

Introduction to Huskey's Study Notes

"What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God."

J. I. Packer

Introduction to Huskey's Study Notes

There seems to be a gap between the massive volumes of commentaries and the shortage of basic outline books on Scripture, doctrine, and theology. Bible commentaries can be overwhelming and often might include more information than a student may be interested to learn. And then we find small-group curriculum and devotionals, which are mostly man-centered rather than God-centered and are largely lacking in exegesis (understanding the true meaning of the text). This study is my effort to bridge those gaps.

These are my personal study notes which I have both accumulated and expounded in order to help exegetically teach through books of the Bible in small groups and Sunday school classes. I wanted to make these available to anyone that is looking to either grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's Word or teach God's Word to others.

I have used numerous sources including John MacArthur, Verse by Verse Ministries, as well as various commentaries and articles in my studies. I have collected the best information available as well as my own exegeses and commentary and included these in this study.

There are basic notes, questions, and expositions throughout this study. The intention is to either bring to remembrance the things you have already studied in order to expound upon them, or to help engage conversation among those you are teaching.

There is a student guide that is available to go along with this study as well.

The NASB version of the Bible has been selected for this study. The sub-points have been staggered in order to help you keep your place when you look away. I have included space for you to add your personal notes.

In addition to the questions included, you may present any statement or point into a question format if you are trying to get the group of students to better engage with the topic. I encourage you to take your time and dive into the depth of these verses. There is no reason to hurry through them.

I cannot stress the importance of learning and using critical thinking when going through a study like this. You must learn to compare all things to what Scripture says, including the comments made by myself on various expositions. A secondary intention of this study is to help you learn how to think critically. Keep this in mind as questions are presented.

I hope that this study is beneficial in helping you to grow in your understanding of Scripture and the character of God, as well as aiding you to teach others the richness of God's holy Word.

The Gospel is the most important thing for us to understand. We need to hear it daily because our nature wants to turn us inwardly. We need to learn to articulate it well. I pray this study will help deepen your understanding of what Jesus has done to set us free and his completed work on our behalf at Calvary.

Michael Huskey

Using this guide for small groups or Sunday school

Read ahead. If you read the material ahead of time you will be able to transition from verse to verse and point to point more smoothly. It is important that you well understand where scripture is leading you. As you read and study feel free to add notes between the lines or in the margins. The way this study is designed is meant to trigger you to expound on the point being made, so prepare for that.

Be punctual. It is important to start on time because of the nature of discussion that is prompted by the questions in this guide. Time will truly get away from you.

Open in prayer. Pray that God will bless you as you teach, that His Word is handled correctly, and that those you are teaching will understand God in a greater way and be challenged to grow in Christ. Pray that if any are lost God will open their eyes as His Word is being read and taught. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice to make us righteous before a holy God.

Stay God centered. In today's self-absorbed world it is easy for people to insert themselves into the Scriptures and make it all about them. When conversations turn to personal matters, that is ok; sometimes people need to get something out they are struggling with, but make sure you take the focus back to God and how all Scripture is about Him and the work He has done.

Ask questions. There are questions in this guide to help guide the direction you are going or to further expound upon a certain verse. Feel free to turn any point into a question or add your own. If you do not know the answer to someone's question, tell them that. Let them know that you will research their question and get back with them either personally or next time you meet.

I also like to ask questions after certain points to see if anyone else has anything beneficial to say about that particular point, verse, or context.

Don't get in a hurry. The church growth movement has done much damage to the way we handle classes. Secular research has been done that indicates that people can only handle six to eight-week studies. This may be true for those who do not have the indwelling Holy Spirit who aids us in walking in the Fruit of the Spirit. I can assure you that the slower you move, the deeper and richer both you and your class's understanding and amazement of God will become. Don't get caught up thinking you have to finish in six to eight weeks. You will be robbing both yourself and your class. It is good to plan what you think you can cover, but due to the nature of the questions associated with this study, be prepared to not make it as far as you would like. You can easily pick up where you left off with a quick overview. I discourage skipping over material or rushing through this study.

