

## Introduction

This is a book I wish someone wrote for me when I was first reading the Bible. Over the past ten years, I have made the study of the Bible my hobby. First as a student, and then as a teacher. My hobby and great joy is to teach the bible on a verse-at-a-time, chapter-at-a-time and book-at-a-time basis.

A few years back I wrote an article and lecture titled “How We Got Our Bible”. It is a brief history of the English Bible and how the bible, as we know it got compiled. Soon afterwards, I wrote a follow up called “How to Buy a Bible”. The purpose of that lecture is to help people make a good decision as to which bible is right for them. My desire one day is to make both of those lessons into books themselves. Perhaps at the time of your reading this introduction, that goal has been accomplished. A particular book you are holding is the trilogy of that series that focuses on the topic of “How to Study Your Bible.”

The title of this book is Eight Simple Rules for Studying Your Bible. These eight rules are principals that I have taught through the years. The rules tend to overlap and that is intentional. Each chapter title is a rule.

In reading this book, please consider the following Bible Verse from the Book of Hebrews:

“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death and of faith in God” (Hebrews 6:1 NIV)

I want you to know what drives me as a Bible teacher is my desire to see people mature in their faith in God. That desire compelled me to write this book. On a related note, one of the principals I always teach is, “There are no guillotines at evangelistic rallies”. What I mean by that is neither God nor Christians say, “OK, you now believe in Jesus and have received eternal salvation. You are free to die now. The line for the guillotines is over there on the left.” Grant it, some people don’t comprehend the Gospel message until the end of their physical life. For most of us, the Christian experience begins with the comprehension of salvation. The growth of our faith comes from three main sources: 1) spending time in prayer to God; 2) spending regular time with other Christians, particularly in a good church where you are spiritually nourished and 3) spending regular time in God’s word. All three of those are necessary for healthy growth into spiritual maturity.

The requirement to spend regular time in God’s word is the concept behind this book. All this book is intended to do is to give you some guidelines and ideas for you to think about while reading your Bible. If it helps you, than give God a big “Thank You” for this book helping you. If not, well, its is a short book and it won’t waste a lot of your time. With that, I hope you enjoy the principals taught in this book.

I should add that this book does not spend a lot of time arguing over whether or not the Bible is inspired by God, whether or not God exists, or which version of the Bible you should read. There are lots of other books on those topics. This is not one of them, nor is it designed as such.

This book starts with the assumptions that 1) You believe in God, 2) You believe Jesus is the Son of God and 3) You have some interest in reading and studying your Bible. I believe the sixty-six books that form the “Protestant Bible” is inspired by God. There are an additional 14 books in the Old Testament of the Roman Catholic Bible. The New Testament is identical for both divisions of Christianity. Whether or not those books belong is another long debate that I won’t get into here. I will say the “Eight Rules” as taught in this book do also apply to the Roman Catholic Bible, other than my disagreement over those 14 books. With all of that said, if you disagree over any of these points, this isn’t the place to do it. If you don’t accept these issues at face value, this book is probably not for you. If you accept these issues, please enjoy this book.

I said in the opening sentence that this is a book I wish someone wrote for me when I was first reading the Bible. Since I cannot do that, I want to take some of the valuable lessons God has taught me over the years on studying the Bible and pass it on to others. With that, I hope and pray that the principals behind these rules are a blessing to you and it helps you to grow and mature in your faith as a Christian.

John Karmelich