

S T U D Y G U I D E



Knowing Scripture

by R.C. Sproul



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R.C. Sproul



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Introduction

Christians need some basic guidance on how to interpret the Bible. Just a few principles of interpretation will go a long way toward helping the believer understand the Scriptures. Here are the easy-to-use skills for your own personal study. Through the course you will learn how to approach difficult passages, how to find the true meaning of each verse, and how to place each passage in its proper context. This series is sure to be helpful to all who seek to know God's revelation better. These lectures parallel Dr. Sproul's book *Knowing Scripture*.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind yourself of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging with its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The time stamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Knowing Scripture* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 14-Week Plan	Standard 12-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1 & 2	1–3
2	1	2	3 & 4	4–6
3	2	3	5 & 6	7–9
4	3	4	7 & 8	10–12
5	4	5	9 & 10	
6	5	6	11 & 12	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8	9		
10	9	10		
11	10	11		
12	11	12		
13	12			
14	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

Why Study the Bible?

INTRODUCTION

As Christians, we are *all* called to master the most important tool of the Christian life—the Bible. This calling means that we must increase our skills as interpreters of the Bible. To appreciate the importance of stretching our abilities, we must first understand why we should study the Bible. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul emphasizes the eternal significance of the Bible, God’s concern that we be diligent students of His Word, and our duty to study and our privilege of studying it.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Name two common excuses why people do not study the Bible
- Understand the Bible’s perspicuity as a key attribute of Scripture
- Name and support the reasons why we are to study the Bible

KEY IDEAS

- The Bible is the best-selling book of all time, yet our day is beset by biblical illiteracy.
- The basic message of the Bible concerning God and salvation is clear.
- The two basic reasons to study the Bible are our duty and privilege.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why should people study the Bible?
- What are some reasons that you’ve struggled to study the Bible in the past?

Scripture Reading

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

—Deuteronomy 6:6–9

- How does this passage war against the idea that a Christian need have only a superficial knowledge of Scripture?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Difficulties in Approaching the Bible

0:00–12:45

- What are two reasons given by people that explain the lack of Bible literacy in our culture?
- According to Dr. Sproul, what books of the Bible are particularly difficult for new readers of the Bible?

The Bible’s Clarity and Our Calling

12:45–27:15

- What does the *perspicuity* of Scripture mean?
- What are the two reasons we are to study the Bible?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Thinking critically, how do the two reasons people do not read the Bible relate to each other?

If you are in a group, have the members identify and discuss times in their lives when they struggled with these challenges to studying the Bible. Ask them which challenge they identify with the most.

- How does the perspicuity of Scripture answer the objection that the Bible is too difficult to study and understand?

If you are in a group, have the members work together to summarize the Bible's central message of salvation, about which the Bible is absolutely clear.

- Throughout this lesson, Dr. Sproul outlined the goals of this teaching series. How will these goals answer the two great difficulties of studying and interpreting the Bible?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the two reasons Dr. Sproul provided for why we are to study Scripture. Invite them to respond to the following question: How do duty and privilege relate to each other?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for revealing Himself in the Bible.
- Confess ways that you fail to approach the study of the Bible as a duty and privilege.
- Thank God for the clarity of the Bible's central message of salvation in Jesus Christ.
- Ask God to make you more obedient to Him in the study of His Word by the Holy Spirit.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. What is the perspicuity of Scripture synonymous with?
 - a. Scripture's brevity
 - b. Scripture's relevance
 - c. Scripture's clarity
 - d. Scripture's complexity

