

Preface:

This work is both challenging and rewarding. It is a challenge merely in the sense of accomplishing the task of completion within a given time span. It is a reward in that the rich blessings from God's Word gained, as the author contemplates and outlines the advancing levels of comprehension for students, additionally blesses him with greater understanding and appreciation for God's matchless wisdom and counsel.

Traditionally, churches of Christ have engaged a "secular system" of advancement for their Bible study classes. Determined by the student's age and/or class assignment via secular education, the materials have posed challenges as they should; albeit many of the materials have not satisfied their intent in that the students often complete the questions/answers without a valued comprehension of the material. Additionally, churches have often advanced these pupils/students without the teachers, parents or the students receiving a satisfaction of "retained knowledge" of the presented scriptures. This proposed study prayerfully will relieve both obstacles: First, it presents the material on a level of acceptable comprehension ability for every student, and thereby each receives encouragement to continue his/her study of the truth (2 Timothy 2:15.) Second, this system of study requires periodic testing by which the student, teacher and parents learn of the accomplishments. Patience must accompany this system (2 Peter 1:5 – 11) as we are engaging the abilities of growth in both the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Four "levels" of increasingly challenging material are presented in four categories:

WHO'S WHO IN THE BIBLE
STUDYING THE EVENTS OF THE BIBLE
THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Admittedly, these are "generalized" subjects in title, but as you will prayerfully note, each level becomes increasingly more challenging in a variety of ways. Not only will additional names, dates, and places find inclusion as the student progresses, but application of these truths becomes increasingly important in the study. Thus, with concluding each step within each level, the student finds greater assurance of the Truth of God's Word, and increases his/her confidence to continue onward toward perfection (Hebrews 6:1- 6.)

At least three intangible elements must accompany this type of study:

1. **PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT** -- Ephesians 6:4 vividly places the responsibility of educating children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord upon the father. Unfortunately, there are many children whose fathers know nothing about God's Word, let alone accept their responsibility to so raise their children as to know God and the power of His Word. The same is true of some mothers whose care and

keeping of God's Word before her children simply does not exist. These realities do not negate the necessity of children learning the Truth so that when they become of age in their accountability (James 4:17) they can know and obey God!

Nonetheless, we rejoice in the fact there are parents whose children are encouraged to read and study the Bible. However, there may be some who are not as "insistent" upon this responsibility as they need to be. Prayerfully, this system of study will prove the necessity of PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT as the family actually can and should "learn together" as they develop their own levels of comprehension of God's Word.

2. **CHURCH ENCOURAGEMENT** -- Just as parents must encourage their children, the local church as a whole must encourage one another in this process. Any student of the Bible, regardless of age, works better in the achievement of learning when encouraged to do so (Jude 20; Hebrews 3:13). Such encouragement comes by HEARING and SEEING (Colossians 3:17). Therefore, when brethren, visitors, children – when ALL see and hear the fervent desires of ALL our membership toward increasing their comprehension of God and His Word, the encouragement is contagious.
3. **PERSONAL COMMITMENT** – Without one's personal dedication to any task, the project is in vain (Ecclesiastes 10:18). Regarding salvation, the scriptures make it personal (Philippians 2:12; Acts 2:40; et al.) Now note the greatest of all Instructors regarding the personal responsibility: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62).

It becomes more than DUTY when studying God's Word for the purpose of learning and obeying its content. It becomes the very "life source" of the soul (Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7). Therefore, while such study can and much be encouraged from parents, spouses, children and brethren, it must equally find its motivation as "self encouraged."

The author of this proposed outline of study has no aspersions or fantasy of this work becoming a sort of "standardized Bible study."¹ God's Word must remain the SOLE standard of education for the soul and its salvation (John 12:48). It is simply the desire of this author to present a system of study, designed for ANY SERIOUSLY STUDIOUS SOUL, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PRESENT LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING/COMPREHENSION, to gain a fervent and loving, workable knowledge of God's Word.

¹ Though this author has produced a published work entitled HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE, it is NOT of his desire to instruct someone in "methodology" of Bible study. Rather, it is a matter of generating the DESIRE of study which collects itself in the material of HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE. Everyone needs various "tools" by which to accomplish their retention of valued material. Should the student, teacher or parent desire a copy of this material by which to encourage study, it is available upon request.