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SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

Walking through the [Manna House's](#) back door, I will sometimes turn left and stop to look at a simple wooden frame hanging on the wall next to the stone fireplace. Within its borders is the ministry's philosophy statement, part of which reads, "We believe that the essence of the Christian life is intimacy with Jesus Christ. Our primary interest is maturing people in the faith, so they, in turn, can be used to mature others in the faith. Thus we believe that as a ministry, we exist for the purpose of disciple-making." Nearly forty years after the writing of that statement, we continue to nurture believers in their walks with Jesus. We believe meditating upon and studying the scriptures is vital in deepening our faith and enhancing maturity. Most Christians align with this idea. But many struggle to navigate the Bible and often admit walking away from reading its pages frustrated. How we view our time searching the scriptures is half the battle of overcoming our frustration and disappointment. There will always be challenging passages for our consideration. Some of which we may never feel 100% confident in our understanding. But greater understanding and revelation come when we desire to know our Father's heart and approach our study with this in mind.

Scripture itself tells of the rewards it offers. It is sweeter than honey and more precious than gold (Psalm 119:103 & 127). No advantage life offers can compare. It is not a dead or an obsolete piece of literature. But instead is living, powerful, and active, sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). It helps us think correctly, transforming us (Romans 12:2). It is a light to our paths, helping to keep us from stumbling so badly through life (Psalm 119:105). It is flawless and pure, enduring forever (Psalm 12:6, Isaiah 40:8). It is a worthy investment of time, key to knowing Christ as our first love and life. In the following article, Preston Gillham offers a unique and practical perspective helping us pave the way to a better understanding of navigating the word of God. We much appreciate his wisdom,



Will Lynch and Ben Warren at the second Winter Youth Retreat held at The Hill in 2021

heart, and contribution to this newsletter.

We are here for you,

Kim



Andrew Porterfield leading our Sunday night college Bible study in person and on Zoom.

How Do I Study The Bible?

By [Preston Gillham](#)

Each week thousands of men, women, and children gather to study the Bible via [Bible Study Fellowship](#), [Community Bible Study](#), [Precept Ministries](#), and other study programs like [The Hill](#) offers. If you add those studying via church-based programs like Sunday School, the number of those closely examining Scripture swells into the millions. Add international students of God's Word and the number is multiplied millions.

But how? How do you properly read, study, digest, incorporate into your life, and build personal proficiency with the Word of God?

How do you know who to trust from the throng of teachers offering commentary on the Bible?

In this short article, I'm making a distinction between reading the Bible and studying the Bible. Reading exposes you to broad concepts covered by the Bible. Studying the Bible delves deeply into the text with the goal of understanding at a deeper level what the Bible is saying.

Contemplate for a moment [how you learn best](#). Do you listen to a lecture and leave with a clear understanding? Do you prefer to read and write for comprehension? Do you doodle and draw an idea in order to grasp it? Do you mix mathematical symbols with words to form a formula that sequences your thoughts? When you are thinking about something, do you talk to yourself? Are outlines and bullet points meaningful to you or do you find pictures and diagrams more beneficial?

In short, are you an auditory learner, a manipulative (kinesthetic, tactile) learner, or a visual learner? The answer to this question defines how you prefer to study and how you learn most effectively. Do you have a learning difficulty, e.g. dyslexia, ADD, ADHD, dysgraphia, etc., that requires a special learning environment?

Precept Ministries teaches their students to study the Bible using images and colored pencils. Once marked, a student looks at the page of their Bible and has a visual image in full color of what that section of Scripture is conveying.

Students in Bible Study Fellowship and Community Bible Study work their way through passages using robust outlines and guided questions to help them think about a passage. They are encouraged to write their answers, listen to a lecture, and only then, meet with a small group to discuss their findings.

If you do your best work in a special place, surrounded by a unique setup, at a particular time of the day, or in a customized ambiance, then this is the same environment you utilize to your advantage in studying the Word of God.

Step away from the idea of studying Scripture and ponder how you have learned other things most effectively. Whatever the answer is to that question is the template for how

you study and learn the Bible.

To summarize, you have a preferred learning style: auditory, manipulative/kinesthetic, visual. This should guide the default manner for how you approach learning and study.

If possible, the primary manner in which you learn should guide how you predominantly study—study anything, but especially something as important as the Bible. Of

course, you take what you get from your source, but then be diligent to implement your learning style into a body of knowledge so your study and apprehension of the material is efficient and effective.

When I study Scripture, I sit down to read. A serious study results in an array of other sources surrounding my Bible. If what I study leaves questions loose in my head, I go to my journal and write words and sentences, requiring my roaming notions to submit to a paragraph. Ultimately, my

journal either resolves my question or isolates the essential question I'm seeking to answer.

