



# Understanding the Bible



# Understanding the Bible

METHODS OF BIBLE STUDY

by Dorothy L. Johns

*AN INDEPENDENT-STUDY TEXTBOOK*

Developed in Cooperation with  
the Global University Staff

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# Table of Contents

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COURSE INTRODUCTION..... 5

## **UNIT ONE:**     *APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING*

- 1**   Opening the Bible ..... 14
- 2**   Approaches to Bible Study ..... 36
- 3**   Principles of Interpretation ..... 58
- 4**   Figurative Language in Interpretation..... 80

## **UNIT TWO:**     *STUDY BY BOOK— HABBAKKUK*

- 5**   Composition—Knowing the Parts ..... 104
- 6**   Synthesis—Putting the Parts Together ..... 128
- 7**   Application—Studying by the Book Method..... 148

## **UNIT THREE:**   *OTHER METHODS OF STUDY*

- 8**   Biographical Method of Study..... 174
- 9**   Topical Method of Study ..... 196
- 10**  Devotional Method of Study..... 226
- Glossary ..... 248
- Answers to Self-Tests ..... 254
- Unit Student Reports ..... 260
- Answer Sheets ..... 273

# THE GU CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM



This independent study textbook is one of 18 courses (subjects) that make up the Christian Service Program. The symbol at the left is a guide for systematic study. The Christian Service Program is divided into four divisions. *Understanding the Bible* is Course 2 in Division 3.

The Divisions are structured to guide you in systematically going through the entire series. However, you may study this course by itself or study any course in the entire series in any sequence.

Study materials in the Christian Service Program are designed in a self-teaching format for Christian workers. This program will provide a student with the necessary Bible knowledge and skills for practical Christian service. These courses have been especially prepared for Christian workers in all nations and cultures.

## ATTENTION

Please read the preliminary instructions for this course very carefully. By following the instructions you should be able to achieve your goals for the course, and you should not have difficulty preparing for your unit student reports.

## COURSE INTRODUCTION

You are about to begin a very important activity: the careful, methodical study of the Bible. This course is divided into three parts, or units, of study. The first part will introduce you to principles, terminology, and relationships that are essential to all effective methods of Bible study. Then, a series of lessons will emphasize a thorough presentation of the synthetic or whole-book method of study. The last part of the course presents other important methods of Bible study. While much in the course is necessarily intellectual comment on how to study, constant emphasis is placed on the student's spiritual improvement as the main purpose of the course.

To understand the Bible, you must do more than merely read it. Reading it has value but often fails to make clear the relationship between different parts of the Bible. When you study the Bible with an organized plan in mind, you write down important findings that help you to see the unity that is present throughout the Scriptures. Furthermore, such study helps you to remember God's warnings and obey His commands. Obedience to God is the result of personal application of devotional Bible study. This application will build up your faith in Christ and strengthen your spiritual life.

You may find it difficult to do the kind of study that this course requires, but your reward for doing it will be great. The Holy Spirit is with you wherever you are. As you ask Him to help you, He will give you insight. May the Word of God dwell in you richly as you study this course!

## Course Description

Understanding the Bible is a course of study that interacts with you on methods of carefully organized Bible study. You will learn effective techniques for general study, then you will apply them to the Bible by means of study questions. Many of the answers given in the textbook to these questions are offered only as suggestions to guide you to your own answers. This study emphasizes the value of skilled procedures of observation and interpretation as aids to understanding the Bible and accomplishing the main purpose of the course. This purpose is to help you apply Bible truth to your own life and share it with others.

## Course Objectives

When you finish this course you should be able to:

1. Describe the basic principles of Bible interpretation.
2. Describe the four methods of Bible study that are taught in this course.
3. Use these basic principles of interpretation and the four methods of Bible study in your own study of the Word.
4. Interpret meaningful questions as you study the Bible and lead others in Bible study.
5. Value the Bible as authoritative for all Christian belief and all Christian living.
6. Be sensitive to your need of the Holy Spirit to help you study and share Scripture.
7. Feel more confident in sharing Scripture with others.

## Textbooks

You will use *Understanding The Bible, An Independent-Study Textbook* by Dorothy Johns as both the textbook and study guide for the course. The Bible is the only other textbook required.



## Study Time

How much time you actually need to study each lesson depends in part on your knowledge of the subject and the strength of your study skills before you begin the course. The time you spend also depends on the extent to which you follow directions and develop skills necessary for independent study. Plan your study schedule so that you spend enough time to reach the objectives stated by the author of the course and your personal objectives as well.

