

# **Methods of Bible Study**

By Luke Seibert

SAMPLE

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# Topical Study: The Biblical View of Work

## Week One: Day One

A lot of times, Christians pick up the Bible, read a few verses in the morning, then go on about their day. They hear people talk about “studying” the Bible, but what exactly does that mean? Through this course, we are going to explore several different methods of studying the Word of God, and it is my goal that you will begin to start using some of these principles in your own time with the Bible. A few of the studies we will touch on briefly, but others we will really zero in on and take a closer look at, the reasons for each I will explain as we go along.

Some days will be longer than others, but each step is essential in our desire to be men and women of God who are “accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Do not feel overwhelmed by the different methods, but take your time, and eagerly look for what God will show you as we work through His Word in these coming months.

One way we study the Bible is to do a *topical study*. Through this, we examine what the Word of God says about a given subject, then work to bring our own ideas into subjection with what the Lord has revealed in the Bible. Although we may think we know what the Scripture says about something, we don’t want to think we know—we want to know with certainty what God has said. Therefore, we study the Bible. As an example of this type of study, we will take the concept of “work.” Not everyone likes work, I know, but that is all the more reason we should see what God has to say about it instead of just assuming we know how He views it.

So as we begin, we must examine the attitude we have toward work right now. That way, we can look back at what we wrote here and see how we have grown in our understanding as we thoroughly examined the Word of God. Simply state what you truly think in answer to the questions; do not be ashamed about anything you write. All we are doing is seeing where we are now, then we can mark our growth in understanding throughout this study.

1. Why is man supposed to work? Is it a punishment, or is it not?
2. Who first told man to work? When was that?

3. Why is work important for the Christian?

4. Will we still be working in heaven?

These are important questions for us to consider, and we will look at these—and ones like them—in the days to come. Do not rush through any of this, but take your time, think deeply, and pray for guidance through this study.

## Day Two

Before we ever start reading or studying the Bible, we should always ask God for guidance as we look at His Word. 1 Corinthians 2:14 tells us that on our own, we cannot understand the things of God, “because they are spiritually appraised,” meaning they can only be understood through the Holy Spirit guiding us. Ask Him to lead you before you start each day’s assignment.

Read Genesis 1:1–2:25 (it’s a lot, I know, but it is the foundation for what we are studying).

1. What are these chapters about?
2. What is the focus of this account? What part of creation is described in greatest detail?
3. Why do you think this is so?
4. Read Genesis 1:28–31. What are God’s instructions to the man and woman?



## Day Three

We covered a lot of ground yesterday. It was a large portion, but it is foundational for our understanding of *work*. Also, there are many large nuggets of truth we find here. Today, we will examine some of those at a closer level.

Read Genesis 1:26–2:25 again.

1. Read back over your answers from the questions presented yesterday. What does this show you about how God viewed work in creation?
2. We saw that God was the first one to work—what does this mean for us?
3. Read Exodus 20:8-11. Do you think God sees the pattern He set during creation as important? Why?
4. You may have already thought of this, but when do Genesis 1 and 2 take place—before or after Adam’s sin? Does this make a difference?

5. Read Genesis 1:31. Was work part of what God called “very good”? Have you thought of work as something good before?
  
6. Read Genesis 2:4-15 again. Why did God plant the garden?
  
7. Look at Genesis 2:18-20. God is planning on making Eve, but He doesn’t do that right away. Why do you think God brought the animals to Adam to have him name them?
  
8. From our brief study of creation, was work originally a good or a bad thing?

I told you there was a lot of truth in these chapters, didn’t I? To begin with, we see that God Himself was the One who first worked (Genesis 2:2). Additionally, He created man and gave him work to do from the very beginning, and all of that work was “very good” (Genesis 1:26–28, 31; 2:4–15). Man was created to work and care for the garden God had planted and to rule (steward) over all of His creation. From this, it is obviously clear that work itself is not a result of sin. God Himself worked, so He clearly thinks it a worthy and honorable thing to do.

There is more we could dig into here, and though it would be a good idea to look more closely at them on your own, we will move on to another passage tomorrow. We have seen some valuable truths in this first part of Genesis, foundational lessons that God wants us to look at. We broke the questions up over two days because, for many things in the Bible, we cannot fully

understand it by simply reading it one time through. Sometimes it takes several days for us to see the truth God has revealed in His Word.

By looking at these two chapters, we might think we see everything God wants us to understand about work. He gave it, it was good, and that is it, right? While it would be easy to think that, we need to remember that we do not live in that perfect creation anymore. What happened? Well, in Genesis 3, the Fall occurred, and we will look at that and the effect it had on work tomorrow.

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## Day Four

So we have looked at work as it was originally created, but we no longer live in that same type of world, and that is because of one simple reason: sin. Sin entered the world, and it affected every part of life. With that said, we should expect to find that it has adapted or changed work in some way, and that will be our focus now.

Read Genesis 3:1–24.

1. What was Adam first charged with? (Hint: it is *not* eating the fruit.)
2. Why is this significant?
3. What are some of the punishments for sin found in verses 16–19?
4. What changed about work for man because of sin?

5. Did his responsibilities change at all?
  
6. Why do you think God allowed work to be affected like this?
  
7. Is there any indication of when the man would no longer need to work or carry out his responsibilities?
  
8. Does this mean that work is now a punishment for sin? Why or why not?

The Fall was a terrible event, a deliberate choice to sin that still affects us in so many ways today, and it will continue to do so until Jesus returns. Because of man's sin, work has now become hard (Genesis 3:17–19). Now it is imperative for us to realize this fact: work became hard as a result of sin, not that work came about because of sin. We saw yesterday that work was good and that God Himself set for us the example of work.

It is simply that sin made work laborious, not that we work as some kind of punishment to help “pay for” our sins. That was finished upon the Cross (see Ephesians 2:1–10). They were judgments placed upon men, “because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

So, we must not think that something is wrong with us if we find work difficult. That is, we are all sinners, but just because someone is in a right relationship with God doesn't mean he

or she will find their work easy all the time. As long as we are on this earth and sin is present, it will still be tough—but we don't have to give up hope. Keep on, both in tasks you work at and in this study. We have far more to learn about the subject of work before we are through.

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## Day Five

We now come to the portion of our Bible that deals with God and His relationship with His people Israel. Though the principles found in this part of our Bible still apply, God is primarily focused upon that one nation. Even so, there is much we can learn by studying the Old Testament. Let us pray, then dive into this portion with an open mind and a readiness to learn.

Read Exodus 20:1–26.

1. What is this passage about?
2. Do these commandments still apply to us today? Why do you think so?
3. Read verses 8–11. What pattern does God reference about work? Is this important? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think God wanted Israel to follow this pattern? If work is good and God does not need to rest, why did He say what He did?

5. Was this something Israel should obey only if they felt like it?

6. Is there anything else in this passage that talks about work?

7. What has this passage added to your understanding of work?

This pattern of a week—working six days and resting on the seventh—was a foundational concept God wanted His people to understand. In this chapter, we see some of the first commandments the Lord is giving His people, and this principle about work is expressed here. God has a specific pattern He wants His people to follow, and they cannot simply lay that aside.

Israel rested on the seventh day as part of their covenant relationship with God, but when Jesus arose from the dead, He sanctified the first day of the week. Therefore, the Church today rests on the first day, remembering the victory Christ brought us.