



Welcome to Explorer's Bible Study

Congratulations! You are about to embark on an exciting and unique adventure. Whether this is your first experience in Bible study or you are a long time student, each venture into God's Word has new and exciting lessons. Even if you have studied a particular book of the Bible many times, you will find that it is truly fresh and new each time you venture to read and study—it is truly the Living Word.

In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul encounters a *“certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord...”* (Acts 18:24-25). As we read this, we might ask ourselves, *“What can I do to become mighty in the Scriptures?”*

First, approach God's Word with a **Pure Heart**.

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby...” (1 Peter 2:1-2). As you approach your study each week, pray that the Lord will open your eyes to the truths of His Holy Word. Ask Him to help you remove the blinders of the world and self and allow the Holy Spirit to illuminate and lead you into the truth He would have you to see and know. Approaching the Word with a pure heart is also essential to having its effects felt and seen in our lives.

We also approach God's Word with **Perseverance**.

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance...” (Ephesians 6:17-18). Nothing worth achieving comes quickly or easily. Knowing God's Word does not come without effort and time spent. Perseverance in this endeavor is not like the 50 yard dash—it is more like the 26 mile marathon—being faithful over the long haul. It involves a daily commitment to read and study—to digest and reflect and allow His Word to seep into our innermost being and permeate our soul.

Finally, we approach God's Word with a **Passion for God**.

“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word” (Psalm 119:11-16). It is easy to see that the writer of this Psalm had a passion for God! It is impossible to have a passion for God without having a passion for God's Word. When we do we will find ourselves learning, declaring, rejoicing, meditating, contemplating, and delighting in His Word—enjoying it with a passion!

Over and over again people say, *“I didn't know that was in the Bible!”* The Bible is relevant for today, and the treasures you find as a result of your study will bring you a greater sense of balance in your daily experiences, a greater sense of confidence in the almightiness of God, and a deepening of spiritual and healthy attitudes toward yourself and others. If you are going to find your way in a mixed-up world, you need a map and a guidebook. The Bible suffices for both.

A few words of encouragement as we get started:

Commit to be present for your discussion group and class each week. Just like so many things in life, you will derive greater benefit from being present each week. This is especially critical as you get started.

Invite friends and neighbors to join the class. Nothing works better than a personal invitation, and you just might be the tool God uses to change a life or a family.

Faithfully answer the questions before class. The questions are carefully prepared with the intent of stimulating and challenging you to thoughtful study of the Word. They are tools to help you in your study. If you get stuck on a question, don't despair; just skip it and see how others answer it when you get into your discussion group.

Work on the study each day. You wouldn't consider eating all your food for the week in one meal; you do better eating some each day. Bible study provides spiritual food and having a daily portion is best. That is why the questions are arranged for daily study. Find the best time for your study and stick to it. Having written answers to your questions makes you eligible to participate in the class discussion. Others are welcome and encouraged to come as good listeners.

Answer the questions from your Bible, not from commentaries. Our desire is for you to focus on what you have personally learned from the Bible itself, rather than what others have written about it. When you answer the questions, always write down the chapter and verse where you found your answer. Unless otherwise indicated, all references should be confined to the given references in your current lesson.

Focus on what the Bible says. Avoid discussions about what your pastor said Sunday or what your favorite radio preacher said. Answering the questions will easily consume the time available and keep the study on track.

Just be a listener when your answers are not written down. Working your lesson each week is of great value as it gives opportunity for you to share your answers in the discussion group. In other words, we discourage the "off the top of the head" answers. Serious students especially appreciate this, as the subject matter is of greater value when it is a result of personal study.

The notes and questions are based on the text of the *New King James Version* (NKJV) of the Bible. However, there are many good versions available which you can use: *New American Standard Version* (NASV), *New International Version* (NIV), *English Standard Version* (ESV), and *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV), are a few among many which may be used. A paraphrased Bible is not recommended for answering the questions in this type of Bible study but they can really help you see the message of the text in a fresh light.

Your study in the Word of God will pay great dividends as you personally experience the preciousness of the Word and the great joy of serving Christ and others. The Word of God effects changes in the lives of people, and you can only act upon that which you are knowledgeable. Be prepared to grow spiritually; you are on a great adventure.