

1. **The Bible is the Word of God in human words.** It has all the characteristics of human language and literature, yet its principal author is God. As Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, is fully divine and fully human, the sacred Scriptures are both divine and human.
2. **The Bible is inspired by God,** giving us the assurance that it faithfully expresses the truth God wants to reveal to us. All that the inspired authors affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit.
3. **The same Holy Spirit** who guides the Church and who inspired the Scriptures **is present to us when we read the Scriptures with faith.** Thus, the Holy Spirit can help us bring the message of Scripture to bear on **new questions and new situations** presented to us in the circumstances of our individual lives.
4. **The differing literary forms in the Bible are central to its understanding.** God's truth is expressed in a variety of forms: epic history, poetry, proverbs, parables, and other literary expressions.
5. Because the Bible came from the Spirit-led community of faith, **it should always be read and interpreted within the context of the Church.** The Bible is the book of the Church, and the words of the Bible cannot express their full meaning when understood apart from the living community of faith.
6. **The Bible must not be interpreted superficially, but always in light of Christian tradition and human reason and experience.** The dialogue between the historical context of the Bible and the realities of our own times aids in interpretation.
7. **The Church does not draw certainty about God's revealed truths from the Bible alone.** God's truth continues to be understood more fully through the **ongoing Tradition** of the Church which is expressed in the Scriptures, the doctrinal teaching of the Church, the creeds, the liturgy and sacraments, the witness of the saints, and the continuing experience of the Holy Spirit working through the faithful people of God.
8. **Two people who dialogue over the Scriptures bring twice the potential for insight and understanding than does an individual working alone.** Thus, when a small community studies the Scriptures, the perspective of many and the wisdom of the community enable a richer understanding of God's Word.
9. **The purpose of Bible study** is not to gain ready-made answers or to put a lid on truth. It is, rather, **to gain deeper understanding of the mysteries of God.** Such understanding, then, always leads to more questions to ponder.

10. **The Bible** does not give us an absolute and static understanding of God. It is **the record of people's evolving understanding of God as their experience of God enlarged and deepened**. God is absolute, but our understanding of God is not.
11. **Carefully searching for the meaning intended by the original author helps us avoid imposing superficial understandings on biblical texts**. Contemporary biblical scholarship can help us better understand biblical texts by exploring the cultural background and the mind of the community from which biblical writings came.
12. **Books of the Bible can be understood more fully when studied in their entirety**. Individual passages or readings from the Church's Lectionary can be understood more fully by studying the context from which they have been excerpted.
13. **The Church is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant**. The Church must listen to and be nourished by Scripture so that it can embody, interpret, and proclaim the Word of God. "All the preaching of the Church, as indeed the entire Christian religion, should be nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture" (*Dei Verbum*, #21).*
14. **The Bible is read** not only for information, but more importantly, **to experience the living presence of God**. Thus, studying the Bible helps us to grow in faith and deepens our relationship with God.
15. **The Church tells us that access to sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful**. The Scriptures should be the heart and foundation of the Church's teaching, worship, and life.
16. **Deeper understanding of the Bible leads to personal transformation of attitudes, values, priorities, and actions**. When we seriously on the Word of God we should expect to be changed.
17. **"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ"** (St. Jerome). Studying the Bible enables us to know Christ and to pass on our faith to our neighbors and to the next generation.
18. **The story of the people of God continues beyond the biblical period and into our own times**. Our story of life is also sacred because God who was present in biblical times remains with us today.

* A fuller understanding of the Church's teaching on revelation can be found in *Dei Verbum* (the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) of Vatican II.