

November 28, 2021 by Steve Brandon



How to Master the Bible

Various

1. Have a Desire
2. Have a Plan
3. Have Faith

As I have preached here at Rock Valley Bible Church for more than 20 years, I have sought to put before you Jesus Christ and the gospel. As Paul reflected upon his time in Corinth, he said, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). In other words, as Paul came to Corinth, he had one message to give them: the gospel. The gospel tells us that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to many, risen from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). This was Paul's message. This was what he preached "as of first importance" to those in Corinth.

This has been my heart as well. To tell you, Sunday after Sunday, of how to be made right with God, by faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, apart from any works that you might do to try and earn God's favor. "When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:4-6).

I have done this intentionally, preaching anything else puts the power and strength of our church upon the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:5). This is what Paul said to those in Corinth. "my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). I know that I don't have enough wisdom. And I know that God has no lack of power. And I have sought to see Rock Valley Bible Church thrive on the power of God!

Thus, I have sought to put before you Sunday in and Sunday out the good news of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

But not only have I sought to put before you the gospel every week, I have also tried to show you from where it comes. Week after week, I have focused my preaching attention upon a text of Scripture. Most often, my outline comes from the verses in that text. My observations come from that text. My applications come from that text. Occasionally, we look at a second or a third passage. But almost always, we key in on a particular passage (a verse or two or five or ten).

Then, the next week, I take up the next passage, and do the same thing. I read the verses in the Bible passage, form an outline from that passage, pull a bunch of observations from that passage, and apply that passage of Scripture to all of us. Then, the next week, I do the same thing until we reach the end of the book. Then, we have picked up another book and done the same thing, taking the first section of the book, forming an outline from that text, showing some observations from that text, and applying that text to all of us. This is called, "Expository Preaching."

Of course, there are times and seasons when pull out of our regular exposition, for Christmas or Easter or some sort of special occasion. Today is one of those special occasions. My message this morning will be different than normal. The reason is simple. In our exposition of Acts, we have reached a good stopping point. We are exactly half-way through the book. We have gone through 14 of the 28 chapters. And chapter 15 is a crucial chapter in the book of Acts, with Christmas and the New Year coming, I didn't want to start working through Acts 15, only to finish it a few weeks later. I want to keep it together for us.

So, this morning, I'm going to pull back from our exposition of Acts. There is a reason why I don't pull back to often. There is a reason the pattern of my preaching for more than 20 years has been book by book, chapter by chapter, section by section, verse by verse. Because my burden hasn't been so much to tell you what the Bible teaches, as much as it is to show you what the Bible says. My heart is for all of you to know your Bible. and to know it well. My heart for you is to see what the Bible says, where it says it, and how it says it. In fact, you might say it this way: I have a burden that every one of you would come to master the Bible. In other words, to know what the Bible says and to know where the Bible says it.

That's a good definition of what it means to master the Bible: to know what the Bible says, to know how the Bible says it, and to know where the Bible says it. When you master the Bible like this, you will be able to use the Bible to guide you in your Christian walk, to use the Bible to guide other believers in their walk, and to use the Bible to share your faith with unbelievers.

My message this morning is entitled, "How to Master the Bible." It comes from a burden that I have for all of you, to know your Bible, and to know it well. indeed, to master your Bible, that it might master you. Let me ask you: Do you want to master the Bible? The Bible calls us to master the Bible. Paul told Timothy, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The worker mentioned in this verse is a "master craftsman." And though this was written to a pastor, it certainly applies to all of us.

Do you want to master the Bible? There are times, when I see people in our church who disregard God's word, They don't read it regularly. They don't think about it. They just come to church and listen politely to what I say, but have no real love for God's word. and have no desire at all to master the Bible. I think that I have a greater desire for them to master the Bible than they have for themselves. Do you want to master the Bible? Really? Do you want to master the Bible? If so, this sermon is for you.

I have three points this morning. How to Master the Bible? First off, ...

