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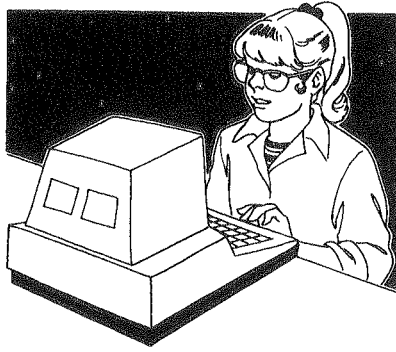
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LET'S GET STARTED

How *do* you study? In an overstuffed chair with the stereo blaring? Slouched on the couch in front of the television, with a sandwich in one hand and a book in the other? Some people can study almost anywhere, and under any condition. But if we want to please God and do our best, all of us must honestly look at where and how we study. A quiet spot is the ideal. The Apostle Paul exhorted certain members of the Thessalonian church to work "with quietness" (I Thess. 3:12), so we too should study accordingly.

Many teachers have recommended guidelines to follow for those who want to study under the proper conditions. These have been summarized as follows:

1. **Use adequate lighting** when studying. If the lighting is poor, your eyes will become strained and tired.
2. **Follow a set schedule.** Develop the habit of studying at the same time each day—when you are most alert.
3. **Study in a quiet spot**, free from anyone or anything that might distract your concentration. A quiet spirit is also an immense asset.
4. **Obtain all your supplies** (pen, paper, text, ruler, notebook, etc.), before you begin studying. In this way you will not waste time and energy.
5. **Use a table or desk as a work station**, and obtain a comfortable chair. Sitting up straight with your feet on the floor helps to keep you alert.
6. **Keep track of your assignments** in a notebook or a weekly chart. Assignments should be marked off as you complete each one of them.
7. **Plan to work for a whole block of time**, without interruption. You will usually finish in less time than allotted.
8. **Do any written work right away.** Start out with a rough draft. Correct any mistakes, and then rewrite the final copy.
9. **Study with a goal in mind.** Why are you reading a given section or chapter? Take notes and do not get sidetracked.
10. **Schedule free time each day** for reading a passage from the Bible, a particular article, or a favorite book to revitalize your heart and mind.



1. Study to Show Thyself Approved

Too often we approach most tasks without consulting the Lord or His Word. Either we are smug in our understanding of what we think the Bible says on any given topic, or worse yet, we are altogether complacent towards the things of Christ. However, the Apostle Paul—who is like a father to Timothy—exhorts him to take everything that he has told him and “the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2: 2). Because Timothy was faithful and passed on what he learned from his spiritual father to other faithful men, the message of God’s grace and forgiveness has come down to us through the ages, nearly two thousand years later.

But Paul does not stop there. He further encourages Timothy to “**Study to shew thyself approved unto God**, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2: 15). Paul expected Timothy to spread this “word of truth” to the ends of the earth, but not without *studying* first. Obviously this refers to studying God’s Word and “rightly handling the word of truth.” We too have been called of God, and sent by Christ to “teach all nations...to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28: 20). As disciples of Christ we must hear and obey all that He has told us to do, just like Timothy received the truth concerning Christ and committed it to other faithful men.

Therefore, as Christians and as students, we should seek to know and understand God’s will in all that we say and do—even when we study. Each of us should seek to learn all we can regarding God’s Word and His world. The course work, which has been especially developed for you in accordance to your abilities, has incorporated those subjects which will help you grow in your knowledge of the Bible and His creation. So, take advantage of this God-ordained time in your life to study—and study with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Your love and devotion towards the Lord Jesus will be reflected in your words and actions—and by the way you study.

Another important aspect of approaching your studies from a Christian perspective is the **spiritual warfare** that you face now and will face in the future. The Apostle Paul reminds the believers in Ephesus that “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6: 12-13). Therefore, we must know God’s Word—“the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God” (v. 17)—and be able to use it. “For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any *two-edged sword*, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4: 12).

