

Dr. Ernest L. Martin's Home Study Course: Introduction

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped Home Study Course made between 1977-98 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D. Former Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

INTRODUCTION – ESSENTIAL STUDY TOOLS

There is an old proverb which says if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man how to fish, you feed him for life.

The spiritual fishermen needs special tools. The student needs to be well organized to 'fish' things out of the Bible. He or she needs to have an easy method to learn from the Bible, learn what the Prophets, the Priests, and The Living Christ have to say to us that is relevant to us today.

This is not what is happening among scholars, theologians or ministers in our era. Most of them seem to think that the Bible has been so worked over in the past centuries that there is not much to learn.

More and more it is the opinions and ideas of men *about* the Bible, rather than a study of the Bible itself, or of the original manuscripts that the English or any other language versions are derived from.

Not that all men's ideas or opinions are wrong, but scholars quote scholars and scriptural references from the universities, seminaries etc., which are not always helpful in arriving at the truth.

It is useful to remember that the King James version was produced at the command of King James, and the manner in which this was done led to errors in translation.

1. The King gave the translators explicit instructions not to translate anything into English that would conflict with the beliefs of the Church of England.
2. There were 54 scholars involved, and there was the possibility that their knowledge of the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek languages varied.
3. The translators inserted thousands of words that were not in the original texts which are printed in *italics* in the King James Version. It is important to be aware that these words are not in the inspired manuscripts.

4. It is also likely that their understanding of Church of England Doctrine may not have been perfect, and of course that Church was an offshoot of the Catholic Church with its different beliefs. So bias may have entered in.

5. Modern translations can be an excellent help to our understanding. It is well to remember that each one might reflect to a degree some of the beliefs or doctrines of the particular denomination the translator belonged to who was responsible for the new translation. They might have allowed personal beliefs to influence their translation of the original texts.

However, The KJV is still probably the most reliable translation we have, so long as we use carefully all the tools at our disposal to check what a word or a verse or passage might mean as we go along.

This course will focus on what the inspired word of God, the Holy Bible says, not on men's opinions from over 20,000 differing denominations.

A new manuscript version of the Bible in the original order is needed

The sacred names of God need to be properly translated because the divine titles are significant for Christians. Traditionalism is hindering understanding. The billions of Bibles in the world are all in the wrong order, and they contain many incorrect translations of words and deviations from the texts in the original languages.

A manuscript version of the Bible in the correct order, with meticulous translation is crucial to a proper understanding of the Word of God. Such a volume has recently been produced, and anyone interested in obtaining one might contact: Congregation of YHWH, Jerusalem, P.O. Box 832, Carteret, New Jersey, 07008, U.S.A.

To enquire about obtaining a copy of the "Hebraic Roots Bible" which is in the correct order, and has been very carefully translated from the original texts, go to: <http://www.coyhwh.com/en/bible.php> where it is offered, with a request for a donation.

You may also want to contact www.askelm.com to enquire whether such a volume is available and is still in print from this site.

To assist your studies, and provide you with a free chart of the original Divine order. Hopefully you have downloaded the file:

BIBLE – ORIGINAL STRUCTURE.pdf

Please print up the file of the inspired order of books from this site in black and white on 8½ x11 or A4 paper

Keep this print out of the chart handy when you are studying, as it is a constant reminder of the perfection of the structure of the Bible, and a help to our understanding.

Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Each of us has talents, and it is our job is to develop them. This is our job, to be about our Father's work, and to realise that we have a special task to do that as 'called out' ones. We are commanded to study in a skilled workmanlike manner. Proper methodical study is an essential part of life for every Christian. This course is only a beginning, but it is a start! We also have a responsibility to teach our children about God and our glorious future while they are young.

Deuteronomy 4:9 only take heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which all eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life: but teach them to your sons and your son's sons;

So here is a command in the old testament law that parents should teach their children at home before they were of school age. This should still be the case. Everyone needs to be in a learning mode all their lives.

At any time there are only a few claiming to be Christians who have not bowed the knee to Baal, so to speak. Modern churchianity is riddled with pagan symbols and practices, but they don't realise it.

