

Introduction to Philippians / Church of the Open Bible / 07.17.16

Problems in Bible Study

To learn anything from God, I need to _____ my Bible.

I need to understand the literary _____ of my favorite memory verses.

I need to study the theology, not just the _____ of scripture, so I can understand why God wants these things and so I experience the Holy Spirit renewing my mind.

I need to live out the commands, not just learn the _____, else I will become prideful of knowledge but not experience life change.

I need to study all of a book in the Bible, not just what looks _____.

Studying a New Testament Epistle

I need to figure out _____ the author wrote this letter.

Step one is to read through the letter and make notes about the authors and the _____.

Try this at home: print out the text of Philippians [about four pages; you can copy the text from Bible websites such as biblegateway.com or photocopy your physical Bible]; use a highlighter to mark anything you learn about these people; then organize the information in a way that helps you understand who they are. If you want more background in this case, read Acts 16.

Step two is to read through the letter and try to get some idea about the _____.

Try this at home: use a different color highlighter to mark anyone the author speaks against; he might critically identify several groups of people, but you can sort out who is the real problem later.

Step three is to read through the letter and note all the _____.

Try this at home: using a third color highlighter, mark any commands; make a special additional marking for negative commands, as these might be refuting the teachings of the antagonists; organize the commands by who they would affect [yourself; your relationship with God; with other believers; with the lost; with antagonists; with spiritual leaders]; make a separate list for the negative commands as coming from the antagonist [put them in positive form for this, so "do not be anxious" becomes "be anxious"].

Step four is to read through the letter to find all the _____.

Try this at home: most likely whatever is not highlighted so far is your theology, though you might discern some theological beliefs from what you already highlighted; organize all this teaching into topical categories that make sense to you; as with commands, note any negative arguments as possibly countering what the antagonists say, and make a list of those; most likely, you will find the author has some direct alternatives for what the antagonists were saying [for example, if the antagonists argue that righteousness is derived from following the Law, Paul will say righteousness is given by God in grace through faith in Christ].

Look also for clues as to the _____ of theology for both the authors and antagonists.

Try this at home: is either party quoting the Old Testament, Christ's gospel, or Christ's other teachings? is either being influenced by the flesh, the culture/world, or evil? is the author claiming apostolic authority?

Step five is to summarize all this information into a chart like that on the next page. Then you can write a paragraph summarizing what you think is happening as the background to this letter.

