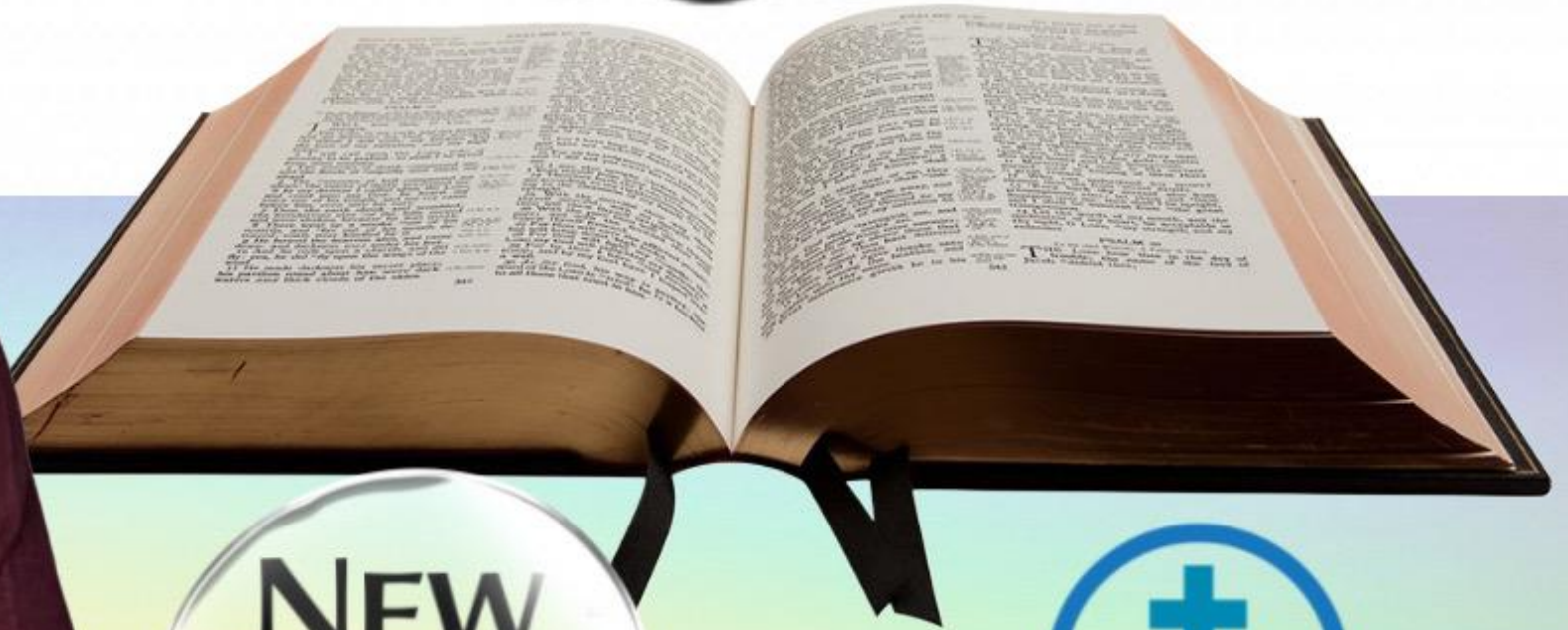


How to Study the Bible!

TUESDAY NIGHT BIBLE CLASS



PASTOR MIKE HOLLOWAY



NEW
SERIES



WALKING ON WATER
BIBLE CHURCH

How to Study the Bible

- **Aim:** Learn the structure of Scripture, the covenants that frame the storyline, how genre shapes meaning, and a faithful method for interpretation and application.

The Books of the Bible & Their Categories

- Why categories matter: They set expectations—how to read a passage, what questions to ask, and how to apply it.

Old Testament (39 books)

- **Law** (Pentateuch/Torah): Genesis–Deuteronomy
- **Purpose:** Origins (creation, fall, covenant), God's promises to Abraham, Israel's formation, covenant law for life in God's presence.
- **History:** Joshua–Esther
- **Purpose:** Records Israel's life in the land, monarchy, exile, and return—how God's covenant promises play out in time.

