ...And for me to grow!
- To KNOW Scripture – Jesus knew Scripture, obviously... but his audience and Paul’s audience and Peter’s audience KNEW Scripture. The more you know Scripture the more alive it becomes!
- To grow in our Christ-likeness
- For the Holy Spirit to shape our hearts as we spend time in his Word.



A FEW KEY RESOURCES:





PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVES

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth

by Fee and Stuart

1. An Old Testament narrative usually does not directly teach a doctrine.
2. An Old Testament narrative usually illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught elsewhere.
3. Narratives record what happened – not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time. Therefore, not every narrative has an individual identifiable moral application.
4. What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.



4. Most of the characters in the OT narratives are far from perfect – as are their actions as well.
5. We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad. We are expected to be able to judge this on the basis of what God has taught us directly and categorically elsewhere in Scripture.
6. All narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given. (e.g., John 21:25) what does appear in the narrative is everything the inspired author thought important for us to know.



8. Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific, limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere in other ways.
9. Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).
10. In the final analysis, **God is the hero of all biblical narratives.**



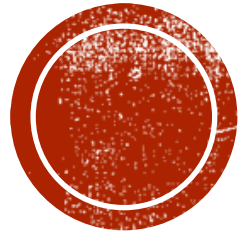
THIS WEEK'S READINGS:

Option 1: Read Genesis 1-26 → 5 Days x 5 chapter (+1)

Option 2: Five Shorter Readings:

- Genesis 1-4:16 – Creation and Fall
- Chapters 6-9, 11 – The Flood and the Tower of Babel
- Ch. 12:1-9; Ch. 15 & 17 – God's Covenant with Abraham
- 21:1-7; 22:1-19 – Isaac is born (...and almost sacrificed!)
- Ch. 24 – Isaac and Rebekah





QUESTIONS?

