

Wrapping It Up

1. Evaluate your study objectives:

- Where do you want to want to be spiritually six months from now? A year from now? Five years from now?
- What role do you believe Bible study plays in your spiritual objectives?
- Are you convinced that you need to study the Bible on a regular basis?
- What facets of your schedule or priorities in your life are you willing to rearrange in order to accomplish your objectives in study of the Word?
- Are you willing to pay the price?

2. Never forget that the Word of God is life-changing!

- More than just an academic exercise
- His Word is what enables us to grow and become more Christ-like –
 - God gives His Word so we can know Him
John 5:39-40 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

- God uses His Word to convict us
 - Reveals what is really inside. – Revealing power of the Bible
 - Transformation requires convicting!
Heb 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Alive and effective in our hearts
 - Read the Bible expecting to be convicted.
- God uses His Word as the main tool to sanctify and transform us toward Christ-likeness
John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
 - Convicts to action. (application)
 - ***James 1:22* But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**

Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- God uses His Word to Equip us to do His work.
*2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 **that** the man of God may be complete, equipped **for** every good work.*

17 – scripture is sufficient to equip us for action!

Complete – thoroughly equipped

- God uses His Word to guard us from sin
Psalm 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. 10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! 11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

- Pray that God changes you!

3. Develop a plan

Studying God's Word doesn't happen automatically every day

We need to be intentional

- Set a time and a place – consistency
- Choose a good starting point
- Journal – write or type what God teaches you.

4. Don't go at it alone.

- Ask your spouse or some friends to hold you accountable and possibly to study the same sections.
- Accountability can be meeting together, but also could be texts, emails, messages, etc.

5. Start studying! (Heb 4:12-13)

A. Read from several translations to get a fuller picture of the verse

Heb 4:12-13 (ESV) For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Heb 4:12-13 (NIV84) For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Heb 4:12-13 (NASB) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and

marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Heb 4:12-13 (New Living) For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

B. Use a study Bible

- For notes (ESV study Bible)

Heb. 4:12–13 The warning continues: faithless disobedience will not go unnoticed. **word of God**. Usually this phrase in Hebrews refers to the message of salvation ([13:7](#); [cf. 4:2](#)), but here the “word” is pictured as God’s personal utterance, **living, active, sharp, piercing, and discerning** ([v. 12](#)), with **eyes** that expose ([v. 13](#)). The Word of God then acts as God himself, so that one’s innermost **thoughts and intentions** are **exposed**. This happens constantly in Christians’ lives.

- For cross-references

1 Pet 1:23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God

Jer 23:29 Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

Rev 1:16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

C. Do word studies on important words

- An Exhaustive Concordance helps find where Important Words are used in other verses. You can also use word study resources like Vine’s and lexicons to research usages in the original languages.

- Software and apps usually allow you to search.
- *Zondervan Exhaustive Concordance*
- *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*
- *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*
- *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*

- “active”

- 1 Cor 16:9 for a wide door for **effective** work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

- Philemon 6 and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become **effective** for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

- Strong’s: **energés**; gen. *energoús* - work. Referring to energy, i.e., engaged in work, capable of doing, active, powerful, effective (1 Cor. 16:9; Phile. 1:6; Heb. 4:12).

D. A Bible Dictionary/Encyclopedia can explain many of the Words, Topics, Customs, and Traditions in the Bible

Heart (Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible) - The heart is especially important in biblical religion. The mystery of the hidden self is fully known to God and to Christ (Jer 17:10; Lk 9:47; Rom 8:27; and throughout), and the heart is the seat of our knowledge of God (2 Cor 4:6). The state of heart governs the vision of God (Mt 5:8); from the heart one speaks to God (Ps 27:8); the heart is the locus of divine indwelling (2 Cor 1:22; Gal 4:6; Eph 3:17).

On the other hand, moral evil in the heart is seen in biblical perspective as sin against God. Senseless hearts are darkened, often secretly idolatrous, far from God, “not right” before God (Dt 29:18, 19; Mt 15:8; Acts 8:21; Rom 1:21). Yet the Lord will not despise a broken, contrite heart (Ps 51:17); if when one’s heart is turned toward God, he promises to make it sensitive to divine things, renewed and purified (Dt 4:29; 2 Kgs 23:25; Ps 51:10; Jl 2:13; Ez 36:25–27). God’s law shall then be written on the heart, as the inward guide and incentive (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10; cf. 2 Cor 3:2, 3).

E. Commentaries - Commentaries give us insights into the passage from scholars of the text. Some commentaries are devotional and focus on the application of the text while others are exegetical and focus on interpreting the text correctly by studying the original language, customs, and context. It is helpful to use both.