My study looks this way because I'm an auditory-visual learner. When I read, I "hear" words in my head. When I read, I see words and concepts. When I listen to a lecture, I hear and envision a spoken idea that forms a concept.

My disposition for thinking the way I think typically sequences the subject to the extent necessary to apprehend the matter and apply it. If application proves problematic, I problem-solve until I've mastered the idea.

When my wife Dianne approaches Scripture (or any sort of learning), she implements tactile practice into the subject. If she's listening to a lecture, she always takes notes. The taking of

notes assists her with studying the subject because note taking is tactile, kinesthetic, manipulative. Colors on a page are meaningful to her. The desk where she studies is surrounded by all sorts of manipulatives: cards, pencils, blocks, dozens of colors, charts, etc.



Jasper Cosby involved in Bible study during the second 2021 Winter Youth Retreat



Residents and friends at The Hill didn't let the frigid temps keep them from enjoying the recent snowfall

To summarize, what might you do to enhance your chances of comprehending Scripture more effectively and efficiently? Do you need to close your door and read the passage aloud? Would an additional resource be meaningful to your study? When you search for assistance, are you looking for an image or are you looking for an article or are you wanting a lecture?

To some extent, the answer to all of the above questions is, “Yes. I will benefit from all of these approaches.” The point being: A mature adult rarely learns in only one way, and complex subjects benefit from multiple presentations, utilizing as many senses as possible.

To state the obvious, whatever your learning style, you will learn little unless you approach Scripture intentionally. By this I mean, engage the text. Devote strategic time to exploration, listening, examination, and counsel.

Not to be legalistic, but five minutes a day with the Word of God will not change your life; thirty minutes will. Think of it this way: You can't maintain a vibrant relationship with a five-minute investment, but with a thirty-minute investment, you stand a fighting chance.



Bailey Patterson ready to study at the Rooted & Grounded College Retreat

Time. Learning. Complexity. Sheer volume of pages. Here's the deal: God promises that the words in His book will not render a [nil result](#). So, engage. Start.

Here are some resources I've found helpful in my study of Scripture.

- I utilize the service of [Biblegateway.com](#) all the time. While the number of Bible versions offered can be overwhelming, it is helpful for comparing translations. I keep my personalized Biblegateway.com set to show me the [New American Standard Bible \(1995\)](#). This translation can be a bit wooden when you try to read it aloud. This is due to its literalness in translating the original texts of the Bible into English. Bottom line: There is no more reliable translation of the Bible for English readers than the NASB.

- If you would like a guided study, I refer you to [YouVersion.com](#). Many churches are now partnering with YouVersion to blend the pastor's sermon notes with a note-taking ability by the congregant inside the YouVersion app.

- Many of the bound study sources on my shelf are now online. The good news is that they are online. The bad news is that so is everything else. As a rule, when you poke around various biblical sources and source people, when you encounter something that diminishes, explains away, runs counter to the general force of Scripture, or



Six couples joined us in November for a marriage retreat

otherwise seeks to moderate the plain statement of the Bible, discard that source. Said another way, the Bible is the standard, not the commentary about the Bible.

- If you are new to Bible study, be systematic in your approach as opposed to simply opening the Scripture and starting to read. Begin with the “Gospel of John” or “The Letter to the Philippians.” You can find these biblical books in the Table of Contents.

- There are two, cardinal rules when you study the Bible: 1) The Bible will not contradict itself. If this appears to be the case, then you have not yet discovered all there is to know on the subject. A corollary to this rule is that God will not contradict the Bible or vice versa. 2) The Bible is complete. No one can add inspired writings to the Bible, not even the Pope when speaking [ex cathedra](#). You should read extra-biblically, i.e. books and commentaries about the Bible, but you should automatically toss these aside if they contradict Scripture or seek to add to Scripture.

God promises that there is no downside, no way to lose, by investing in His Word: the Bible. Not only does He [promise a return](#) on your investment (ROI), He promises the return will be remarkable. Transformative even. In fact, He promises an investment in Scripture will make you rich in your spirit and soul and heart. So wealthy and secure in fact, that whatever losses this world creates and levies against you, will not be severe enough to diminish, wither, or otherwise discount the ROI in studying and investing in Scripture.

Here's to a grand investment through study and the anticipated ROI.

The Quiet Cabin

Folks rent the [Quiet Cabin at The Hill](#) for several reasons, but the most common is to enjoy the peace and quiet the setting offers. Nestled in a secluded location at the edge of the woods, it is the perfect spot to relax, rekindle, or recharge. Some even find it a great place to work when you need a place with no distractions.