Old Testament (39 books)

- **Poetry/Wisdom:** Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- Purpose: Worship, wisdom for life under God, reflection on suffering, joy, and fear of the Lord.
- **Major Prophets:** Isaiah–Daniel
- Purpose: Covenant prosecution (calling Israel/Judah back), judgment and hope, promises of a coming King and new covenant.
- **Minor Prophets:** Hosea–Malachi
- Purpose: Twelve shorter prophetic books echoing the same themes—repentance, justice, hope, restoration.

New Testament (27 books)

- **Gospels:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
- **Purpose:** The life, death, resurrection of Jesus—the climax of God's promises.
- **History:** Acts
- **Purpose:** The risen Christ builds His church by the Spirit through the apostles.

New Testament (27 books)

- **Epistles** (Letters): Romans–Jude (Pauline & General)
- Purpose: Explain and apply the gospel to doctrine, discipleship, church life, and mission.
- **Apocalypse/Prophecy**: Revelation
- Purpose: Unveil Jesus as victorious King; encourage perseverance through symbolic imagery and prophetic promises.

The Two Covenants: Old & New—and Why They Matter

- Covenant: God's solemn relationship with His people, with promises, obligations, and signs.

Old Covenant

- Main context: Given through Moses at Sinai (Exod 19–24).
- Features:
- Law given to a redeemed people (Exod 20:2).
- Priests, sacrifices, temple/tabernacle for God's holy presence.
- Blessings/curses tied to obedience in the land (Deut 28).
- Limit: Could expose sin but not transform hearts (Jer 31:31–34; Rom 3:20).

New Covenant

- Promised: Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 36:25–27.
- Established by Jesus' blood: Luke 22:20; Heb 9:15.
- Features:
- Forgiveness of sins once for all (Heb 10:10–18).
- Spirit-written law on the heart; new birth/transformed life (2 Cor 3; Titus 3:5–6).
- One multi-ethnic people in Christ (Eph 2:11–22; Gal 3:26–29).

Why this matters for study:

- It frames the storyline (creation → fall → promise → Israel → Christ → Church → New Creation).
- It clarifies continuity and fulfillment (shadows in the Old find substance in Christ; Col 2:16–17; Heb 8–10).
- It guides application (e.g., sacrifices fulfilled in Christ; holiness still required, now empowered by the Spirit).

Bible Genres & How to Read Them (with Examples)

- Reading rules change with genre; poetry isn't read like law, and parables aren't read like history.

Bible Genres & How to Read

Narrative (Story/History)

- What it is: God's works in real time/space; shows His character and purposes.
- How to read: Trace setting → conflict → resolution; watch for God's covenant faithfulness.
- Examples: Gen 12; 1 Sam 17; 2 Kgs 18; Acts 2.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Law** (Legal Instruction)
- What it is: Covenant stipulations for Israel.
- How to read: Distinguish moral principles, civil/ceremonial aspects; read through Christ's fulfillment (Matt 5:17; Heb 10).
- Examples: Exod 20; Lev 19; Deut 6.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Poetry**
- **What it is:** Parallelism, imagery, emotion in worship and lament.
- **How to read:** Expect metaphor; feel the force; connect theology to prayer.
- **Examples:** Psalms 23; 51; 103.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Wisdom**

- What it is: Skill for godly living under the fear of the Lord.
- How to read: Probabilities, not guarantees; context and genre prevent misuse (Prov 22:6; Eccl 3).
- Examples: Prov 1–9; Job 1–2; Eccl 12.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Prophecy**
- What it is: God's word through prophets—covenant lawsuit (sin), warning (judgment), and hope (restoration/Messiah).
- How to read: Note near/then and far/future horizons; **symbolic language**; tie to covenant themes.
- Examples: Isa 9:1–7; Jer 31; Mic 6:6–8.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Apocalyptic**
- What it is: **Symbol-rich** visions revealing heavenly realities and the end, to fuel hope.
- How to read: Expect symbols, numbers, and OT echoes; major on the main point—God wins through the Lamb.
- Examples: Dan 7; Zech 1–6; Rev 1; 12–14; 21–22.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Gospel**
- What it is: Theological biography proclaiming Jesus as Messiah and Lord.
- How to read: Compare parallels; trace claims, signs, discourses, passion/resurrection.
- Examples: Mark 1:1–15; John 1:1–18; Matt 5–7; Luke 24.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Parable**

