



SIT  
WITH  
ME

AN INVITATION TO  
MEET WITH JESUS  
IN GOD'S WORD



A FAITHPATH RESOURCE



THEFAITHPATH.ORG

SIT WITH ME

A **FAITHPATH** Bible Study

Faith Bible Church of The Woodlands, Texas

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# SIT WITH ME

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This study is a part of your growth in discipleship. Most people involved at any level in a local Jesus-centered church would tell you that discipleship is important, but ask people to define discipleship and many will stumble.

Jesus explained the essence of discipleship in **Matthew 10:24-25**: *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher and the slave like his master."* This is what we see first: Christian discipleship is about becoming like Jesus.

Again in **Mark 3:13-14**, the author describes Jesus' invitation to discipleship and its nature: *"And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed the twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach..."* Next, discipleship is about being with Jesus.

It is from these and other beautiful passages that we arrive at a clear and biblical definition for discipleship:

***Christian discipleship is the lifelong pursuit of nearness and submission to Jesus our Master, developing in yourself Jesus' character, values and mission.***

This is discipleship. It is beautifully complex yet powerfully simple. It is all about following near to Jesus and becoming like Him. But how do you actually do that?

In an effort to answer this question, a team and I have worked hard to represent all that Jesus and the New Testament says about Christian discipleship in a manner accessible to everyone interested in following Jesus. It was not easy and took many years of study, research, prayer and conversation. The final product is alarmingly simple.

We call it **FAITHPATH**. It is a map of twelve circles, with each circle representing a specific biblical aspect of discipleship. While the map is simple, it captures a lifelong adventure on multiple levels of knowledge and practice, grace and truth, being and doing.





There are three critical points to understand about the **FAITHPATH** map. First, it is just that - a map. The content, practices, study and relationships involved in each step of discipleship cannot be fully represented in a map, just as the beautiful diversity of any city cannot be represented by a dot and a name.

The map is a teaching tool. Parents and mentors can easily sit down with a disciple and walk through the map, asking if an individual understands each step and where they have and have not taken significant action. It also functions as a diagnostic tool for an individual wanting to track her own spiritual maturity in specific steps of discipleship. (See [www.thefaithpath.org](http://www.thefaithpath.org) for content, studies and action steps.)

Second, and most critical, there is one and only one starting point for Christian discipleship: trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation. This is the first circle in the map, with a double border. Discipleship is all about Jesus and personal faith in Jesus is the non-negotiable starting point. Jesus, the Son of God, accomplished all that is necessary for our redemption and salvation by His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Jesus Himself and the Scriptures constantly represent faith as the only requirement for salvation. "...*whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*" (**John 3:16**)

Where are you with Jesus? Have you trusted Him for salvation and life? It is God's design for each individual person to move toward a Jesus-centered life. This is where you will find the deepest meaning, the greatest joy and the best relationships.

Apart from this essential first step, Christian discipleship is not a strict chronological or sequential journey. While the Scriptures communicate specific elements of discipleship, each individual life will follow a unique path. In addition, while some actions may naturally come earlier than others may, Jesus has invited all of His followers to discover and experience the same things. That is why the twelve circles on the map will work with any 7 or 97 year old, male or female, across cultures. Every follower of Jesus is invited to explore His distinct and individual invitation in each of these steps.

Finally, after placing faith in Jesus for salvation, the disciple will never graduate or fully conquer most of the steps on the map. You need baptism only once to publicly profess your faith in Jesus and to identify with His death and resurrection, but you will also need to understand baptism in ever-deepening ways as you share and mentor others. Learning how to spend time with Jesus, how to be generous and how to practice grace with others are all lifelong pursuits. Most of them are.

Take some time examining the **FAITHPATH** map for yourself. Become familiar with it. Refer to it often. Create your map by determining in which steps you have experienced significant growth and on which steps you need to focus for more growth, prayer and maturity. Finally, become familiar enough with the map to walk someone else through the steps of Christian discipleship.