The Quiet Cabin has two bedrooms, three bathrooms and a sleeping loft that will accommodate a total of eight guests. Most enjoy the fact that there is no cable TV, phone line, or satellite dish to interrupt the peace. That's one of the reasons we call it the Quiet Cabin. Free wifi is available in case you don't want to leave all amenities behind.



The Quiet Cabin

Check our website for more information and to contact us about renting it for your next get away, lifeonthehill.org.

Featured Resident: Leah Harley



I have been a resident at The Hill for a little over a year and it has shaped my life in amazing ways. At first it seemed very easy to feel disconnected because I did not grow up going to camps and had never heard of this place until my sister became a resident several years before me. However, it did not take long for this place

to feel like home.

The biggest impact God has made in my life while at The Hill is from the teaching, specifically Bob's Romans study. Even though I was born and raised in the church, I still had much to learn. God set me free from several twisted truths I had believed my entire life. He used the Romans study, which we did as a group, to open my eyes. The Hill also provided me with an amazing community of fellow believers who not only have the desire to pursue Jesus as I do, but they hold me accountable for specific things or areas in my life. They encourage me and provide me with wisdom in so many different ways. Overall, God has used The Hill to ultimately bring me into a deeper and closer relationship with Him. Thank you, because your contributions help provide resources for people like me who's lives can, will, and are changed forever.

Cooking Class at The Hill

When new residents come to The Hill for discipleship it's often their first experience at being on their own. This comes with all sorts of life adjustments. One of those is having to provide their own meals. There seems to be quite a skill level disparity between the young men and women who join us here. The ladies seem to arrive endowed with cooking ability or are able to figure it out rather quickly. The gentlemen, however, normally struggle in this area, and more times than any of them will admit, they succumb to the frozen pizza syndrome. Need I describe that for you?

Kim Warren and Olivia Robison, full of compassion for their plight (and possibly horrified by the sheer number of \$2.00 pizzas being consumed), decided to teach these young men to cook and shore up their culinary proficiency. Armed with easy recipes and optimism, the duo hoped to propel the guy's gastronomy beyond the frozen food isle.

Little complaining was heard as the guys chopped and stirred their instructional cuisine, perhaps at the joy of having a new variety of fare or more likely due to the feast to come at the end of class. Either way, they left with the potential to grace a table with more than Totino's.



The Hill resident Ethan Edwards participating in a cooking class taught by Kim Warren and Olivia Robison

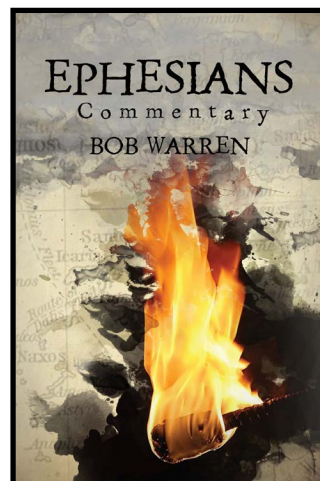
Online Ephesians Study

Our current [online teaching series](#) is Paul's letter to the Ephesians. He takes great liberty and is able to dig deep theologically because he spent three years teaching there. Such depth conveyed to this familiar audience makes for a rich feast of God's word.

The audio lesson, study notes, and discussion questions are posted weekly on Monday. This makes a complete package for anyone desiring to hold a Bible study with this material in his or her home or other venue.

The first sessions will remain available for a few more months before being replaced with newer sessions. Please consider joining us at lifeonthehill.org for this wonderful study

of Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus. It is not too late to get caught up.





Campers and counselors from Winter Youth Retreat 1: Presley Pritchett, Aiden Edwards, Leah Harley, Avery Joyner, Emmy Dashiell (behind Avery), Jordan Dashiell, Gardner Guillory, Cole Carroll, and Aaron Davis.

Upcoming Events

Men's Retreat, [April 23-25, 2021](#)—This is our annual gathering of men at The Hill. Watch the website for info on speakers and other details.

Summer Youth Leadership Camps, #1-June 6-10, #2-June 27-July 1, #3-July 11-15—Summer camp will be a little different this year and smaller in size. Applications and more information can be found on our website.

Senior Camper Weekend, [June 25-27, 2021](#)—2021 graduating Seniors can join us for this extra weekend of camp designed specifically for them.

Awakened to Grace Conference (AKA Romans Retreat), Aug. 27-28, 2021—Andrew Farley and Tim Chalas will be the main speakers. More information is available on our website. [Registration is required.](#)

For more info on these and other events go to lifeonthehill.org.



Winter Retreat 2 Leaders: Andrew Porterfield, Chris Holloman, Ben Warren, Olivia Robison, and Oakley Warren

Your Friends at The Hill