## Lesson Organization and Study Pattern

Each lesson includes: 1) lesson title, 2) opening statement, 3) lesson outline, 4) lesson objectives, 5) learning activities, 6) key words, 7) lesson development including study questions, 8) self-test (at the end of the lesson development), 9) answers to the study questions. Answers to each self-test are at the back of your textbook before the unit student reports.

The lesson outline and objectives will give you an overview of the subject, help you to focus your attention on the most important points as you study, and tell you what you should learn.

Most of the study questions in the lesson development can be answered in spaces provided in this study guide. Longer answers should be written in a notebook. As you write the answers in your notebook, be sure to record the number and title of the lesson. This will help you in your review for the unit student report.

*Do not look ahead at the answers until you have given your answer. If you give your own answers, you will remember what you study much better. After you have answered the study questions, check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson. Then correct those you did not answer correctly. The answers are not given in the usual numerical order so that you will not accidentally see the answer to the next question.*

These study questions are very important. They will help

you to remember the main ideas presented in the lesson and to apply the principles you have learned.

## How to Answer Questions

There are different kinds of study questions and self-test questions in this study guide. Below are samples of several types and how to answer them. Specific instructions will be given for other types of questions that may occur.

A *MULTIPLE-CHOICE* question or item asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

- 1** The Bible has a total of
- a)** 100 books.
  - b)** 66 books.
  - c)** 27 books.

The correct answer is *b) 66 books*. In your study guide, make a circle around *b)* as shown here:

- 1** The Bible has a total of
- a)** 100 books.
  - (b)** 66 books.
  - c)** 27 books.
  - d)** 2 books.

(For some multiple-choice items, more than one answer will be correct. In that case, you would circle the letter in front of each correct answer.)

A *TRUE-FALSE* question or item asks you to choose which of several statements are TRUE.

### *Example*

- 2** Which statements below are TRUE?
- a)** The Bible has a total of 120 books.
  - (b)** The Bible is a message for believers today.
  - c)** All of the Bible authors wrote in the Hebrew language.
  - (d)** The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible.

Statements **b** and **d** are true. You would make a circle around these two letters to show your choices, as you see above.

A *MATCHING* question or item asks you to match things that go together, such *as* names with descriptions, or Bible books with their authors.

### Example

**3** Write the number for the leader's name in front of each phrase that describes something he did.

- |                     |                                  |           |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| . <u>1</u> <b>a</b> | Received the Law at Mt. Sinai    | 1) Moses  |
| . <u>2</u> <b>b</b> | Led the Israelites across Jordan | 2) Joshua |
| . <u>2</u> <b>c</b> | Marched around Jericho           |           |
| . <u>1</u> <b>d</b> | Lived in Pharaoh's court         |           |

Phrases a and d refer to Moses, and phrases **b** and **c** refer to Joshua. You would write 1 beside **a** and **d**, and 2 beside **b** and **c**, as you see above.

## Ways to Study This Course

If you study this GU course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Although GU has designed this course for you to study on your own, you may also study it in a group or class. If you do this, the instructor may give you added instructions besides those in the course. If so, be sure to follow his instructions.

Possibly you are interested in using the course in a home Bible study group, in a class at church, or in a Bible school. You will find both the subject content and study methods excellent for these purposes

## Unit Student Reports

In the back of your study guide are located the unit student reports and answer sheets. These are to be completed according to the instructions included in the course and in the unit student

reports. You should complete and send each unit answer sheet to your instructor for his grading and suggestions regarding your work. Send one when you complete each unit.

## Certificate

Upon the successful completion of the course and the final grading of the unit answer sheets by your GU instructor, you will receive your Certificate of Award.

## About the Author

Dorothy Johns taught in elementary schools in New York and Missouri, USA. She also taught at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri.

Mrs. Johns received a Bachelor of Music Degree from Eastern School of Music in Rochester, New York. She received a Master of Science Degree in Education from the State University of New York at Brockport, New York. She did additional studies at Drury College, Central Bible College, and Missouri State University, all in Springfield, Missouri.

## Your GU instructor

Your GU instructor will be happy to help you in any way possible. If you have any questions about the course or the unit student reports, please feel free to ask him. If several people want to study this course together, ask about special arrangements for group study.

God bless you as you study *Understanding the Bible*. May it enrich your life and Christian service and help you fulfill more effectively your part in the body of Christ.





# UNIT ONE:

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## Approach To Understanding

### Lessons

- 1 Opening the Bible
- 2 Approaches to Bible Study
- 3 Principles of Interpretation
- 4 Figurative Language in Interpretation