# FAITHPATH

— DISCIPLESHIP MAP —





## CONSIDERATIONS AS YOU EXPLORE THE FAITHPATH MAP FOR YOURSELF

1. Have I trusted in Jesus for salvation?

If you have placed faith in Jesus Christ, then you have begun the journey of discipleship.

2. What circles have you already explored as you follow Jesus?

While these may not be completed yet, you have already enjoyed some movement in this area.

3. What circles are new to you and need your attention?

You have not considered this aspect of discipleship yet or have not experienced great movement in this area.

4. Identify 2 or 3 circles from the second list (those that need more attention).

Pursue intentional exploration in these areas. For help go to [www.thefaithpath.org](http://www.thefaithpath.org)

Learning how to spend time with Jesus is perhaps the most important aspect of Christian discipleship after the starting point of placing your faith in Jesus for salvation. This step involves several specific practices and pursuits that will occupy the rest of your life, such as worship, prayer, fasting, Scripture study and many others. While one can achieve great success in these things, complete mastery is always out of reach. You will always be a learner in this area. Spending unhurried time with Jesus your Master is critical to becoming like Him. Remember, That is the first thing mentioned in **Mark 3:14**, *“that they would be with Him.”*

Like any relationship, this nearness with Jesus must be developed and deepened over time. You must actually learn how to spend time with Jesus, and in the ways that He most desires.

This study zooms in on only one of these elements. It is all about relearning how to read, study and enjoy God’s Word. After His Spirit, the Bible is one of the greatest gifts and tools God has given His children. Through the Scriptures, God transforms your heart, teaches you how to hear His voice, instructs you, convicts you and trains you for holiness. It all begins by saying yes to Jesus’ invitation, *“Sit with Me.”*





# SIT WITH ME

## UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF TIME SPENT WITH JESUS

On a recent family vacation to the Massachusetts Cape, I picked up the book *In the Heart of the Sea* by Nathaniel Philbrick. It is the story of the whale-ship Essex, whose home port was the island of Nantucket, an island just off the Cape where my family and I were staying, and the epicenter of the whaling industry in the 19th Century. Because I was reading from this location, it was as if the drama was playing out in the waters before me.

I started the book only slightly familiar with the story. I had not seen the recent movie by the same title, nor had I read *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, which is based on the true story of the Essex being sunk deep in the Pacific Ocean by a unruly sperm whale. I was expecting drama, intrigue and adventure in the book, and it did not disappoint. However, the story of the Essex, its captain and crew is less about a whale than it is about survival. Stranded with no food and little else at perhaps the most remote spot on Earth, the story quickly turns to matters of willpower, leadership, nutrition, starvation, and death. Philbrick's vivid and lengthy description of what happens to the human body in the starvation and dehydration process is both fascinating and stomach-wrenching. By God's grace, some survived the unimaginable experience. Most did not.

I wonder how many followers of Jesus are suffering from similar effects today. Spiritual starvation and dehydration have distanced many Christians from health, strength, vigor and power in the Lord. Distance from regular time in God's Word is at the very center of this problem. This life-stealing separation from regular time in the Scriptures, as we will see, can be created by guilt, intimidation, fear or any of their ugly grandchildren.

The remedy is a feast. God has untold stories of delicacies and delights to give and share. Your Heavenly Father desires to speak to you, to heal, to guide, and to transform. Again, it all begins by accepting Jesus' invitation, "Sit with Me."

Multiple studies have shown that most Christians struggle to read their Bible on their own. Some have revealed that as much as 80% of church-going Christians rarely or irregularly read their Bible outside of church worship services. This alarming statistic reveals a shocking level of spiritual starvation in most churches. This reality is directly connected to the daily experience of Christians in these churches.

