



HOW TO STUDY
THE BIBLE

RICHARD MAYHUE

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Richard L. Mayhue

CHRISTIAN FOCUS

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Foreword

There are two main ways in which we all need help in approaching the Bible. The first is in our understanding of its nature and origin. That takes us immediately to such subjects as the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible. But secondly we need to understand how to approach it, how to read it, how to understand its language, how to make our way through the various types of literature it contains. This is all part of the crucial biblical science of interpretation. 2 Peter 1:10 forbids us interpreting the Bible any way we like, and it is for this reason that we need principles of biblical interpretation clearly set out for us to follow. It is to this whole issue that my friend Dr. Richard Mayhue addresses himself in this excellent little book.

The book is not a heavy theological treatise addressed to academics. It is intended for all kinds of Christian people who are serious about studying the Bible carefully and interpreting it properly. He is helping us to fulfil the command we have in 2 Timothy 2:15: 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.'

The contemporary Christian church greatly needs the guidance that is found in this book. It will be valuable to Christian people at all stages of their experience. The book comes from the pen of an able scholar, an experienced pastor, and a gracious Christian. I warmly commend it.

Eric Alexander

Introduction

R.A. Torrey, former president of Moody Bible Institute, offered this profound thought over a century ago: 'I learned years ago, to go to one place for the deepest lessons of life. That one place is the Bible.'

Today Christians still go to that one place, but with even greater opportunities to understand God's Word. More Bible teaching goes out faster to larger groups of people than ever before. Satellite transmissions of radio and television, the Christian publishing boom, the advent of affordable audio and video cassettes, and the computer craze has saturated our society.

However, with these unprecedented opportunities for truth comes the potential liability for error. Just because someone broadcasts a message or publishes a book does not necessarily mean that he or she is delivering God's Word as God intended it to be delivered. Thus, false teaching is abroad today more than ever.

The problem is not new. That is why Paul told Timothy, 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth' (2 Tim. 2:15). Without the Word being rightly divided, there would be ruined Christians (2:14) and ungodliness (2:16), and the church would be poisoned just as gangrene ravishes the human

body (2:17). Hymenaeus and Philetus had gone astray in Timothy's day and had upset the faith of some with false teaching about the resurrection (2:17-18).

Our challenge is to produce a new generation of Christians who are committed to getting God's Word right; pastors and teachers who teach with meticulous care; students and parishioners who listen and learn with discernment.

How to Study the Bible is written for those who go to the Scriptures for the deepest lessons of life. It would be tragic to come to the well and drink deeply of its refreshment, only to discover that its content had been altered so that what was consumed differed from the reservoir. Likewise, it would be pitiful, having come to God's inerrant Word, to depart with an errant message.

Both scholar and new believer can be impacted by these studies. They cover a wide range of subjects and purposes including:

- * Teaching a basic Bible study method
- * Warning about interpretation mistakes
- * Exposing current theological error
- * Providing right steps to avoid wrong doctrine
- * Emphasizing the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture

If we understand that when we open the Scripture we handle God's Word, there will be an awesome sense of responsibility as we seek to understand what He wrote — particularly if we intend to pass it on to someone.

Years ago, as a brand new Christian, I heard Dr. Lehman Strauss tell about having 'The Word of God' stamped on

MISINTERPRETATION of Scripture is a major problem that faces the Church. We are living in an image-centered world that demands short cuts to answers combined with a limited attention span.

This book discusses the many obstacles that can keep us from clearly understanding what scripture is explaining to us. Mayhue's experience with methods of biblical interpretation enables him to provide our generation with simple tools – so we can understand what the Bible says and avoid commonly-made errors. It should be mandatory reading for anyone who is serious in finding out what scripture says.

Richard covers a wide range of subjects making this an excellent take-off point for Biblical study:

- Teaching a basic Bible study method
- Warning about interpretation mistakes
- Exposing current theological errors
- Providing right steps to avoid wrong doctrine
- Emphasizing truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture

An excellent book from the pen of an able scholar, an experienced pastor and a gracious Christian. It is intended for all types of Christian people who are serious about studying the Bible carefully... I warmly commend it.

Eric Alexander

Former Senior Pastor of St. George's Tron Church, Glasgow, Scotland

DR. MAYHUE joined the faculty of The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, California in 1989 and was appointed Dean of the Seminary in 1990. In 2000 he also assumed the role of Senior Vice-President and Provost of The Master's College. He has an international speaking and teaching ministry and has authored many books, among which are...

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