-
2. What challenge is raised by the claim that Scripture is a prescientific book unable to speak to the realities of modern life?
 - a. Scripture is too difficult.
 - b. Scripture is unclear.
 - c. Scripture is irrelevant.
 - d. Scripture is uninteresting.
 3. What Reformer did Dr. Sproul name in connection with Scripture's perspicuity?
 - a. John Knox
 - b. Martin Luther
 - c. John Calvin
 - d. Huldrych Zwingli
 4. What passage of Scripture did Dr. Sproul use to demonstrate that studying the Bible is a Christian's duty?
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:4–9
 - b. Psalm 119
 - c. Romans 15:4
 - d. 2 Timothy 3:16
 5. The Gallup poll that was cited in this lesson maintained that people have a high regard for the authority of Scripture.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 6. What two adjectives did Dr. Sproul say are actually not an insult against Scripture?
 - a. Irrelevant and difficult
 - b. Unauthoritative and errant
 - c. Speculative and fallible
 - d. Primitive and obscene

Answer Key—Why Study the Bible?

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- How does this passage war against the idea that a Christian need have only a superficial knowledge of Scripture?
This passage reveals that God commanded Israel to dwell on His words continually. Not only are they to be on our minds, but they are to be on our hearts. These words are to be the substance of our conversations with others as we teach them about God, and they are to surround us throughout the day. God's command concerning His Word is thorough and comprehensive. Obeying will lead us beyond superficial knowledge of it.

During the Video

Difficulties in Approaching the Bible

- What are two reasons given by people that explain the lack of Bible literacy in our culture?
The two common reasons that explain the lack of Bible literacy in our culture are that the Bible is no longer relevant to our culture and that the Bible is too difficult. The belief that the Bible is no longer relevant and that it is too difficult to interpret will be answered throughout this series by showing how correct, biblical interpretation is possible and how the principles of the Bible can be applied today. Answering these objections is at the heart of the goals for this series.
- According to Dr. Sproul, what books of the Bible are particularly difficult for new readers of the Bible?
Many people commit to reading the Bible for the first time or start a plan to read through the Bible in a year by starting in the Old Testament in the book of Genesis. By the time the average reader has finished the book of Exodus, the laws and sanctions of the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy create a seemingly insurmountable challenge. Even if a reader perseveres through these books, sorting through the kings of Judah and Israel in 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles is complex.

The Bible's Clarity and Our Calling

- What does the *perspicuity* of Scripture mean?

One of the most important principles of the Protestant Reformation is the principle of the perspicuity of Scripture. Scripture's perspicuity refers to Scripture's clarity. When the Reformers said that Scripture is clear, they had in mind the clarity of Scripture's basic and essential message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

- What are the two reasons we are to study the Bible?

The first reason we are to study the Bible is that it is our duty as Christians. God requires His people to be diligent students of His Word. The second reason is that studying the Bible is our privilege. In the Bible, we come to the words of life.

After the Video

- Thinking critically, how do the two reasons people do not read the Bible relate to each other?

The two objections commonly raised to explain why people do not study the Bible relate to the Bible's relevance and the Bible's difficulty. When people object that the Bible is irrelevant, their objection often is that it, a prescientific book, cannot be applied to modern life. When people object that the Bible is too difficult, it usually relates to how far removed the history and laws of Israel are to our present experience, providing the reason they are difficult to read and understand. Both these objections relate because they appeal to the temporal and cultural distance between us and the Bible. Other logical connections between these two difficulties may also be valid.

- How does the perspicuity of Scripture answer the objection that the Bible is too difficult to study and understand?

The perspicuity of Scripture does not mean that every part of the Bible is equally clear. Scripture's perspicuity concerns the clarity of its central message of salvation through Jesus Christ. For this reason, the perspicuity of Scripture challenges the idea that the Bible is too difficult to study and understand. Because Scripture's essential message is clear, there is eternal significance for everyone who endeavors to study it, so the difficulty of Scripture should not be a hurdle standing in the way of our study.

- Throughout this lesson, Dr. Sproul outlined the goals of this teaching series. How will these goals answer the two great difficulties of studying and interpreting the Bible?