Give glory to God. We were created to give glory to God. Give glory to God for how He has preserved his church and developed our understanding of him over the last two thousand years. Give glory to God for helping our brothers draw a line in the sand when heresies were spreading like infectious disease. His goodness, kindness, and mercy point to His worth not to ours. That He loves us is a profound mystery. That He loves us is clearly seen but not clearly understood. We may not understand why He has ordained all things, but we must understand that all things will ultimately give glory to Him.

Encourage them to read ahead. It is easy in a study like this to get caught up in the details and miss the overall context. This can be avoided by reading ahead. At the very least have them read through the current chapter each week until you get through it.

Pray again. If you have time and a smaller group, go around the room and have everyone pray. If this is not possible, ask your class if there is anything specific that you can pray about.

As an additional resource, there is a student guide available that goes along with this book.

Using this for personal study

This applies to people in a classroom setting going through this study as well.

Pray. You should always pray before you begin studying God's Word. Ask Him to help open your eyes and understand what you are reading. Every verse is deep, rich and too vast to comprehend in this lifetime. No matter how often you come over these verses you will only scratch the surface of their depth.

Read ahead. Read the entire chapter in your Bible before you start so you will not get lost in the details. It is important to understand the context of the overall book before you begin. If you are a new Christian and just starting your journey, pay attention to the introduction. It will help you understand the overall context of what this epistle is all about.

Glorify God. All Scripture is about God and what He has done. Not only in this book, but any book of scripture you read, always be asking the question...how does this help me understand God in a greater way? He loves you and wants you to love Him, what better way than spending time in His living breathing Word. This is where He talks with you and guides you.

Share what you learn. The Gnostics gloried in having a secret knowledge. Other religions love to stew in their pride and take joy over withholding information in order to esteem themselves over someone else. Christians, on the other hand, want to share every detail of what we learn. We desperately want others to come to faith in the Maker and Ruler over all things. We also want those who are in Christ to grow deeper and deeper in their love and understanding. A Christian's goal isn't to withhold any information, but to grow those around us to be even better than we are.

Pray again. Pray that what you have learned will be lived out in day-to-day life. That what you learn isn't just knowledge, but life! Pray that God will give you a hunger for His Word and a desire to tell everyone you know about the God you serve and what He has done.

Introduction

WHY SHOULD YOU STUDY CHURCH HISTORY?

1. God has continued to work sovereignly since the canon was closed with the last word of the book of Revelation.
 - i. Church history helps us better understand the nature of God.
 - ii. God was actively bringing the dead to eternal life.
 - iii. He was actively convicting the believers of their sins.
 - iv. And He was actively drawing the saints to Himself.
- It is good to learn from what has been recorded.
2. Polemics/discernment
 - What are Polemics?
 - ❖ Being inwardly focused on the church in a critical manner.
 - i. Think of it as apologetics, which outwardly focuses on defending what we believe, turned inwardly.
 - ii. Polemics is a sheepdog guarding the sheep from wolves.
- In a lot of ways, we could call this a polemics class rather than church history.

- Are there any new heresies today?
 - i. The majority of the epistles are written to battle heresy by bringing clarity to the gospel.
 - We are clearly instructed to be discerning and test all things according to the Scriptures.
 - i. You cannot test all things if you have no knowledge of what Scripture teaches.
 - Our Christian forefathers have already fought against every conceivable heresy.
 - i. It is important to understand the battles they fought so you too can be equipped to understand when God's word is being twisted, or you have been taught something wrong.
 - a. The same heresies we will study continue to show up again and again or combined.
 - b. There really is nothing new under the sun.
- Malachi 3:18** *So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.*
- i. Church history teaches us how to distinguish between truth and error.
3. Jesus said He would build His church in **Matthew 16:18**. To see Jesus's prophecy unfold to His glory over the last two thousand years despite Satan attempting to stomp it out.
 - i. This isn't just the history of some ancient and foreign people; this is the history of the bride of Christ; our brothers and our sisters.
 - ii. You are part of church history if you are in Christ.
 4. The truth has been preserved and passed down through history.
 - i. When you are studying Scripture and come to an understanding of what you are studying, it is best to look at what others have taught throughout all of church history in order to be sure you are correct.