1. Have a Desire

If you want to master the Bible it begins with your own desire for the Bible. Without a desire to master the Bible, you won't. A desire begins with your affections: The Psalmist says, "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day!" (Psalm 119:97). The Psalmist is talking about a desire for God's word, that occupies his mind all the day. In fact, this is what we see in all of Psalm 119. It's a love-poem, if you will, to the word of God.

There is reason why the Psalmist loves the law of the Lord. The Bible makes him wise (Psalm 119:98). The Bible is sweet to his soul (Psalm 119:103). The Bible gives him understanding (Psalm 119:104). The Bible guides his way (Psalm 119:105). He says, "Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart" (Psalm 119:111). This is where mastery of the Bible begins: with a desire.

As most all of you know, Yvonne and I just became grandparents this week. Carissa had her baby girl: Eloise Marie Mennen was born on Friday afternoon. We had a chance to hold her. Grandma had a chance to hold her: Uncle David had a chance to hold her. When I got to hold her, she was a bit fussy, because she was eating just before I took her in my arms. I was reminded of 1 Peter 2:2, which speaks about babies, and their longing for their mother's milk, and how we ought to long and yearn for the word of God. "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk [of the word], that by it you may grow up into salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

If ever you will master the Bible, you need to have a longing for the Bible. And if you have a longing for the Bible, nothing will keep you away from the Bible. You will cry like a baby, and cry like a baby until you get your milk of the word. Do you have a heart for the Bible? Do you have a desire for the word of God? Do you have a desire to learn? A desire to know? A desire to grow?

If you lack that desire, but want to have that desire, may I encourage you to pray? "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Psalm 119:18). That's a simple prayer that you can pray, that I'm sure God will answer. "God, open my eyes, that I might read your word, and find wonderful things in it." The promise of God is this: "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). If your desire is to desire to master the Bible, pray for God to give you the desire. I'm sure that he will.

Now, one of the ways to cultivate your desire is to be convinced of the benefits of the Bible in your life. Consider the following Psalm:

Psalm 1:1-2

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

This Psalm tell us that the man is blessed who turns away from evil and delights in the law of the Lord. The man is blessed who meditates upon the law of the Lord day and night. In other words, the one who delights in God's word, and thinks about it, and meditates upon its meaning and application, is a blessed man.

The Psalmist continues with a word picture, describing this blessing: He says, ...

Psalm 1:3

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Such is the favor that God gives to those who love his word: He gives a steady life. He gives a life that perseveres through struggle. Because a tree by the river always has a source of strength. A life lived near God's word has a constant stream of strength from which to draw. Charles Spurgeon said it well, "A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't." That's Psalm 1 in action.

The one who has a Bible, and constantly reads the Bible, wearing out its pages, is the one who will know and experiences the sustaining grace of God throughout his/her life. The contrast comes in verse 4.

Psalm 1:4

The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

The one who loves God's word and delights in God's word, is like the oak tree by the stream. The one who neglects God's word and delights in the world, is like the tumbleweed blowing down the highway!

Are you convinced of the benefits of God's word in your life? If so, you will have a desire for the word of God. Let's move to my next point. How to master the Bible? First of all, "Have a Desire." Second, ...

2. Have a Plan

You may have all the desire in the world to master the Bible, but without a plan, you won't master the Bible.

Some people think that knowing a lot about the Bible is the same thing as mastering the Bible. But it's not. Again, my definition of what it means to master the Bible: to know what the Bible says, to know how the Bible says it, and to know where the Bible says it.

So, when it comes to a plan, my suggestion is simple: Read the Bible.

Surely, there is more to mastering the Bible than reading the Bible. There's study and memorization and meditation. But it all begins with reading. So, if you want to master the Bible, read the Bible. Too often Christians learn about the Bible, but do not actually read the Bible itself.

Now, I'm thankful for the abundance of resources that we have today that explain the Bible to us. We have books and book and books that explain the Bible. We have an internet that has an inexhaustible amount of Bible resources for us. Web pages are devoted to answering every question that we might have about the Bible! We can watch the best Bible-teachers and preachers in the world! We listen to the classics of Christian literature read to us. We can watch well-thought-through presentations of Bible truth! All of this for free! If, we have the desire (point #1).

