

Eph 3:1-5**I. "I wrote" – "Scriptures"*****God's means to CONVEY His message***

NOT

- Dreams
- Visions,
- Mysterious events
- Stars (astrology)
- "Church"
- Plays
- Graphics
- Modern "prophets"

A great "**advantage**" to have these in our language! **Rom 3:1-2**

II. "When You READ"***God's means for men to LEARN His message***

Reading, or, hearing it read – **Ac 17:11; 1 Th 5:27; Col 4:16; Rev 1:3**

A. Importance of READING WELL

(Public & private reading)

- Practice
- Adult reading programs
- Teach your children

B. Read FIRST!

i.e. BEFORE read commentaries, brotherhood papers, etc.

C. When you read, LOOK FOR...

- Who is speaking/writing
Illus: Book of **Job** - see **4:7**, Eliphaz; **8:4**, Bildad
- What is he talking about?
Illus: Book of **Eccl - 9:5...6** (42 times "under the sun" or its equivalent in the book)
- Seeming contradictions
Illus: **Gen 2:18-21** vs. **1:26**.
- Applications
Illus: **Jn 13:17**
- Word families
Illus: **1 Cor 13**
- Take notes

File notes - Develop some type of filing system. Your previous studies can be valuable by way of reminder, comparison, availability to in-depth research.

D. Bible -- readability?

- Size of letters (type)?
- Boldness of the print?
- See-through pages?

The aim is have a Bible that facilitates READING and READING and READING -- for understanding and conforming the mind, not a beautiful family heirloom, or something that is simply "convenient" to carry.

Get a Bible that is conducive to READING so that "you can understand"

E. Read it as GOD'S WORD

It's NOT

- a **novel** that you read casually once
- a **dictionary** that you turn to one particular location that happens to be of interest to you or proves a point
- a **newspaper** that you skim over to get the highlights

III. "You CAN Understand"

God's promise you CAN UNDERSTAND His message!

A. Devil try to persuade can**NOT** – so...

- Not read
- Read without diligence, purpose
- Depend on others
 - Paraphrase "translations"
 - Preachers, teachers (limited by their abilities, choices)
 - Plays, movies

BEWARE any person, church, or dogma that leads to believe YOU cannot read and understand!

- Roman Catholicism – "church"
- Protestantism - "Protestant principle"

B. A Divine expectation and thus a human responsibility!

Eph 3:4; Mt. 24:15; Lk 10:25,26; 2 Pt 1:12-15 (this letter! – see **3:1-2**); **3:16-18**.

Choose a **setting** that is conducive to "understanding."

With some, background music may help; with others, they need complete silence. It may be helpful to sit at a desk a table rather

than a recliner – compare trying to understand a school textbook or article you must make a research paper on.

The **time of day** can make a difference

With some, late at night better; with others, early in the morning.

Whatever, when we come to the BELIEF that God EXPECTS us to READ to UNDERSTAND, we will *treat it with the seriousness and devotion it deserves!*

C. **But...don't you find some parts difficult...?**

- Yes - **2 Pt. 3:16**.
- But, once you become a good, independent student, you may find that the parts you find difficult, *so does everyone else!* So, the commentaries do not solve this dilemma. At least, as an independent student, you can form conclusions based on your OWN study and critically examine the interpretations of others.

D. **Two Rules to Interpreting (understanding)**

- Context (next lesson)
- Harmony (another lesson)

This whole lesson focuses on READING. It is VITAL. Must get God's people back to READING THE BIBLE. Turn off the TV, put aside the the commentaries and brotherhood publications. *READ THE BIBLE*. If we can learn to make this a regular, devoted practice, we will have come a long way on "How to Study"!

IV. "The Mystery Of Christ" – Greatest Message!

God's assurance of the VALUE of reading and understanding His message!

A. "Mystery"? – "revealed"!

"Fellow heirs"; "fellow mem. Of body"; "fellow par. of the promise" - **chs 1-3** – "*unfathomable riches of Christ*"!

Nothing read of greater importance, do greater good, have greater impact on life here and hereafter!

B. Gives "boldness & confidence" – **Eph 3:12**

C. Strengthens the inner man – **Eph 3:16**

CONC

Weak? Waver? Doubt?...READ??

*God's plan for saving man? – READ: **Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 1 Co 15:58***