In 1100 B. C., Samuel had a school for prophets. In previous centuries only those over age 30 went to school.

Paul lived in the university town of Tarsus and sat at the feet of Gamaliel who was a great Jewish scholar.

Acts 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught

according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God as you are all are this day.

True repentance of individuals and indeed the whole of the Jewish or Israel people is prophesied to precede the second advent.

Christ Jesus inspired the writing of the entire Bible

It is of vital importance that we appreciate that the Living Christ Jesus is God's Son and actually inspired every word in the Holy Bible, so He was actually the Author. Believing that this fact is true, and having faith in the truth of that statement is a major key that opens our minds to understanding. Also we need to appreciate that Christ really *is* God, so that when the restoration and the times of refreshing referred to in Acts 19 and Daniel 12 begin to occur, our personal and collective knowledge will increase.

As has been mentioned, all translations have flaws, but Christ Jesus has ensured that his group, His 'ecclesia' will be able to overcome these issues with His help. When we use the tools covered in this Introduction with care and attention, He will guide us into 'all truth' that He wants us to have at any given time.

The role of the Holy Spirit in our studies

John 16 tells us about the central role of the holy spirit in our lives. Jesus said in verse 12: I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. verse 13 Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that he will speak; and he will show you things to come.

As we grow in grace and knowledge, the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth that God intends us to have at any particular time.

The Holy Spirit will speak to us as we study, not by audible sounds, but in our minds in terms of concepts, thoughts, ideas, and feelings. This is the language of God's spirit working in our minds.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

When we study, we need to ask for Spiritual Gifts

Our spirit can only commune with God through the gift of the Holy Spirit plus the other spiritual gifts we need. So we ask that His Spirit will fill our minds, and guide us into truth; and that God will give us the gifts of faith, confidence, belief. Ask for the gift of true repentance and a contrite heart; and that we will grow in Grace, knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

We do not need religious, pious, or ecclesiastical men of any kind to help us, that only leads to the confusion of different ideas of men.

Understanding 'Progressive Revelation' is an important key

Over time spent with Christ and indeed after his resurrection, the disciples continued to grow in Grace and knowledge due to the reality of 'Progressive Revelation' which we can see in action throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. God does not reveal His entire Plan to His children all at once, but gradually over the centuries from Adam on, then through the Prophets and the Writings. After Christ came to earth, He began a completely new phase of His revelation, firstly to His disciples, and latterly to Paul with the revelation of the Mystery, and finally to John in the book of Revelation..

Here is an example of 'Progressive Revelation'. In the Book of the Law, children were to be visited by the iniquity of their fathers to the 3rd and 4th generation. This is repeated at least four times in the Mosaic Law.

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

Exodus 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Numbers 14:18 The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

Deuteronomy 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the

fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

However, in Ezekiel, this consequence of law breaking being passed onto subsequent generations is clearly changed, and in effect this aspect of that law was abrogated or repealed by the Christ inspired words of Ezekiel. People who lack understanding of the scriptures might see this as a contradiction, but God never contradicts Himself, and the Scriptures cannot be broken. They can be modified, expanded, or brought up to date by the Author though!

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Progressive Revelation is intermittently continuous throughout the Bible as God has gradually over centuries revealed more detail of His Plan and Purpose to His children over time.

Here is another example of 'Progressive Revelation'. Many churches which have kept one foot back in the Mosaic Law often emphasise a verse in the Sermon on the Mount to support their so-called law-keeping practices and then enforce them on their adherents when Jesus said:

Matthew 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

But just a few moments later, Christ says:

Matthew 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But (that is no longer the case, I am giving you a new law!) I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

So what does Christ mean when he says in verse 19...

Matthew 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the

kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Which one of these least commandments is Christ referring to? Is He referring to the Mosaic Law? Absolutely not! Christ is explaining his expansion of the N.T. Law of Love to His disciples. He is emphasising the need to keep the New Commandments that He is in the process of giving them! He is showing them that the New Law is now spiritual, and even more binding (and more impossible to keep without His help!) than ever the O.T. physical laws were.