Now, I'm thankful for all of it! I use the Bible resources on the internet on a weekly basis. But I have a fear that many people who know a lot about the Bible, aren't really masters of the Bible itself.

David Nienhuis, Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, Seattle Pacific University and Seminary, has some good observations about this in his book, "A Concise Guide to the New Testament." He describes the struggle that his Bible students have. He says that he gives assignments of textbook readings and Scripture readings, he finds that the students read the textbook and skim the Bible. He says this, "This results in too many students spending their time reading about the Bible instead of actually learning to read the Bible themselves."^[1]

This is a danger for us as well, especially in this internet age, to know much about the Bible, without reading the Bible for ourselves. Nienhuis continues, ...

"Students memorize the names of the biblical books in order. They learn the basic plot line of the larger biblical story. They are encouraged to set aside time each day for devotions. They memorize a variety of Bible verses. ... And yet these same students typically struggle in my classes. This is the case because most of them have been trained to be Bible quoters, not Bible readers. They have the capacity to recall a relevant biblical text in support of a particular doctrinal point, or in opposition to a hot spot in the cultural wars, or in hope of emotional support when times get tough. They approach the Bible as a sort of reference book, a collection of useful God-quotes that can be looked up as one would locate a word in a dictionary or an entry in an encyclopedia. What they are not trained to do is read a biblical book from beginning to end, to trace its narrative arc, to discern its main themes, and to wonder about how it shapes our faith lives today. Indeed, oftentimes these students find themselves dismayed when they read a beloved Bible quote in its actually literary context and discover that it does not seem to bear the meaning they thought it did when they quoted the verse in isolation "To summarize, the problem as I see it is this: the university frequently introduces students to a Bible they don't recognize, and the church often teaches students to be devoted to a Bible they don't know how to read."^[2]

The burden of my message this morning is simple: I want to encourage you to read your Bible.

Now, I know many of you (if not most of you), read your Bibles on a daily basis! For this I am thankful to God, because I know that such a practice is best for you, and is best for our church. But I want to encourage you all to read strategically. In other words, "Have a Plan." As they say, "Those who refuse to plan, plan to fail." I want to encourage you to have a plan for your Bible reading.

Maybe you already have a plan. Maybe you attend some Bible study that gives you some direction on your Bible reading. Maybe you are committed to watching some video series, which is guiding you through some book of the Bible. Perhaps you and your family is committed to some sort of Bible reading practice that helps you all to read the Bible. If you already have a plan to systematically read the Bible, great! wonderful! keep it up! keep going! I want nothing more than for you to prosper in your plan. Go for it! Don't be distracted away from that plan.

But if you don't have a plan, I want to give you a recommendation. I want to invite you to read the Bible with me. Well, not literally with me. But along with me.

As many of you remember, I was on Sabbatical a year and a half ago, and during our three months in California, I was able to read through the entire Bible. I had done so before on many occasions over the years. But that summer was a concentrated time of reading and reflecting that proved to be very helpful for me and my soul. Along the way, I also produced a little booklet, consisting of one page per book of the Bible, with chapter summaries. I now keep it with me in my Bible.

When I came back from Sabbatical, I told all of you of my experience. I challenged you all to create such a book for yourself. Because of time, I said, "It will be difficult for you to produce such a booklet in three months." But you could certainly do it in a couple of years, if you worked at it a bit every day." I believe, that such a booklet will go far in helping you grasp the contents of the Bible so that you can master it.

So, fast forward to last December, a year ago. I asked some guys if they wanted to read through the Bible with me. Along the way, each of them would make effort to create a booklet for themselves by recording summaries of the chapters that they read. I told them, ...

"I believe in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which says, 'All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. I believe this verse. It says that the best way to train a 'man of God' is with *all* of Scripture. So, believing this verse, I'm asking you if you want to join me in reading through the entire Bible together. We will trust the Lord that it will teach you and correct you. We will trust that it will train you, so that you will be equipped for ever good work. Will you join me?