- Do not refer to commentaries too early in the study process as they are man’s opinion on the text and we want to start with God’s Word.
- It is best to use several commentaries to understand various opinions.
- Some recommended resources:
 - Bestcommentaries.com – rates commentaries by book of the Bible
 - Tyndale commentary series – Good scholarship written in an easy-to-read format.
 - Expositor’s Bible Commentary – Excellent blend of exegetical and devotional
 - New American Commentary series – Exegetical commentary series
 - Zondervan Exegetical Commentary series
 - NIV Application Commentary series
 - Preaching the Word Commentary series – pastoral and devotional insights.

○ Holman Commentary –

4:12. This vivid expression of the power of God’s message provides the explanation for the strong warning of verse 11. Because God’s message is alive, active, sharp, and discerning, those who listen to God’s message can enter his rest. Two questions are important in this verse. First, what is **the word of God**? Second, what does this passage say about it?

Although the Bible sometimes refers to Christ as God’s Word (John 1:14), the reference here is not speaking of Jesus Christ. Here we have a general reference to God’s message to human beings. In the past God had spoken to human beings through dreams, angelic appearances, and miracles. He still can use those methods

today, but our primary contact with God is through his written Word, the Bible. God's Word will include any method God uses to communicate with human beings.

This verse contains four statements about God's Word. First, it is **living**. God is a **living** God (Heb. 3:12). His message is dynamic and productive. It causes things to happen. It drives home warnings to the disobedient and promises to the believer. Second, God's Word is **active**, an emphasis virtually identical in meaning with the term **living**. God's Word is not something you passively hear and then ignore. It actively works in our lives, changes us, and sends us into action for God.

Third, God's Word penetrates the **soul and spirit**. To the Hebrew people, the body was a unity. We should not think of dividing the soul from the spirit. [7 highlights] God's message is capable of penetrating the impenetrable. It can divide what is indivisible. [6 highlights] Fourth, God's message is discerning. **It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart**. It passes judgment on our feelings and our thoughts. What we regard as secret and hidden, God brought out for inspection by the discerning power of his Word.

- Preaching the Word –

THE PENETRATING WORD

God's Word is not only living but *penetrating*, as the next line is so clear in stating: "Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow" (v. 12b). Some have attempted to use this text in the dichotomist/trichotomist debate—to either prove that humans are two parts or three parts. Such attempts do harm to the practical understanding of God's Word, because all we have here is a poetic statement of the power of God's Word to pierce the human personality to its very depths. God's Word can cut through anything and bring conviction.

John Bunyan has his warrior heroes Mr. Great-heart and Mr. Valiant-for-truth converse in the respite after a battle. As I imagine the scene, these two spiritual warriors, still sweating and breathing heavily, sit down to catch their breath. After a moment, Mr. Great-heart gestures approvingly to Mr. Valiant-for-truth and says:

"Thou has worthily behaved thyself. Let me see thy sword." So he showed it him. When he had taken it into his hand and looked thereon awhile, he said, "Ha! It is a right Jerusalem blade." Then said Mr. Valiant-for-truth, "It is so. Let a man have one of these blades, with a hand to wield it and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an angel with it. He need not fear its holding if he can but tell how to lay on. Its edges will never blunt; it will cut flesh, and bones, and soul, and spirit, and all."

Tough guys! Tough weapon!

God's Word cleaves through our hard-shelled souls like a hot knife through warm butter. Certainly we Christians find this to be true in our lives. There are sections of God's Word that cut through all the pretensions and religious facade, leaving us convicted.

When God wills it, his Word will pierce *anyone*.

- F. Bible Background Commentaries - Explore the culture, customs, and worldview surrounding the text. Excellent background to help in the interpretation stage.

○ *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*

The word of God is living and active (4:12). The beautifully crafted prose on God’s word should be understood as echoing the reference to God’s voice in the quotation of Psalm 95 (Heb. 3:7). First-century Judaism and Christianity both understood the word of God to be a force in creation, administration of the world, and judgment. The word, as indicated by the words “living and active,” must not be thought of as static speech-act. Rather, it is a dynamic power that has the ability to effect change, both in the created order and in individual lives.

Sharper than any double-edged sword (4:12). The sword, ranging in size from sixteen inches to three feet, was the most basic weapon used in battle in the Greco-Roman world. For the first recipients of Hebrews the sight of a Roman soldier fully armored would have been common. As his primary weapon a Roman legionnaire would carry a *gladius*, a double-edged sword about twenty inches long, strapped to his right side. This weapon was designed for slashing and thrusting in close, hand-to-hand combat.