The Bible Student's 'Tools of the Trade'

Workers need the right tools. Skilled workers develop a relationship with their tools, treasure them, as through them they are able to produce good work of which they can be proud. In order to be a good worker in the field of Bible Study, there are quite a few 'tools' that we can use in order to get the most out of the time we spend studying the Scriptures. Using the many 'tools' listed here will help us gain greater knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and enjoy the satisfaction of learning well.

Instead of Bible Study perhaps being something we may feel we *ought* to do, with the help of the Holy Spirit, it will become an exciting journey of ever increasing discoveries. The Word contains so much information, the more we delve into the Bible, the more we will discover of the deeper and vital meanings that are hidden from those whose eyes are even partially closed.

Dr. Martin was a 'master' craftsman of his trade, and we have here part of the legacy he has left for those who want to become as proficient as he was. An exciting time is ahead of those who apply themselves to this Home Study Course, and perhaps also to the recorded lectures we have available to us that Dr. Martin created in his desire to share what he learned.

Rightly dividing the Word of Truth

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Our emphasis needs always to be on 'rightly dividing the Word of truth', and there are methods of study we can adopt to ensure that we do that as efficiently as possible.

When most people read the Bible they usually just read the text. There is a more scholarly approach we can use. We can use methods which will enable us to get a deeper understanding of the scriptures. This will enable us to get more "fish" so to speak.

1 Peter 3:15 but sanctified the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is seen you with meekness and fear.

We need to teach ourselves, and also be ready to help others understand the true meaning of the scriptures, always recognizing our need to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

If we are to be ready to give an answer to those who ask, we need to be truly workmanlike in our study of the scriptures.

We can be scholarly and methodical in our approach to study, but technical and complex matters can be and should be simplified. We need to develop our own system for ourselves, and not just mimic anyone else.

We need to learn principally from the one Book, the Holy Bible, with the help of the Holy Spirit, finding the unity and of the constant thread that runs through the whole book. Always bearing in mind that the Bible is the one standard we can rely on, so long as we can understand what Christ who wrote it is telling us that is relevant for us today.

Scriptural education was put on the back burner in 1859 and empirical and pseudo scientific thinking, Greek philosophies, study of nature and evolution took precedence. This is even more true today, as Scriptural Knowledge classes are being removed from the school curriculum.

Knowledge shall be increased

Daniell 12:4 but you had O Daniel shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Lack of what knowledge? We live in an era of a technological and 'scientific' knowledge explosion never before experienced by human beings, yet we are systematically destroying ourselves and the earth as

well. What this world needs is knowledge of God, Christ, and His Word, and His wishes concerning how we should live, dress and keep this Earth.

There is much in the Bible that has been sealed for centuries, but in our time knowledge is being increased. In verse 10 of Daniel 12 it says none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

Who are the wise? Those who heed God's instructions. Understanding the principles of study leads us to greater knowledge and understanding, and God gives us the Wisdom by means of the Holy Spirit.

Use the Internet for locating scriptures, & historical knowledge.

Using the Internet can save an enormous amount of time. Bible Gateway is an extremely useful program. www.biblegateway.com It has dozens of versions of the Bible to choose from, and many other powerful tools to help you with your study, and it is free to use.

You only have to type in a word or a text, or just the book and the chapter, and it will find all the occurrences in the version of your choice. I use the King James Version (KJV) for this work almost exclusively.

There is also another site which says the program it offers is free, but I finished up paying for mine without realising it. Maybe because I bought the 'Android' version, I am not sure. So beware. However this tool enables you to use Strong's Concordance, access the original Hebrew or Greek Word and its meanings all in seconds. www.bible-discovery.com

I have a Strong's and several other large concordances, but they are so heavy and cumbersome to use, and it takes ages to find what I am looking for. The Bible Gateway and Bible-Discovery are unbelievably quick, convenient, and easy to use.

Any time you might have a question about a time or event in history, or geographical material, the Internet can be a useful tool. Online encyclopaedias, historical details, maps etc., on every subject abound.

Of course we have to filter what we read there carefully to ensure that what they say does not conflict with the Scriptures but only adds to our understanding of people, events, chronology and geography.

Beware of familiarity with your Bible

When we are familiar with any particular verse or passage in the Bible, there is a danger that we might read over something that is important.

