

# Three Basic Rules For Bible Study

1. Understand what the Bible is.
2. Stay loyal to the context of the passage.
3. Seek to apply what you read.

## 1. Understand what the Bible is.

- a. From God . . . 2 Peter 1:16-21
- b. Confirmed by miracles . . .
- c. Written by men who were . . .
  - i. Eye- and ear-witnesses, and
  - ii. Moved by the Holy Spirit
- d. Sufficient. 2 Timothy 3:16-17. We need no human creed.

## 2. Stay loyal to the context of the passage.

Beware: *“You can make the Bible say anything.”*

Or in the words of Peter, there are

“some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:16-18)

### *Example of ignoring the context:*

“Judge not, that you be not judged...” (Matthew 7:1) People who know no other Bible verse quote *this* one to say, “Don’t condemn my behavior.” But Jesus wants us to discern good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14) He wants us to “expose the unfruitful works of darkness” and “understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:8-17) In fact, the very context of the “judge not” passage refers to discerning holy things, telling the difference between people with honest interest and those with none (“do not cast your pearls before swine”), being wary of false prophets (“by their fruits you will know them”), and seeing clearly so we can remove a “speck” from our brother’s eye.

### *Example of twisting the Scriptures:*

Jesus said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) People who do not believe in water baptism as necessary to salvation twist the word “water” by focusing on the *spiritual* significance of water in the Scriptures, for healing and cleansing and such. By the time they’re done with the passage, it might as well read, “Unless one is born of spirit and the Spirit...”

## 3. Seek to apply what you read.

Some books contain only dry information, even trivia. The Bible contains words to live by. Notice the emphasis on obedience and application and *doing* the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 7:21-27 (especially in the story of the wise man and foolish man who built houses, one on the sand, and the other on the rock).

We will never have the answers to some questions, and God will simply not reveal everything He knows. But as we learn, let’s remember what Moses told the nation of Israel:

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 29:29)

(See also Hebrews 5:12-14)

*From a sermon by Joshua Ellis, June 05, 2005*