- a. Don't only look at modern commentaries or a study Bible, look at how the church fathers understood the passage, how the Reformers understood the passage, how the Puritans understood the passage, etc.
- If your understanding is different from the collective historical view, who is in error?
- i. There are secondary issues such as baptism and eschatology that are much more difficult because the historical church has been divided over these for a long time.
- What is exegesis (exegeting Scripture)?
- ❖ Drawing the true meaning out of the verse using proper context. This is the opposite of eisegesis.
- What is eisegesis?
- ❖ Reading your own ideas or what you have been taught into the text.

“When we study church history, we not only confirm the fact that what we believe today is what the apostolic church believed, but we also see how the truth was preserved throughout history.” Nathan Busenitz

2 Timothy 2:2 *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*

5. Church history gives us motivation to persevere.
- Learning what our brothers and sisters in Christ suffered will make many of our complaints seem petty.
 - i. We will learn of the sacrifices made in both major and what we would consider minor doctrinal matters.
 - a. Those who were martyred would probably disagree that anything is minor.
 - ii. We can be motivated by seeing the faithfulness of these saints such as Polycarp and others.

6. We will see an eagerness for Jesus to return. The same eagerness that we should have today.
 - Do you have an eagerness to see Jesus return?
 - i. Everyone should be ready for it no matter what time period you live in.
 - a. It is by design and purpose that Jesus's second coming is always lurking in immanency.
7. We can learn from others' failures.
 - i. Small compromises by men who should have known better have opened up a can of worms that has led to entire false religions.
8. Ignorance is not bliss.
 - i. Even though we live in the most advanced society, our ignorance of church history itself is historical.
 - ii. Better understanding of church history gives us better understanding of theology which gives us a better understanding of the one true and living God . . . and not a false god that we have created in our own minds.
 - iii. Church leaders must be able to defend and protect the church from false teachers.
 - iv. Family leaders must be able to defend and protect their families from false teachers.
 - v. You must be able to protect yourself from false teachers. Church History helps.

What is theology?

- Theology is the study of the nature of God.

- Why is studying theology important?
1. Because we love God.
 - i. If you love someone you want to learn everything there is to know about that person.
 2. To better understand God's attributes.
 - i. The attributes of God are truly amazing. If you can better understand God's attributes, you will better understand yourself and the relationship that you have with Him.
 - ii. This will bring you to an overwhelming sense of the vastness of God.
 - a. The more you understand God's attributes, the larger your view of God becomes and the smaller your view becomes of man. This is truly humbling.
 3. To better understand God's nature.
 - i. Understanding the nature of the Trinity and the nature of Christ can be a lifetime undertaking and can never be fully comprehended.
 - a. However, it is vital to at least have an elementary understanding of God's nature and attributes . . . in order to avoid the many heretical teachings floating around concerning the nature of God.
 - b. The greater your understanding of God's nature, the greater your understanding and appreciation of the gospel will become.
 4. To learn to be pleasing to God.
 - i. If we truly love God, we want to be pleasing to Him.
 - a. You cannot be pleasing to Him unless you know who He is.

- b. The study of theology helps us understand all of the things mentioned above in order for our love of Him to grow and to help us better understand how to be pleasing to Him.

"Every time we mention God we become theologians, and the only question is whether we are going to be good ones or bad ones." ¹ J.I. Packer

- There are three distinct ways that theology has been framed:
 1. Biblical Theology
 2. Historical Theology
 3. Systematic Theology
 - i. Each of these methods of study are important and should closely be examined by all Christians.

Note: When the church fathers used the word “catholic” they mean the whole church, not Roman Catholic as is known today. We are all catholic who are in the body of Christ; not Roman Catholic!!!

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Notes

¹ Packer. *Knowing God*