Remember to pause and ponder the words in familiar verses, think carefully about what we are reading. It is often the case that our previous associations with religious organisations may have resulted in our believing error, or at least masked from deeper or true understanding.

So it really does pay to read the verse or passage as if we had not read it before, thinking carefully about the words and their real meaning as we do.

As we do this, we can note any words that we do not fully understand and check them in a concordance or dictionary in order to get the true meaning in the original language. This is necessary because the translators often used secondary or even tertiary meanings of a word from the original text, and this may well obscure the actual or real meaning intended.

Be aware of the context

Many people use the Bible to support their own ideas and teachings. One way they either intentionally or unintentionally deceive is to take parts of the Word of God out of context. Using this ploy, they wrest the scriptures to their own destruction, and to the confusion of others.

Be careful of using individual verses without checking to see if our understanding of the verse is confirmed by other passages in the Bible. What is the context of the verses surrounding the verse in question? Use the interrogative words to help get the sense of who, when, where, etc.

Here is an instance of a text that many thousands of people are familiar with being used as a 'universal truth' that applies to everyone, but does it?

3 John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that **thou** mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Was it intended that we should use this inspired verse to think that God intends everyone to be prosperous and in good health all the time?

Clearly not! It seems more likely that this verse was intended as a personal greeting to an individual, for that is what it says.

This was not the case in the time of the Apostles as many around Christ were sick at times, and Paul mentions his own health problems, and also of those close to him.

Clearly health and prosperity are not universal, and is not the case in our world today, not even for well-meaning, sincere Christians! It is plain to see that God is allowing everyone on earth to experience the entire range of health and sickness, and also the extremes of poverty and wealth at this time in human history.

Failing to use context, and the plain words of the Bible, and indeed the evidence of the world around us, many thousands were taught to read over and even ignore the first verse of 3rd John.

John was writing to an individual, Gaius.

3 John 1:1 The elder (John) unto (my friend) the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that **thou** mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

John was wishing his friend 'all the best' so to speak. John was not intending to suggest that 'prosperity and health' was a promise from God to be claimed by all believers.

Be aware of the chronology or the history of the time

In English, we have the simple single syllable word 'time'. Chronology is a four syllable word which sounds a bit daunting, but means the same thing.

When studying, as we read, be alert to catch any words which refer to 'time'. For instance: minute, morning, evening, day, week, month, harvest, year, before, now, then, after, and so on.

Then consider how any of these words fits in with the context, and to the larger picture in relation to the time frame that is being referred to, and also perhaps to the overall plan of God for His children.

None of the 'time' words in the Bible are in relation to the 'Gregorian Calendar' devised by Pope Gregory that is used in our current world.

All Biblical 'time' is in relation to the Solar/Lunar calendar, and all the words for 'time' have a direct relation to God's Calendar with the exception of the

'week'. The 'week' is not directly related to the month or the year. Bible days are not midnight to midnight! The number seven, and this seven day period 'week' and the Sabbath made for man is one of God's 'mysteries'.

We cannot all be expert historians, but we can use books external to the Bible. Josephus the Jewish historian for example, whose works can shed a lot of light on the events and practices of the times. Just being aware of some of the history of the time we are reading about will help our understanding. So think about **when** what we are reading occurred?

Commentaries can also be useful, but we need to be careful to evaluate what they say, and whether they are in accordance with the theme and truths of the Scriptures. Their authors are from many different denominations which have an extremely divergent or even a distorted view of many things, as they have many integrated pagan and heathen philosophies into their teachings, so we have to be alert.

Be aware of the geography

We can get a much better idea of the meaning of some scriptures by having a reasonable knowledge of the location of the events we are studying. So it pays to have some idea of the location of the action, the **where?**

So during study, be aware of any words which define the 'where': like the names of villages, towns, cities, and countries, rivers, mountains, seas, etc. It often helps to consult a map which shows the topography of the time. Most Bibles have such maps of time periods, also Bible dictionaries and commentaries can help in getting the 'feel' of the 'where'.

