

# How to Read the Bible (part one)

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## CONTEXT

The Bible is the Word of God. Inarguably it is the most important book ever written. It shows us who God is and what He is like, it tells us of His love for us, and lays out His instructions for our lives.

*“2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”*

Reading the Bible can be intimidating if we don't understand how to interpret it. The problem is we can make the Bible say things that God isn't saying. By reading a verse here and a verse there we can form some really whack theology. The important thing is not just to know what God's Word says but to understand what it means.

The religious leaders in Jesus's day knew their Bible. They could quote backward, forward, upside down, and while playing Angry Birds. They knew what God's Word said but they didn't understand it. As a result they killed God's Son. Just knowing what God says doesn't change much.

In order to understand what the Bible teaches there are several rules for interpretation. Rule number one: find the AIM, the author's intended meaning. When we read something our first thought is often: "What does this mean to me?" It's not about what you think or what you feel. To understand what God is saying we need start by looking at what the author most likely meant. This prevents us from imposing our thoughts or attitudes on what the Word of God says.

Rule number two: context is next to Godliness. Without context you can make the Bible say whatever you want.

*Mt 27:5 Then Judas went away and hanged himself. Luke 17:31: "Go and do likewise." And John 13:27- "What you are about to do, do quickly,"*

That's all Bible. But that's not at all what God is saying. Context is king. If you want to understand what you are reading you need to read it context. Otherwise you are just flipping open someone's journal and reading random pages. You cant have understanding without a framework of context.

The Bible wasn't written to us. It was preserved for us. We cant just rip it out of the first century. We have to realize it was written to real people in real churches. Reading the Bible without understanding the background is like listening to one side of a phone call and trying to figure out what is was about.

By reading what came before and what comes after a verse we get a better understanding of what's going on. Reading in context means don't just open your bible and start reading. Start at the beginning of a book and read all the way through it. If that doesn't give you enough, you can get a study bible that will help explain who the book is written to and what was going on at that time.

Through a study of context the Bible transforms from words on a page to a message of life. When you see who the Bible was written to, you better see how to apply it to your own life.