- What it is: Short story teaching kingdom truth.
- How to read: Look for the main point; locate audience/context; avoid over-allegorizing.
- Examples: Luke 15; Matt 13.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Epistle** (Letter)
- What it is: Occasional, pastoral instruction applying the gospel to churches and leaders.
- How to read: Track the argument; doctrine → practice; situational issues.
- Examples: Rom 3–5; Gal 3; Eph 1–3 then 4–6; 1 Pet 1.

Bible Genres & How to Read

- **Discourse/Sermon**
- What it is: Extended teaching (e.g., Sermon on the Mount; Hebrews as a “word of exhortation”).
- How to read: Follow logical flow, key themes, repeated words.
- Examples: Matt 5–7; Heb 1–2; 12.

How to Approach Scripture for Proper Understanding

- **A. Posture & Prayer**

- Reverent dependence: Ask the Spirit for illumination (Ps 119:18; 1 Cor 2:12–13).
- Humility & obedience: Come ready to believe and obey (Jas 1:22).

- **B. Method (A Clear Process)**

- Context, Context, Context
- Literary: What comes before/after? How does the paragraph fit the book's flow?
- Historical: Who wrote it? To whom? When? Why?
- Canonical: How does this passage fit the whole-Bible story and covenants?

How to Approach Scripture for Proper Understanding

- **Authorial Intent (Grammatical–Historical)**
- Observe words, grammar, structure, key terms, and contrasts.
- Define terms by usage in the book and across Scripture, not by modern assumptions.
- **Genre Sensitivity**
- Read poetry as poetry, narrative as narrative, apocalyptic as symbolic—but anchored in OT allusions.

How to Approach Scripture for Proper Understanding

- **Scripture Interprets Scripture**
- Use clearer texts to interpret harder ones; trace themes across Testaments (e.g., temple, sacrifice, kingdom).
- **Christ-Centered Fulfillment**
- Jesus is the telos of Scripture (Luke 24:27, 44–47).
- Ask: How does this text point to or flow from Christ and the New Covenant?

How to Approach Scripture for Proper Understanding

- From “Then” to “Now” (Application Bridge)
- Then: What did it mean for the original audience?
- Timeless principle: What truth about God, humanity, sin, salvation, or discipleship is taught?
- Now: How does that principle apply to believers under the New Covenant, in the church, by the Spirit?

Guardrails

- Avoid proof-texting and eisegesis (reading in your view).
- Distinguish description vs. prescription.
- Major on the main point; don't build doctrine on obscure texts alone.
- Read in community (teachers, creeds/confessions, responsible scholarship).

A Simple Study Framework (Use This Weekly)

- Pray for understanding.
- Read the passage repeatedly (different translations can help).
- Observe (mark repeated words, key connectors, promises/commands).
- Interpret (context + genre + cross-references + covenant/Christ).
- Apply (heart, habits, church life, mission).
- Respond (worship, repentance, obedience, prayer).

Quick Reference: Examples by Genre

- Law: Exod 20:1–17; Deut 6:4–9
- Narrative: Gen 50:19–21; 1 Kgs 18:36–39; Acts 13:1–3
- Poetry: Ps 1; Ps 23
- Wisdom: Prov 3:5–6; Eccl 12:13–14
- Prophecy: Isa 53; Mic 5:2
- Apocalyptic: Dan 7:13–14; Rev 21:1–5
- Gospel: John 20:30–31; Mark 10:45
- Parable: Luke 18:9–14
- Epistle: Rom 12:1–2; Eph 2:8–10; Titus 2:11–14