But there is an opportunity for great change. Consider the following statement from the book *Move*, an extensive ministry survey conducted by Willow Creek Church in Illinois.<sup>1</sup> ***Reflection on Scripture is the most powerful Spiritual Practice for every segment of the Local Church Family.*** In all of their study of various events, ministries, life-stages, programs and needs, their conclusion was so simple that it runs the risk of being missed: Daily reading of Scripture is the single most important aspect of spiritual growth in a church family.

Did you catch that? That simple idea is the heart behind this study. The single most important aspect of spiritual growth in a church family is regular reflection on Scripture. Reading God's Word is not only critical for the individual soul, it is vital to the health of the local church. This is why a study like "Sit With Me" is necessary.

Many Christians "eat" only on Sunday. With one meal a week, the Sunday sermon, many believers have learned how to survive on very little, irrespective even of the quality of the sermon. What is more, typical church attendance in our area of the country is sporadic at best, with most people who identify as churchgoers or church members showing up somewhere between one to three Sundays a month. This is very little spiritual food.

Are you starving? Worse, have you become so used to scant spiritual nourishment that you have become acclimated and accustomed to malnourishment and starvation? Have you ever experienced what it is like to be healthy and full? Please know that only a spiritually healthy person can make great spiritual impact and produce great spiritual fruit. It all begins with sitting with Jesus, spending time with God. It is the start. It is the center. There is no substitute.

Consider with me, the great power and wide benefits of consistent, unhurried, fruitfully "loud" time with God in His Word. What would change if your heart became hungrier for consistent time with Jesus? What could happen if your mind became trained to read and understand God's Word for yourself? What if hearing from God became a regular occurrence? What if you enjoyed it? A lot?

What you hold in your hand is a powerful tool. It has the potential to change your life completely. It is, at the same time, training for the individual Christian disciple and a community project. There is work to be done privately first. Then there is conversation and prayer to be done with at least one other believer. If you are a part of a small group, that is the perfect setting for a study like this. If you are not, then now is the time to join one. This is also perfect for families.

I believe you can do most of this study in about 20 minutes a day. Of course, you could spend a lot longer, and hopefully you will be able to someday. But for most folks, a good concentrated and distraction-free 20 minutes will be a great start.

**Scot Pollok**  
*Lead Pastor, Faith Bible Church*

# ESSENTIAL TOOLS

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

There are six essential tools for this study.

### **BIBLE**

A good physical Bible is absolutely essential to this study. By physical, I mean paper-page-turning and not electronic. The translation is up to you, but for the purposes of this study choose one that is a translation (New American Standard, NIV or ESV) and not a paraphrase (The Message).

### **PENCIL AND HIGHLIGHTER**

A sharp pencil (because you will probably want to erase at some point) is a helpful tool for navigating your Bible study. I like mechanical graphing pencils. A highlighter is also a good tool to have on hand. I use a good quality colored pencil because it can be erased also.

### **JOURNAL OR NOTEBOOK**

While the margin of my Bible is the first place I go to write something brief (whether it be a word or phrase or reference verse), there will be many times that God reveals something that demands more space. You will want to have a small journal or notebook on hand (I like one the same size as my Bible).

### **A SCHEDULED TIME**

Sitting with God in His Word in our day and age demands thought, preparation and discipline. This means you need to schedule it. Look at your calendar and figure it out. I recommend that you choose the time of day when you are at your very best. I believe you can do most of this study in about 20 minutes, but try to set aside 30-60 minutes each day for maximum impact.

### **A DESIGNATED SPACE**

This study cannot be done in a car or on a walk. You will need to designate a space to meet with God. Ideally, you will need a table, counter or desk-like space to sit, and place your Bible and journal. You will need to write. You will also need to think and pray. You will want to put your phone away and unplug from all other devices. Silence is best. Space is important.

### **A COMMUNITY GROUP AND MEETING SCHEDULE**

This study will be most influential with access to a community of fellow believers. Discussing what you have learned, being able to ask honest questions and hearing the experiences and feedback of others will greatly encourage your discipline and rhythm with God.