So, for the past year, a handful of us have been reading through the Bible together on our own. Then, we have met together for one hour each week. For us, to make things easiest, we have used Zoom. It reduces the time constraint. There is no travel. There is no problem with children. For all of us and our schedules, we found a one-hour time slot that worked. Tuesday evening 8-9pm. So, every Tuesday this past year We began promptly at 8pm on Tuesday evening. We ended promptly at 9pm.

We got online, shared briefly what was going on with our lives. Then I asked, "Are you all current with your reading?" We then gave our "thumbs up." If anyone wasn't current, I simply asked where they were in their reading. There were times when some guys were behind. But I never had to dig into why they were behind. Often, my encouragement to them was to start afresh. "Don't try to catch up, just skip ahead and come along."

Then, after that question, I asked, "Are you current with your chapter summaries?" We then gave our "thumbs up." Again, the same thing, if anyone wasn't current, I simply asked for a status. Never did I have to give them a plan to catch up. They often had a plan of their own. Often, my encouragement to them was to start afresh. "Don't try to catch up, just skip ahead and come along." You can catch it again next year.

With those preliminaries out of the way, we spent the next 45 minutes just talking about what we learned in our reading this past week. At 9pm we were done, on to the next week. Our conversation about the Bible helped to keep everyone going. Questions were asked and answered. Hard portions were pushed through. This accountability has made all the difference in the world for these men.

To reduce the burden of their chapter summaries, we didn't summarize everything that we read. But about half of our reading, we did. These men have committed to reading with me another year, working on the chapter summaries that we passed over. Perhaps, after this year (or next year or the next year), they will have a booklet of their own to place in their Bibles, to help them master the Bible.

This morning, I have asked two of these men to come and share a testimony of their experience reading through the Bible together with such accountability. The first is Jake. The following is a slightly edited transcript (for readability) of what he shared:

As Steve said, he approached us and asked us if we would be interested in going through a year of reading the Bible. I was extremely nervous about this because I wasn't a good finisher. I have never been a good finisher. I have always been a great starter. I have always been motivated, "Let's do this!" But I get bored. I'm not going to lie. I get bored with stuff. Often I zing and ping someplace else. I was nervous about this. I asked my wife, "Can I do this? Should I do this? I don't want to sit there and say I can't do it. I'm not going to be the old me and give up." But she encouraged me and it was the best year I ever had. It's the best thing I have ever done.

I had a Bible before. It was there. It sat there. I would look through it. I would notice some things. That was good enough for me. But I didn't know what I know now. Let me tell you some things that I have learned this year (and it's not over yet).

I learned that God's relentless pursuit to redeem his people will never end. I read from the beginning how God stretches out his arm to protect and to lead and to shelter his people. I have learned that he nourished his people and that he is going to nourish and protect us. I have learned and seen God be the God of the impossible. Matthew 19:26 says that "with God, all things are possible." I never realized how true that was. Yes, I have seen God work little things here or there, but in the Scriptures, I have seen impossible things that he has done. He has done it because he's God.

I have seen God do unbelievable things with both people and nature. I have seen God create and form the world and the universe and the stars and the mountains and the rivers. He has created it. I have seen God split the seas to allow people to travel through safely and then swallow up the enemies. I have seen God open up the earth and swallow up those who weren't righteous. I have seen God use earthquakes to save his people. I have seen God send his angels out to save his people. I have seen God confuse armies that were massive. I have seen God use nation against nation. And if God wanted to, he would use our nation.

I have seen our Lord use whatever and whoever he wants to fulfill his divine plan. It is God. The Lord will use the weak. The Lord will use the barren. The Lord will use a rock. The Lord will use a donkey. He will use a tax man. He will use a persecutor. He will use a fisherman. He will use fire. He will use a cloud. He will use the doubting. He will use prophets. And finally, he used his son.

I have seen how God doesn't want us to embrace a spirit of fear. Instead, he tells us to stand strong and courageous. I see that we should not fear, but that we should have faith because the God of the unlimited will not be limited. He is limitless in what he can do.

