

Wednesday Evening Study
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SPECK: A Guide for Reading the Bible

A. SPECK: A Guide for Reading the Bible

1. S – Sin to Confess or Avoid

- a. **Exposure:** One of the best descriptions of the Bible actually comes from Hebrews 4:12-13, *“For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”* These words remind us that God actively speaks to us through his Word, performing exploratory surgery on our hearts, deep within us, revealing everything that doesn’t belong and must be removed. Now, obviously, the Bible does more than this, but a large portion of the Bible is aimed at showing us our sins and what needs to be removed from our lives, or what we need to avoid.
- b. **Principle:** So, when you are reading through any passage of Scripture, ask yourself, “Is God showing me a sin that I need to repent of or avoid?” If so, confess it and repent. If not, commit yourself to be on the lookout.
 - **Proverbs 6:16–19** – *“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.”*
 - **Matthew 5:27** – *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*
 - **Philippians 4:2–3** – *“I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.”*
 - **James 2:15–17** – *“If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

2. P – Promise to hold in Scripture

- a. **Promise:** As we said a moment ago, the Bible tells us more than just what is wrong, it also tells us what God promises that he will do. And we find such promises all over the Bible, and – to some degree or another – they are all promises for us today.
- b. **Principle:** So, as you are reading Scripture, see if you notice any promises that God is making, and how they apply to your life. Remind yourself of these promises when you are tempted with sin or filled with doubt. Make a practice of praying them back to God.
 - **Isaiah 41:10** – *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*
 - **Matthew 6:33** – *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*
 - **Romans 8:28** – *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”*
 - **Romans 10:13** – *“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*
 - **2 Corinthians 9:6–8** – *“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”*
 - **1 John 1:8–9** – *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

3. **E – Example to Follow or Avoid**

- a. **Examples:** There are countless stories and characters throughout the pages of Scripture – the good, the bad, and the ugly. However, Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:11, *“Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.”* In other words, regardless of the story, whether it’s good or bad, there is something to learn by the examples presented.
- b. **Principle:** As you read through the many stories of the Bible, think about what’s taking place and ask if this is something you should follow or avoid.
 - **Genesis 38:24–26** – *“About three months later Judah was told, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality.” And Judah said, “Bring her out, and let her be burned.” As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, “By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant.” And she said, “Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff.” Then Judah*

identified them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not know her again.”

- **Genesis 50:18–21** – “His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”
- **Acts 4:18–20** – “So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”
- **Acts 5:3–5** – “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.” When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.”

4. C – Command to Obey

- a. **Command:** One of the simplest parts of the Bible to understand are the commands that are interspersed throughout. We find commands in both the Old and New Testaments. Commands are very easy to locate because they tell us to do something.
- b. **Principle:** When you read through the Bible, highlight any commands from God and ask how these apply to your life.
 - **Exodus 20:1–4** – “And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.’” (Ten Commandments, Decalogue)
 - **1 Corinthians 1:10** – “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”
- c. **Warning:** However, sometimes we need to understand if the command is *descriptive* or *prescriptive*. In other words, is the command a description of what God called Israel to do during a certain period of history (e.g., the food restrictions given during the exodus); or is this command something that God prescribes for his people to do today (e.g., worship, pray, serve, witness, etc.). A basic approach is this: Do we find similar commands in the New Testament? As we read the Bible, be on the lookout for commands.

5. K – Knowledge Obtained

- a. **Knowledge:** Along with examples, promises, and commands, the Bible is filled with information. We find details about history, culture, customs, geography, nature, genealogies, architecture, sacrificial requirements, travel plans, etc. Sometimes these details can seem boring, difficult to understand, or non-applicable, and we are tempted to read them lightly or skip over. However, with help from God, and a little effort and patience, we can benefit greatly from all of the “knowledge” that’s given to us in Scripture.
- b. **Principle:** As you read through the Bible, ask yourself, “Why is this information included? Why are these details valuable? How do they help me understand other parts of Scripture?” As Bible students, we must understand that God revealed every detail to us for a reason, and we should seek to understand its purpose.
 - **Genesis 10:6–20** – *“The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.” The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. Egypt fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom the Philistines came), and Caphtorim. Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the clans of the Canaanites dispersed. And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon in the direction of Gerar as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.”*
 - **Leviticus 7:1–4** – *“This is the law of the guilt offering. It is most holy. In the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the guilt offering, and its blood shall be thrown against the sides of the altar. And all its fat shall be offered, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys.”*