How do your thoughts measure up? What are the intentions of your heart? You must “...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye *transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is good, and acceptable and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12: 1-2). Our minds need to be cleansed “with the washing of the word” (Ephesians 5: 26), so we will be able to discern between good and evil. As you learn, you should get in the habit of holding all that you read and study up to the “mirror” of God’s Word—“But whoso looketh into the *perfect law of liberty*, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1: 25).

As you progress in your studies and in life, you will be exposed to all kinds of teachings and ideas. Therefore, you must be ready in and out of season, “For the time will come when they will not endure *sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4: 3-4). Especially if you plan to go on to college, you must be well-grounded in the Word: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4: 14). So instead of being swayed by the clever eloquence of men, you will “know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4: 6).

Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed of your age or status in life. But as God gives you grace, rightly handle God’s truth so you will know right from wrong, good from evil, and the truth from satan’s lies. And as you study, make it a goal to study the powerful, life-changing Word of God. May it be your guide and defender in all that you think, say, and do!

Next to grace, time is the most precious gift of God. Yet how much of both we waste. We say that time does many things. It teaches us many lessons, weans us from many follies, strengthens us in good resolves, and heals many wounds. And yet it does none of these things. Time does nothing. But time is the condition of all these things which God does in time. Time is full of eternity. As we use it, so shall we be. Every day has its opportunities, every hour its offer of grace.

Henry E. Manning

2. Redeeming the Time

Time management is a key factor for anyone who seeks to improve in the area of study habits. In fact, handling time properly is half the battle. The Bible says, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *Redeeming the time*, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15,16). Everyone has the same twenty-four hours to complete the tasks at hand, but not everyone uses these hours wisely.

Each student can redeem the time by keeping a *time diary*. A simple chart makes the best time diary, where weekdays are placed across the top of the chart, and all the activities of the day are listed down the left-hand column. Such activities as devotions, sleeping, eating, studying, working, exercising, and socializing are some that may be enumerated. Enter the estimated time you would normally spend doing each activity in the appropriate box. Sunday should always be allocated as a day of worship and rest (see Genesis 2:2-3, Hebrews 10:25). Out of the 144 hours we have left, let’s say 48 hours are set aside for sleeping, 16 hours for eating, and 30 hours for an outside job and some kind of recreation. This would leave approximately seven to eight hours per day for classes and studying. In a homeschooling environment, class and study times would be combined, and the total time-frame would be reduced. Examine the suggested *time diary* below:

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Devotions							
Sleeping							
Eating							
Studying	- 0 -						
Working	- 0 -						
Exercising	- 0 -						
Socializing	- 0 -						

Figure 0.1 Time Diary

How do you spend your week? Make an honest evaluation of how you have been using your every waking hour. And then, chart a new time diary that would reflect your desire to redeem the time God has given each of us to manage.

3. Long -Term Scheduling

The first thing you need to create is your *long-term schedule*. A single-page calendar listing each month with spaces to fill in self-imposed deadlines for tests, daily work, special projects, and book reports. Researching and writing a paper takes quite a bit of time, therefore, this should be broken down into a step-by-step approach over a longer period of time. You will not be able to remember everything you need to do, consequently, you should schedule all your known assignments. In this way, you will be able to tackle each task one day at a time.

Your overall course work will not intimidate you, if you spread it out and tackle it bit by bit. Study by a planned schedule, which saves time and effort. This approach is more efficient and most rewarding. Without a schedule, you will find yourself paralyzed by indecision: "What should I do first? Should I spend one hour or two on this assignment? Am I going to finish that project on time?" Your goal should be to make studying not only a habit, but spontaneous as well. Do not be distracted by the tyranny of the urgent. By sticking to the plan, you will escape the frustration and guilt for not doing your best on your assignments. Give each task adequate attention. Plan ahead!

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Figure 0.2 Long Term Schedule