Finally, I have seen God's mercy and grace. I'm still trying to figure it out, but I'm still just awed by it. His mercy and grace saves sinners and uses people. He saved a sinner like myself, who I didn't think had a chance. I have seen his grace allow me to walk a new walk, to forget about the old man, to not feel guilty about the sins I used to have. There is no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ. I have seen God lead and forgive. I have seen how God wants us to build and to encourage one another.

So, in this past years as my eyes and my heart has been opened, my mind has been changed because my heart has been changed. I have seen that I'm not less masculine because I'm going to repent and be humble. I'm not less masculine of a man because I surrender myself and my pride. I have realized that true strength comes from weakness and giving it to God to make me strong. I have seen how God has loved us and that he is going to continue to love us.

I never realized that this book sitting on the side of my bed would ever impact that power in me. But my children see me constantly, day in and day out, every morning, in my Bible with my pens and with my notes. He showed me everything.

I do highly encourage it. It's a blessing. It has been a blessing to me.

The following slightly edited testimony (for readability) is given by Adam.

Usually, the best goes last! ... Not today, folks! ... You already had the good stuff. ... This year has kind of flown by. It feels

like we are getting ready for 2022 and I'm still waiting for 2020 to end.

We have embarked on this great adventure of reading the Bible together as a group of men. If you haven't read the Bible before, I would encourage you to do that anyway. But it's even better if you can do it with a group of men, and even more so if you summarize it also. I have done that. I'm far from "Mastering the Bible" still. But we are on our way. It is a great adventure.

It's helpful when you read with others because you have that support, not only to keep you accountable to read it because you know that others expect you to do your part, so you do your part and keep up in the conversation. But also, you have questions. What does this mean? What could this mean? Having an explanation from others is key.

The Bible is a big book. It can be intimidating. When you take it bit by bit, fifteen minutes a day or whatever it might be, that's helpful. But also, when you have other people around you that you can help explain something. Not only that, but they can pique your interest in something. They might read a verse that you have read a thousand times. Then, you say, "Wow, I have never thought about it that way."

It's also helpful to summarize because then you can go back and study and understand how the Bible fits together as a whole. It is somewhat like a novel, from beginning to end. There is poetry involved. There is historical parts of it. And, of course, there is the biggest theme of Christ saving us.

You will never consider it a waste of your time. You can't look back and say, "I wish I didn't read that Bible. That was a waste of time." How many movies have you seen recently where you experienced two hours--gone! Two hours covers a couple of weeks worth of reading the Bible. So, you won't regret doing it. If anything, it is going to lift you up spiritually.

We were doing the Fighter Verses earlier too. Jake has been doing pretty well with that. A couple of other guys still have some memorized. I fell apart early on with those. But I did find that when I was doing them, I felt closer to God in some ways. So, doing that in combination with reading the Bible is huge.

It's all about the Bible. We want to read about Jesus. But it's also about fellowship among friends. It's helpful to know how to meet together and know how to pray for one another. It's helpful to know what they are going through, what their family is going through. We are here every Sunday. We get to talk with one another. But we don't usually talk with everybody. Just having that small group of people that you can understand what's going on in their lives with jobs or spouses or kids or whatever is good as well.

I would encourage you to read your Bible. Read it with a group. Summarize it like we have.

Also, it's pretty relaxed as Steve said, he will check on us. We will put our thumbs up, down or sideways. If you are behind, it's all good. Take your time with it. I'm behind right now! I'm behind in Ezekiel, still. Because you get busy with things. You get busy with work or whatever you have going on. That's fine. You will catch up.

I would say, "Read your Bible so that you can master it." But then, summarize it and do it with a group of men or women or whatever you want to do. It's good for your soul. You are going to grow and grow. And if you can do it each year, you will be even better. It has been awesome.

Again, if you are content with your plan of mastering the Bible, go for it. But if you would like to be involved in a group like has just been described, you can talk with me and I can help to put you together with a few people that read through the Bible together. If you want to form a group on your own, have at it.

The principle is simple. If you read with some accountability, it will help you. Dave Helm has written a book entitled, "One to One Bible Reading," in which he advocates for something similar.^[3] Two people reading the Bible together and meeting to talk about it. You don't need to follow my plan. But, you need to "Have a Plan."

