

# HOW TO STUDY A BIBLE CHARACTER

1. What are the facts concerning the person's birthplace? Where was he/she born? When? Anything unusual?
2. Who were the parents and relatives? Were they godly or ungodly? Consider their characteristics and their influence on the person.
3. Was there any early training? Uncover the influences and environmental factors which shaped his/her life and thinking (e.g., home, school, religious disciplines, etc.)
4. What was his/her occupation and how did this equip him/her for later service?
5. Who were his/her contemporaries and associates? Examine both friends and enemies. What did they say about him/her? Were they contributory or detrimental?
6. Study the time in which the person lived. What were the conditions (e.g. social, religious, political, economic, etc.).
7. Determine what the person's crowning achievement and contribution. Analyze his/her influence upon the nation, the church, family, others, etc. What were his/her writings? Why was he/she chosen to pen this material?
8. Chart the travels and journeys which the person made.
9. What traits did this character have? Include assets as well as liabilities. Was there one sin or strength which characterized his/her life? Trace its causes and its results (upon himself/herself and others). Was there any crisis which brought about a change in the person's life?

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10. Can you detect any growth or development in his/her life?
11. Who was his/her spouse? Children? Were they a hindrance or a help?
12. Notice his/her attitude toward life. Ascertain his/her philosophy of life. What motives pervaded his/her actions?
13. Evaluate his/her spiritual status before and after conversion/dedication to following God. What did he/she think about God? His Word? His work? etc. Investigate his/her prayer life, the quality and quantity of his/her faith, the service he/she rendered, etc.
14. Was this person a type of Christ? If so, in what respects?
15. What phases or episodes of his/her life are given and why? Do these furnish any clues for an organizational outline?
16. Compare all the other Biblical references of this person. Do any of these constitute a divine commentary on his/her life?
17. Study the manner and cause of his/her death. Any extraordinary features? In your opinion did this person finish well? Why or why not? What did this person leave behind as legacies?
18. What are the salient principles which emerge from a consideration of this person's life? How would the application of these principles transform my experience?

These suggestions for studying a Bible character were sent to J. Robert Clinton in a letter from Dr. Howard Hendricks in 1966.