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Catholics and Bible Study: Ignorance of Scripture is NOT Catholic!

by: [Marcellino D'Ambrosio, PhD](#)



There is a myth that we must lay to rest, once and for all--Protestants are all about the Bible, while Catholics are all about the Sacraments. While I can't speak for my Protestant brethren, I can say this with certainty--the Catholic Church has never tolerated any such either/or. Both Scripture and Sacraments are precious gifts from the Lord, gifts we desperately need and are bound to use.

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ!" insisted [St. Jerome](#), an [Early Church Father](#) and [Doctor of the Catholic Church](#) from the 5th century AD. Because of this, every liturgical service of the Catholic Church is full of Scripture.

Take Sunday Mass for instance. First there are significant chunks of Scripture read aloud, just as we see in Nehemiah 8 or in Luke 4 when Jesus serves as lector at the synagogue of Nazareth. But don't forget the prayers and acclamations that are full of Scripture like the Holy Holy (a combo of Is 6 and Ps 118:26), the Our Father (Mat 6:9), and the Gloria (Lk 2:14). Ironically, many "Bible churches" that accuse Catholics of being non-scriptural don't actually read any Scripture aloud in their Sunday service at all!

So is hearing Scripture on Sunday enough? Not by a long-shot. Scripture, says the Second Vatican Council ([Dei Verbum](#) 21), is "food for the soul." Who eats just once a week? To survive and thrive, you need daily nourishment. You can have a steady diet of Scripture by attending Mass daily, participating in the liturgy of the hours with its daily readings and psalms, or reading Scripture in daily personal prayer. Actually, all three make an unbeatable combination.

Frequently, though, when Catholics start reading the bible, they quickly run into trouble--usually in the first chapters of



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Leviticus! Yes, sometimes it is hard to know where to begin, to fit it all together, and to interpret correctly some rather obscure passages, words, and names. My father, who first attached the Bible at age 63, discovered the book of Malachi. Thinking the name was pronounced “ma-LA-chee”, he rejoiced that there was an Italian among the prophets.

There are great [Catholic bible studies on books, tapes, videos, and the web](#). Some are book-by-book commentaries. Others are big-picture overviews of salvation history so that you can fit each book, character, and theme into the overall story of God’s dealings with his people. Most are conveniently designed so that busy people with no background in the Bible can learn a lot without a huge time commitment.

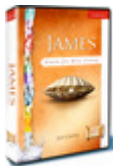
Many of us spend 16 or more years of our life preparing for our secular career, then take continuing ed courses on nights and weekends. In contrast, how much have we invested in our education in the Word of God, essential for our heavenly career?



The study of the Bible, is for one purpose, however. So that, praying with Scripture, we may be better able to hear what God is saying to us here and now. The writers of Sacred Scripture were inspired by the Holy Spirit. But it is equally true that the Scriptures themselves are inspired. The Holy Spirit has been “breathed into them” and resides within their words as in a temple. When we approach the Scriptures prayerfully, aided by the same Spirit who dwells in them, reading Scripture becomes an experience of being filled and empowered by God’s Spirit, and we are changed.

Sometimes the Words of Scripture are encouraging. Like when 1 Corinthians 12 tells us that no matter how insignificant we may feel, we each have an essential role to play as members of the Body of Christ. But other times Scripture holds a mirror up to our face and we don’t like what we see. In Nehemiah 8, the people wept at the reading of the word, because it made them realize their sin. The Word is truth, and sometime the truth is painful. But so is antiseptic on a wound. Scripture challenges us only to heal us and call us to growth. No pain, no gain.

[James: Pearls for Wise Living 10-Part Study \(6 DVDs\)](#)

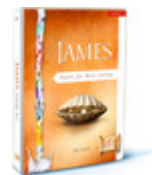


James is one of the most practical books of the Bible. Like the book of Proverbs, it is a book of wisdom, a collection of teachings on issues faced by ordinary Christians in everyday life. These teachings speak loudly to all those who feel torn between the competing demands of this world and their faith. This study offers "pearls for wise living" by applying the wisdom of James to the present day. For anyone who has struggled to live a truly Christian life,

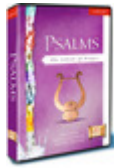
James offers a wealth of practical solutions for handling and even sanctifying everyday circumstances. 6 DVDs

[James: Pearls for Wise Living Study Set](#)

The James Study Set Questions (56 pages) guide participants through their study with thought-provoking questions about the Epistle of James and related portions of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Comprehensive Study Set Responses (40 pages) provide answers and further commentary on the questions as well as a substantive review of each lesson. Each lesson is designed to be followed by the corresponding talk from the DVD or CD series.



Also included in the Study Set is the James Memory Card. This card offers "Pearls for Wise Living" so you can apply the lessons you learn to daily life.



[Psalms: The School of Prayer 10 Part Bible Study 6 DVDs](#)

This is the 10 Part - 6 DVD set: Psalms: The School of Prayer, The Great Adventure moves from telling the Story to making it personal. While the historical books of the Bible recount God's creative and redemptive acts in history, the Psalms reveal Israel's response to God's covenant offer and serve as a model for our response to Him. Indeed, one could say that the historical books tell the "outside" of the story of Israel by giving an historical perspective, while the Psalms tell the "inside" story, which comes from the deeply personal perspective of one who is seeking God. Our communication with God is enhanced by a deeper understanding of the book of Psalms and of the individual psalms that reside in each of our hearts.

[Psalms: The School of Prayer Study Set](#)

The Psalms Study Set Questions (56 pages) guide participants through their study with thought-provoking questions about the Psalms and related portions of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Comprehensive Study Set Responses (40 pages) provide answers and further commentary on the questions as well as a substantive review of each lesson. Each lesson is designed to be followed by the corresponding talk from the DVD or CD series.



[Great Adventure Bible Time Line Scripture Study by Jeff Cavins --24 talks on DVD](#)



The Bible Timeline provides a clear understanding of the underlying Scriptural narrative, which is essential to all Bible reading and study. The 24-part Bible Timeline Bible Study dives deep into the Biblical story. A combination of individual reading and study, group discussion, and lecture commentary guides participants as they read through the 14 narrative books of The Bible Timeline and discover the meaning of each in light of the whole.

[First Corinthians: The Church and the Christian Community, 10-Part Study \(4 DVDs\)](#)



The conflicts of the early Christians in Corinth were in many ways similar to our struggles today as Christians. With divisions, immorality, persecution, and other trials of the faithful, the message of St. Paul to the Corinthians is a much-needed message for our own times. First Corinthians: The Church and the Christian Community explores the key elements that the apostle Paul introduced to a new and growing Church. St. Paul taught the Corinthians about the nature of grace and the Church as the Body of Christ. In addition, he introduced the Corinthian Christians to the most powerful gift of all, the Eucharist. In this DVD series Dr. Tim Gray provides comprehensive teaching and commentary on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Each 30 minute talk is designed to follow a lesson in the First Corinthians Study Set.

[First Corinthians: The Church & the Christian Community, Study Set with Binder](#)

The First Corinthians Study Set Questions (48 pages) guide participants through their study with thought-provoking questions about Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians and related portions of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Comprehensive Study Set Responses (46 pages) provide answers and further commentary on the questions as well as a substantive review of each lesson. Each lesson is designed to be followed by the corresponding talk from the DVD or CD series.