So, I encourage you, that if you want to master the Bible, to read the entire Bible.

I have a friend, who's in his 80's now. But he told me of the time when he was in his 40's maybe? His nephew came to him and asked him if he had ever read the entire Bible. He said, "Uh, yeah, sure I have. I read my Bible often." His nephew said to him, "Neither have I. How about we challenge each other to read through the entire Bible together this year?" And they did. And his habit hasn't stopped for several decades now. He is all the more stronger for it. He is like the tree described in Psalm 1. Do you want to master the Bible? Have a plan! Read it!

Finally, before we finish this morning, I want to give a word of warning to those of you who wish to master the Bible. If you want to master the Bible, Yes, you need to (1) Have a Desire. Yes, you need to (2) Have a Plan. But also, you need to ...

3. Have Faith

With this point, I'm simply saying that mastering the Bible is far more than a mere academic exercise. There needs to be heart. There needs to be faith.

We see this best when we see Jesus dealing with the religious authorities of his day. They prided themselves on their knowledge of the Bible. In fact, academically, even the least of the Pharisees put all of us to shame when it comes to their Bible knowledge. Yet, on several occasions, Jesus said to them, "Have you not read?"

One such occasion is in Matthew 12, when they were angry at Jesus for picking grain and eating it on the Sabbath, Jesus said to them:

"Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him?" (Matthew 12:3). "Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?" (Matthew 12:5). You might say it this way: they got the letter of the law, but not the Spirit. So stuck were they on the Sabbath, that they missed mercy.

On another occasion, the religious authorities were questioning Jesus about divorce, trying to get him in trouble with Herod, who had divorced his wife to follow after his lusts. Jesus said to them, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female," (Matthew 19:4) and he proceeds to quote from Genesis 2. It's not that they had never read these things, it's that they hadn't mastered the Bible to think about them correctly.

When questioning the resurrection, Jesus said, "Have you not read what was said to you by God: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' He is not God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:31-32). Yes, they had read, but they didn't believe. They lacked faith to understand the Bible.

During one of the conflicts that Jesus had with the Pharisees, he said to them, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life" (John 5:39-40). In other words, they knew what the Scriptures said, but they lacked faith. They didn't believe that the Old Testament Scriptures spoke of Jesus. Later, in the same context, Jesus said, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me" (John 5:46).

And as I challenge you this morning to have a plan to master the Bible, please don't neglect the role of faith. Because, ultimately, we don't simply want to master the Bible. We want to have the Bible master us. Max Anders writes, ...

There is a very close connection between God and His Word. Jesus Himself is called the Word of God (John 1:1, John 1:14; Revelation 19:13). To know God, you must know His Word; to honor God, you must honor His Word; to be in touch with God, you must be in touch with His Word. Mighty promises are given to those who master the Bible so well that the Bible masters them.

We are promised spiritual stability, fruitfulness, and true prosperity as we meditate on His Word day and night (Psalm 1:1-3).

When the words of Jesus abide in us, our desires will be given to us, according to God's will (John 15:7).

Meditating on God's Word leads to prosperity and success in our endeavors (Joshua 1:8).

We will have more wisdom than our enemies, more insight than our teachers, and more understanding than the aged (Psalm 119:97-100).

We will have greater power over sin (Psalm 119:11).

We will have comfort in affliction (Psalm 119:50).

By drawing near to God, we have His promise that He will draw near to us (James 4:8).

These astonishing observations, these magnificent claims, these profound promises — they help us to realize how important the Bible is, and what remarkable potential we bring to our lives when we become serious students of Scripture. That's why it's so important that we commit ourselves to mastering the Bible so well that the Bible masters us.^[4]

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 28, 2021 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] David R. Neihuus, *A Concise Guide to Reading the New Testament* (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 2018), 2.

[2] Ibid. p. 2.

[3] David Helm, *One to One Bible Reading: A Simple Guide for Every Christian* (Matthias Media: Chicago, 2011).

[4] <https://www.faithgateway.com/how-to-master-the-bible-so-well-that-the-bible-masters-you/>.