

# LEARN TO STUDY THE WORD

By Sandy Michon  
November 2006

As homeschoolers, we work so hard to find just the right curriculum to teach our kids. We look for a systematic approach to build levels of knowledge in each subject. We wouldn't dream of ignoring certain letters of the alphabet, or skipping subtraction. Who would allow their child to randomly open their math book and do a few problems? You personally know the value of a good education so you spend time, money and energy to make it happen.

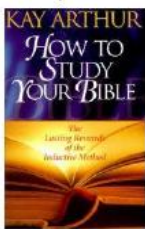


"Where am I going with this?" I ask with a smile and first-aid kit in hand.

As Christians, a systematic *study* of Scripture is how we get to know God, how we understand His plan and purpose for us, how to discern in a fallen world, and how to be equipped for all that God has planned for us. Even with so much at stake, we often relegate Bible study to random devotions – if we can fit it in our academic schedule. The October devotional addressed this problem, offered practical help, and a little "in-class" practice.

When homeschooling my son, I came across an interesting book called, *How To Read a Book*, by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren. The authors explained that schools spend a lot of time teaching students "to learn to read" but little to no time teaching how to "read to learn." It sound like playing with words, but it highlights an important distinction – and one that makes a huge difference when applied to the Bible. *How To Read a Book* explained that there is a different approach to different types of books. We read fictional books faster and with less attention to detail than technical books. We approach poetic books differently than research materials. The author said that "reading to learn" transformed him into an honor college student.

Do we read all of the books of the Bible in exactly the same way? How should we read to really learn?



Kay Arthur's book, *How to Study Your Bible*, offers a methodical approach to maximize learning when we read the "Book of Books" – the Bible. As the founder of Precept Ministries, Kay lays out the inductive method of Bible study. Webster defines induction as reasoning from particular instances to a general conclusion. In other words, how do the pieces make sense as a whole?

The primary difference between the book titles is "read" versus "study" – and it's an important distinction. If we are to be men and women of the Word we need to study the Word. We need to be able to glean the meat of the word and not stay on the milk like spiritual babies.

Let's start with milk first: **I Peter 2:2 says... we should "desire the sincere milk of the Word, as newborn babes, that we should grow by it."**

Often, when I was nursing my daughter in the middle of the night, I would gaze at her and ask myself: "Do I desire the sincere milk of the Word enough to get up in the middle of the night to read it?" (Or do I just wake up crying and can't figure out why – like a baby?) Or,

“Do I realize I need to be fed every 3-4 hours?” The reality is that we often find ourselves crying out, but don’t realize what we really need.

As we grow up, do we stay on the milk, or do we introduce solid food so we can sleep through the night?

Paul exhorts the carnal Corinthian church to grow beyond “milk” in **1Cor. 3:1-2: “And I, brothers, could not speak to you as to spiritual ones, but as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with solid food, for you were not yet able to bear it; nor are you able even now.”**

In Hebrews 5: 12-14, we see the contrast between immature and mature believers: **“For indeed because of the time, you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again what are the first principles of the oracles of God. And you have become in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone partaking of milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, even those who because of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”**

Studying the Word takes us from milk to meat. As **II Timothy 2:15 says: “Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”**

The Bible itself tells us to STUDY. The Greek word is **“spoudazo”** which is from a root word which means “to make effort”, it also means: “to give diligence, endeavor, and labor.” It takes work, but **II Timothy 3:15-16 shows the benefits of our study: “... and that from a babe you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work.”**