

- *“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)* One of the first things you are taught concerning the handling of any sort of weapon whether it be a bow and arrow, some sort of blade, or a gun is the fact that there is great responsibility in handling such a thing. Those weapons can be dangerous if they are not treated with great respect and handled with care. There one of two or both things are present with any sort of accidental gun accident: carelessness and ignorance. If a person is careless or ignorant of the gun and how it is to be used, then the chances of an accidental discharge that could lead to a life being lost are raised exponentially. That is why we are implored to always handle a gun or any type of weapon with great care.
- The same things can be said for the use of God’s Word. Notice that the Hebrew writer equates God’s Word to an extremely sharp sword. Just like a sword, gun or any other weapon, the Bible holds great power. But its power is found within the spiritual realm. It is able to convict the soul. It is able to guide us into the thoughts and character of God. It holds the standard by which we will be judged. It should not be lost upon us the great power that is contained within its pages. And just as Uncle Ben told Peter Parker 17 Spider Man movies ago, *“With great power comes great responsibility.”* We must handle the Word of God with great care (**II Tim. 2:15**) and remember that there are many ways that we might misuse God’s Word. With these thoughts in mind, what I would like to do this evening is to consider 3 rules that we must follow within our study and use of God’s Word. We should be a people who are constantly considering God’s Word to come to know how it should impact our lives so that we can be more Christ like. In doing so, we need to be sure that we are approaching it and handling it in the correct way.. Let’s consider these 3 Bible study rules that should impact how we view, approach, and use the Biblical Text.

### **I. Respect the Text.**

#### **A. The Bible is not just another book.**

1. There are many good, even great, books that have been written by men. They are books that have done a lot of good in this world for a lot of people.
2. But there is truly no comparison between the Bible and every other book in the history of mankind.
3. The Bible claims a characteristic that no other book can claim and that is the inspiration of God. (**II Tim. 3:16,17**)
4. The inspired writers recognized that they were not the true source of their words. Their words were a result of the the Spirit speaking to them from God. (**II Peter 1:20,21**)
5. This inspiration allowed them to author letters that were noncontradictory, historically accurate, and able to lead a soul to the saving grace of God.

#### **B. If we recognize the Bible as the Word of God, then that demands some things from us.**

1. If we recognize the Bible’s divine inspiration, then we must recognize the divine wisdom that it contains. It is full of wisdom from the mind of God that is higher than our own. (**Isaiah 55:8,9**)
2. If we recognize the Bible’s divine inspiration, then we must be willing to accept and conform to the teachings of it, whether they be teachings of morality, practice, or doctrine.
3. If we recognize the Bible’s divine inspiration, then we must be consistent with our view of it. We must accept it all as being inspired, or none of it. There is no way to be consistent without the all or nothing approach concerning its divine inspiration.
4. If we respect the Bible as God’s Word, then we will approach our study with a reverent demeanor recognizing the serious nature of studying the Words of God without taking it lightly.

### **II. Respect the context.**

#### **A. Context is important in many different aspects of life.**

1. Some might try to understate the seriousness of consider context in Bible study, but we sure wouldn't want to ignore context in everyday life.
2. If a man walks up to a woman, grabs her, and kisses her passionately...The context certainly affects whether or not such a thing is appropriate.
3. Where are they when this happens? What is the occasion for the kiss? Are these two people even together??
4. The “who, what, when, where, how?” have a great impact on shaping this event in the eyes of others.

#### **B. Failure to recognize context can lead to great misuseage of the words of the Bible.**

1. One of the greatest misunderstandings of context is in regard to the question concerning the the thief on the cross and baptism. **(Luke 23:39-43)**
2. The issue is present because opponents of baptism misunderstand the fact that the context of the thief on the cross and Jesus forgiving him is that of them being under the Law of Moses which did not require baptism for the foreignness of sins.
3. That is really one of the greatest mistakes that is made concerning the Bible's teachings. Too few people understand that there are different covenants within the Bible. Understanding context and the covenants is key to knowing how to apply the teachings of the Bible. **(Heb. 8:7ff)**
4. Skeptics try to use restrictions of the Old Law to trap the Christian and Bible believer in hypocrisy, but their arguments and accusations fall apart when you consider the context and which Covenant is applicable.
5. Without coming to understand context, we really get into some problems and we can easily come to faulty conclusions from our study. Faulty beginning more than often leads to faulty conclusions.

### III. Respect other Texts

- A. Not only is immediate context important, but we must also consider the teachings of other parts of the Bible.
  1. The examples of conversions throughout the book of Acts is a great example of looking at the big picture of the Bible's teachings in order to come to a proper understanding of a subject.
  2. If you were to only read **Acts 16:31** **"They said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."**, you might think that all one needs to do is believe in Jesus and your understanding of "belief" might just be an acknowledgement of Jesus being the Son of God.
  3. If you were to only read **Acts 3:19** **"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; then you might think that all a person needs to do is repent in order to have sins forgiven."**, then you might think that all a person needs to do is repent in order to have sins forgiven.
  4. But then you might read **Acts 2:38** **"Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**, and become confused cause Peter says something different just a chapter later.
  5. Its necessary for us to roll up our sleeves and put in some work to come to understand what exactly is going on. When we connect the dots, we come to realize exactly what God's plan for man's forgiveness is.
- B. Without understanding other portions of Scripture, we can come to some faulty conclusions.
  1. We might be missing an important aspect of a subject because we haven't exhausted the Bible's teachings on the subject.
  2. Someone might be studying about miraculous gifts and wonder why they don't see any today when they were so prevalent throughout the New Testament.
  3. Without consider all the New Testament's teaching on miracles, we'd miss the fact that Paul writes that those gifts wouldn't be necessary once God's complete revelation has been given to us. **(I Cor. 13)**
  4. When we focus on a tree and ignore the forest then we will have a faulty view of one or many of God's teachings.
  5. If we want to use the spiritual sword of God then we must consider the entire teachings on any and all subjects. Failing to do so would lead us to a misuse of God's teachings.

Again, with great power comes great responsibility. And there is no greater responsibility than for us to make sure that we are handling God's Word properly. We must remember who the source of the Bible. We must remember to examine the context and consider the other text concerning our subject of study. If we handle the word rightly, then we will please God and we will be able to know His will for us in all things.