# STUDY BREAKDOWN

## ESTABLISHING DISCIPLINE AND RHYTHM

This study is divided into sections that will help you understand its movement and help develop a personal flow to time alone with Jesus.

### **WEEK INTRODUCTION**

Each week begins with a short introduction. It will set up the theme or practice of that week and will be an essential part of your growth and training. Each introduction includes a MEMORY VERSE that you will work to commit to memory. Do not skip or rush this section.

### **SIT WITH ME: SIX DAILY READINGS**

This is the heart of the study. These SIX daily entries will help you develop regular rhythm in God's Word. It is also a reminder that God is constantly asking you to sit with Him, and this study will encourage you to sit with Jesus every day. We chose to include six days a week in this study but you can easily expand that to seven if you wish.

Each daily "sit with me" reading should begin and end with prayer. Try to linger in this time. The goal is unhurried time with God, where you have minimal outside pressures or distractions.

*Note: Things happen that are out of your control. But within your control, the rhythms of your schedule and responsibilities, work hard toward developing regular rhythm with Jesus. If you struggle or fail to do so, feel no guilt, just jump back in. Never let yesterday's failure steal the joy of today's opportunities with God.*

### **INSIGHTS**

These brief side notes reveal specific tools and instruments to help you study God's Word for a lifetime.

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONS**

These closing questions will help you discuss the study within a larger group. This section will also help those who facilitate small group discussion, whether it be a family study or a small group within the church.

# GOD'S GOAL

WEEK ONE

# WEEK ONE

## GOD'S GOAL

While in my undergraduate studies, and simply because I already worked for the university, I was asked to serve at the opening of the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library on the campus of Texas A&M University. All living U.S. Presidents were in attendance. My job was to stand in one spot and look official. For several hours I confirmed passes and allowance into the prime VIP section. To my astonishment, one guest was the Terminator, then governor of California. I am positive I did not check his pass. I turned, gasped, stepped back and immediately let him in. I am also positive I was reduced to a mouth-breather for a few seconds. Once I got over the awe and intimidation of that moment, I remember thinking to myself, "Huh, I thought he would be taller."

When it comes to reading the Bible, many see it as a giant, intimidating and daunting. Yes, intimidation is still a problem for adults too. I have personally talked with dozens of people who do not enjoy regular time in God's Word because of intimidation and fear. "I just don't understand it," they will say. "I haven't been to seminary." On the other hand, perhaps the hardest one, "I never seem to get out of God's Word what you get out of it on Sunday mornings, so I must be doing something wrong." In the end, most people just avoid it so long that they effectively give up.

I believe it will help you immensely to see God's heart behind the gift of His Scriptures and why He gave them to us.

***This study will focus on dismantling the lie of intimidation and fear when it comes to God's Word. God longs to reveal Himself to you and the more you sit with Him, the more He speaks. The more you sit with Jesus, thinking and reading and studying God's Word, the easier it becomes to hear God's voice.***

Consider this truth: understanding God's Word is primarily the concern of God's Holy Spirit. Think about that for a second. The Spirit communicates truth and opens up God's Word for the believer. God's Word was written to and for the common woman and man. Remember, most of the original audiences of biblical letters and books were illiterate and uneducated. Seminary is not required. Depth of understanding comes from the Spirit of God revealing it to your heart. It is a product of time and discipline to engage.

So how do you break in? How do you regain some ground and reestablish your priorities with God's priorities? Your first step must be to align your goal in reading God's Word with God's goal.

The ultimate purpose of the Bible is transformation, not simply education. Let me say it another way: ***God's Word does not seek to primarily inform. It reveals God's character, values and mission so that you are forever changed in every way.*** This includes your mind, but does not end there. God wants your heart, your language, your actions, your relationships, your everything. God reveals Himself in the Scriptures to change us, to set us free, to bring light and hope, grace and redemption.