Although the vast majority of the over four hundred references to a sword in Scripture refer to the literal weapon, it is used to symbolize war (e.g., Jer. 19:7; Hos. 2:18), bloodshed and conflict (e.g., 2 Sam. 12:10), and judgment, either human (Rom. 13:4) or divine (Ps. 7:12; Rev. 1:16). Negatively, the sword symbolizes anything that causes harm to people, such as destructive words (Ps. 57:4; Prov. 12:18), a false witness (Prov. 25:18), a sexually immoral woman (5:4), and the character of those who exploit the poor (30:14). Here in Hebrews 4:12 the author uses the image positively to speak of the power and effectiveness of God’s Word (cf. Isa. 49:2; Eph. 6:17). This “sword’s” ability to cut deeply is seen in its penetration to a person’s inner life. We might say that God’s Word “gets to the heart” of any matter. In this sense it can be a powerful force of judgment when thoughts and intentions of the heart are not what they should be. Thus the author of Hebrews uses this image to warn against neglecting God’s Word by failing to obey him.



DOUBLE-EDGED ROMAN SWORDS Models of a Roman *gladius*.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare (4:13). The idea that the guilty were not able to hide from God's intense, penetrating judgment was common in Jewish theology of the era. In Revelation 6:16–17 those who face God's judgment wish to hide: "They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'" Yet, of course, there is nowhere to hide from God. No one can stand. The term translated in Hebrews 4:13 as "uncovered" (*gymnos*) normally connotes nakedness or lack of adequate clothing, but figuratively speaks of being vulnerable or helpless. Similarly, things that are "laid bare" are exposed and unprotected. So those who are disobedient to God, not attending to his voice, are vulnerable before his penetrating, judging Word.

- G. Bible Introductions and Book Overviews – General biblical and historical background to each book of the Bible. These can be very useful to understand the broader context of each book within the Old and New Testaments.
- Raymond Dillard and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Zondervan).
 - D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Zondervan).
- H. Atlases – Useful to understand the geography and national aspects of the text. Especially useful in understanding narratives.
- *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas*
 - *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*
- I. Bible Software
- Logos - www.logos.com / biblia.com / vyrso.com
Bible study Software for PC/Mac/apps for many mobile platforms. Can purchase commentaries, books and language tools.
 - BibleWorks.com
Bible study software for PC/Mac.
 - Globible.com
 - Biblegateway.com
 - Unbound Bible – unbound.biola.edu
 - www.BlueLetterBible.org
 - Apps
 - a. Logos
 - b. Youversion
 - c. ESV Bible
 - d. Olive Tree Bible Study
- J. Continue studying How to Study the Bible
- *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
 - *Playing With Fire*, Walt Russell

Summary of how the different genres contribute to our spiritual growth

1. OT Narratives

- To inform and shape our worldview about God's eternal plan in human history ultimately pointing to and leading to redemption through Christ. It also underscores our continuity with the children of Israel as the people of the same God.
- To give us positive and negative models of old testament believers making choices to trust God.

2. The Law

- To explain how God relates to humans within a covenantal relationship and how His holiness and Israel's sin could be reconciled through Israel's obedience to the Law ultimately pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. Within this relationship, the Law also demonstrates the concrete, practical, multifaceted areas in which God's people should obey and be transformed.
- To give us ethical and moral illustrations of godly responses to a wide variety of life's situations.

3. Psalms

- To model what a God-centered view of life is like, through expressions of worship and prayer, and the way believers may express their deepest needs, pains, and concerns to God in passionate prayer and worship.

4. Proverbs / Wisdom Literature

- To instruct us how to make wise, godly choices in the daily affairs of life and the difficult, inscrutable events of life.

5. The Prophets

- To exhort us as to the rewards of obedience and warn us of the discipline of disobedience to God's covenant in the OT so that we are challenged to maintain our heart for God and our just treatment of others.
- To give us glimpses into the immediate future of God's people or into the distant future of the eternal kingdom.

6. The Gospels

- To teach us about who Jesus the Messiah is and His purpose of providing redemption through the cross. They give us the opportunity to be disciplined by Jesus as we observe Him and His disciples. Also to observe Him modeling life in the kingdom of God and listen to Him about how we should live in the kingdom and be transformed in areas of sinful resistance.
- To give us insight into how we may encourage fellow disciples.

7. Acts

- To teach us what God is doing in history at this present time under the kingship of Jesus the Messiah and to model for us what our corresponding

purpose is as God's church. It also explains our roots, as well as some of the fruits of our identity as the church as we fulfill our purpose in the world.

- To give us methods and techniques for ministry to others.

8. The Epistles

- To teach, exhort, and model our identity as the church and how we are to live it in the community of God's people by making godly choices in a myriad of practical areas in order to fulfill our purpose of living for His purpose.

9. Revelation

- To encourage and exhort us to overcome through continued faith and faithfulness in the difficult times by revealing God's ultimate triumph over Satan in establishing Christ's kingdom and the new heavens and earth.
- To inform us of some of the specific events signaling the end of the age.