“Living by the Book” by Howard Hendricks

Session 1: Why & How to Study the Bible

Why Study the Bible?
1. It is essential to Growth – 1 Peter 2:2 – Key word: “Long for”
2. It is essential to Spiritual Maturity – Hebrews 5:11 – 14 – Key word: “time”
3. It is essential to Spiritual Effectiveness – 2 Timothy 3:16 -17 – Key word: “All”

What is the COST in studying the Bible?
1. Effort – the greater the effort, the greater the reward
2. Openness to God – Proverbs 8:34 -35
3. Openness to Change – do we really want to become like Jesus?; Romans 8:29

HOW do we study God’s Word?

OBSERVATION
What do I SEE? What are the facts?

Terms – more than just words
Structure – more than just grammar. God’s Word is NOT random
Literary form – poetry, prose, narrative, parables. The Holy Spirit uses all
methods of communication to speak with us
Atmosphere – get involved with the text, the people, the culture

Spend most of your Bible study time here. With more Observation, you’ll gain better &
more accurate Interpretation.

INTERPRETATION
What does it MEAN? How is God speaking to me?

Questions – don’t be afraid to ask questions! God wants to answer your
questions. A foolish person is he who doesn’t ask questions.
Answers – the Bible does a tremendous job in answering questions in its own
text. Answers come through Observation.
Integration – the answers to the questions must be put together to reach the
meaning.

APPLICATION
HOW does it Work? God’s Word is always at work. It is ALWAYS relevant.

HOW it works for ME. If God’s Word isn’t “working for me”, then how can it be
passed on to others?
HOW does it work for Others? God’s Word can and does have implications for every aspect of our lives. Will we allow it transform us?

When beginning to study God’s Word and “Live by the Book” it is helpful to:

READ
Don’t browse! READ. How often have you gone back to a passage that you “read” years earlier and said to yourself “WOW, I didn’t see that!”

A great resource is the book “How to Read a Book” by Mortimer Adler. Dr Hendricks will mention this title in the next video session. You can read this book online at this web address:

http://cyberspacei.com/greatbooks/h2/how2read/h2r_001.htm

RECORD
Take notes of what God is saying to you. Keep notes in a journal. Use your Bible as a Work Book. God didn’t write His Word to be placed on a shelf to be admired! He wants us to use it.

REFLECT
Take time to get alone every once in a while. Sometimes we just need to “get away” from everything that may distract us. Turn off the cell phone. Go to the beach or park. Put yourself out of the reach of others & into the reach of your Father – even if it’s just for an hour or two. You’ll be greatly refreshed. You may not have your questions answered, but you’ll have found the beginnings of relief.

Remember to take a pad of paper & pencil or pen. Write down what’s on your mind or what’s troubling you. Lift those thoughts up to God as an offering of your dependence upon Him. Save those notes & return to them after a couple of month’s time & see what God has done with them.