How far was it from the Tree of Crucifixion to the Curtain in the Temple? What was the distance from the source of the River Jordan at Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea? How far was Galilee from Jerusalem? What was it like there when Jesus was teaching his disciples? Being able to 'picture' the area in our minds helps to expand our understanding of events.

It can help to use the maps printed in the back of most Bibles, or we can scan the Internet to get maps we can print out of various eras in the past, and also maps that are current in our time. All these will help our appreciation of the area, events, and passages we are reading about.

Does this text or doctrine apply to Christian conduct in our era?

Some denominations quote verses from any part of the Bible regardless as to whether they are addressed to us in this era. Or whether they are part of a system that has passed into history for now, like the rite of circumcision and the Temple sacrificial system for instance.

Many denominations cling onto selected parts of the Mosaic Law and claim that observing the letter of these Laws is essential for Salvation. They ignore the 'Progressive Revelation' given to us by Christ Jesus, that we are no longer under those physical Laws but now we are under the Spiritual Law of Love which is far more exacting than the physical laws were.

It is very important we understand clearly those Scriptures we are studying and know how they apply to our Christian life today, and those that do not.

Use interrogative words

One way to get more 'fish', is to bear in mind to employ the interrogative English words in mind as we study. There are six interrogative words in common use in English. They are:

who, what, where, when, why, and how.

If as we read, we ask ourselves to whom this was written? What is the text describing? Where did the event occur? When did this occur? Why is it important? And how does this apply to me, and whether indeed it does?

We need to be flexible in the use of this useful key. We certainly do not have to use it all the time, or for every word or verse. It is, however, a tool to pick up and use whenever it might be useful or needed.

The Bible uses repetition for emphasis

There are hundreds of examples in the Scriptures of two or more verses saying the exact same thing, or very similar. Whenever Christ Jesus inspires repetition, it is to get our attention of how important the topic is. Here is an example:

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

These verses are ignored by millions, even perhaps billions who believe in the Immortality of the Soul, or in Reincarnation which are both Satanic notions.

Learning is a way of life

We are commanded to grow in grace and knowledge. We should be in a learning mode all our lives.

Even without realising it, we 'teach' everyone we meet, often without saying a word! And we can learn from everyone we meet.

Proverbs 23:12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Proverbs 2:6 For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Knowledge is what we know, facts: A switch can be used to turn the light on and off.

Understanding is how that knowledge applies to us, how it is so, and how it is to be applied. The light is powered by electricity from the power station through wires to our house. The light bulb offers resistance to the electric current which produces heat and light.

Wisdom is the skill of the proper use of both knowledge and understanding. For instance: When or whether to turn the light on, and when or whether to turn it off!

There are seven points to learning:

1. We need a proper learning environment. Set up a comfortable area to study in. Make sure you have good light. Ensure the desk is at the right height for you, and that the chair is comfortable. Pen and paper at the ready, and the Internet available as a resource tool, we are ready to begin.

2. Nothing that we learn is unimportant, everything has its significance. We need not to be afraid of learning or think we cannot do it. Embrace it. Learning should be simple and it needs fearless application. And it should be mentally stimulating and emotionally satisfying.

3. We need to do our own personal study. Bible study is not the prerogative of ministers, otherwise we end up being entirely dependent upon them for our knowledge of the scriptures and of God. No father wants his children to be dependent upon others for what they know. A good father wants his children to learn for themselves. Our Heavenly Father certainly wants that for all His children.

4. Do not hide your lamp under a bushel. We are the light of the world. Be ready to give an answer to those who ask. And beware of casting pearls before 'swine', or sharing precious truths Christ reveals to us personally to people whose minds are closed, who might turn and 'rend' you.

5. Be confident that you can learn. Christ has made Bible study the true key to personal development; to learning the truth about doctrines; to world history and chronology; and to related geography which are all parts of what we need to lead a successful Christian and human life.

6. Set goals of how much time you want to spend and what you want to study. When you plan to work. Work your plan! Procrastination is the thief of time!. Better a few minutes work, than putting it off for another day.

7. Make a practice of always to be learning new things. Use these practical tools contained in this introduction to help you to make the most effective use of your study time. Have an exciting and wonderful time!