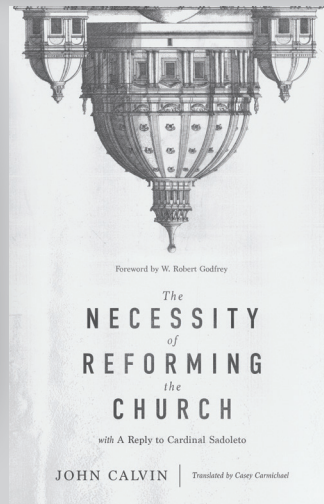
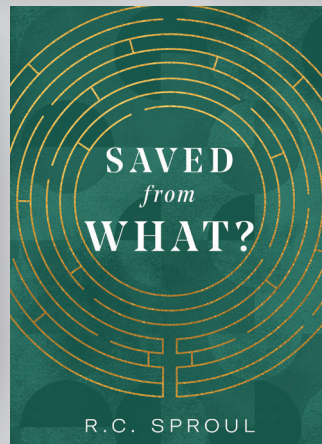
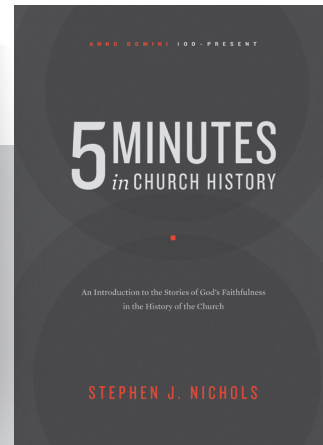
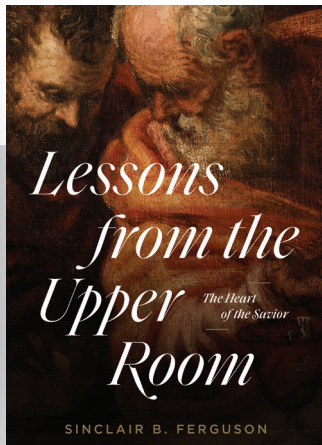
The primary goal of this course is to increase a person's ability and skill in interpreting the Bible. Reaching this goal will provide the key tools necessary to translate biblical principles to the present day, demonstrating how the Bible is relevant to our day. Increasing people's skill in interpretation will also help them become comfortable and confident with Scripture, alleviating its difficulty.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 1

1. **C.**
The perspicuity of Scripture refers to Scripture's clarity. While the perspicuity of Scripture does not mean that every part of Scripture is equally clear, it does mean that the central message of salvation contained in Scripture is understandable through the due use of ordinary means.
2. **C.**
One of the challenges raised against studying Scripture is that Scripture is irrelevant. The Bible is often looked at as an archaic book filled with prescientific notions and an outdated moral code that doesn't speak to modern life. One of the goals of this teaching series is to demonstrate that with the proper interpretive principles, such a claim is unfounded.
3. **B.**
Scripture's perspicuity is a Protestant principle maintained by the Reformers that states an important attribute of Scripture: Scripture is clear. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul named one Reformer in relation to this attribute of Scripture: Martin Luther. Luther emphasized that the basic message of salvation is plainly revealed in Scripture.
4. **A.**
While all these passages offer wisdom into the nature of Scripture, Dr. Sproul appealed to Deuteronomy 6:4–9 to support the case that studying the Bible is a duty. This portion of Scripture contained the Shema and calls God's people to have His words on their hearts.
5. **A.**
Though a respect for Scripture's authority may be called into question more and more, the Gallup poll cited in this lesson indicated that people had maintained a high regard for the authority of Scripture. The problem that accompanied this finding was that despite this respect, people largely remained ignorant of the content of Scripture.
6. **D.**
Dr. Sproul was once confronted with the belligerent claim that the things contained in Scripture are primitive and obscene. He used this as an opportunity to speak about the atonement and God's grace in revealing Himself to us. In one sense, the Bible does contain the obscene, for there is nothing more obscene than the cross of Christ, when He who knew no sin became sin through imputation. In one sense, the Bible is also primitive because God condescends to us in order to reveal Himself in an understandable way through it.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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