God does not play hard to get. God is not hiding Himself. He gladly reveals Himself and His will in His Word. Everyone who wants to know God has access to Him in the Scriptures. He is inviting you, "Sit with Me."

Look at the specific goals mentioned in **2 Timothy 3:16-17**: *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."* This text includes information (teaching) but goes far beyond mere education. God does not seem as occupied with authoritarian intimidation as we ascribe to Him. This text seems to say that the Scripture is given to us as a great gift. And the result of consistent time in God's Word is the kind of life that can handle just about anything.

If God's expressed goal in His Word were to educate you into a biblical and theological genius-level-Bible-answer-professional, then overcoming the intimidation of this goal would be very difficult. However, as we have seen, this is not God's goal. Even though God may develop great wisdom in you over time, God's explicit goal is to transform your heart and life. It is all about becoming more like Jesus. Again, this is what discipleship is all about.

His goal is for you to be more free, to be more joyful, to be more protected from sin and evil, to be more holy, to be a more powerful player in His mission to the world. God invites you to sit with Him because He longs to reveal Himself to you. God is a Father who speaks. You engage God's Word to see Him more clearly, to know Him more intimately, so that you may be like Him more completely. It is all about revelation that leads to life change. Jesus-centered transformation, spiritual growth and maturity are the final goal of every Bible study, and no Bible study is complete until it reaches this point in real lives.

# WEEK ONE GOD'S GOAL

## MEMORY VERSE

“For it is not an idle word for you;  
indeed it is your life.”

- Deuteronomy 32:47

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.





Sitting with Jesus in God's Word is a give and take. He gives to you and takes from you. You give to Him and receive from Him.

This back and forth should be like a growing relationship. This is why prayer is absolutely critical to this study and to Bible study in general.

Prayer is the beginning and end of all Bible study. God wants to speak to you. Listen to Him.

God also invites you to speak to Him. Pray and ask questions with honesty and vulnerability.

Please use your journal to write prayer notes, requests, answers and to record the beautiful things God reveals.

# INSIGHTS

## NAVIGATING YOUR BIBLE

Understanding how to navigate your Bible is important. We refer to Scripture passages by referencing the name of the book and then the chapter and verse, such as John 3:16. The name “John” refers to the Gospel of John, the fourth book of the New Testament. The number 3 refers to the chapter and the number after the colon (16) refers to the verse. These reference numbers may be found within the text but were added much later by scholars for easy reference.

Some Bibles, such as “reference” or “study” Bibles, include additional notes and notations. For example, **John 6:14** looks like this in the New American Standard Bible: *“Therefore when the people saw the <sup>1</sup>sign which He had performed, they said, ‘This is truly the <sup>a</sup>Prophet who is come into the world.’”*

Carefully notice the “1” before the word “sign” and the “a” before the word “Prophet.” These tiny marks refer to notes in the margin or at the bottom of the page. Find verse 14 in the margin or at the bottom of the page and “sign” will be explained and “Prophet” will have topical cross-references to other Bible passages.

These references help us understand both the original language of the verse and explore other verses that refer to the same concept. Under <sup>1</sup>, we see the word “sign” also means “attesting miracle.” This is an alternate translation of the Greek word. Under <sup>a</sup>, we see the background to the title “the Prophet” finds further explanation in **Matthew 11:3**, **Matthew 21:11**, and **John 1:21**. (Abbreviations of books are listed in the first few pages of your Bible.) Looking up these other verses will add depth and insight to **John 6:14**.

Most Bibles also have helpful resources in the front and back, including a table of contents, maps, and a concordance, which is an alphabetical list of keywords and terms found in the biblical text. “Study” Bibles have notes and further insights on every page. For beginning students or the highly curious, I recommend a “Study” Bible. Spend some time investigating these sections of your Bible and become familiar with how to use them for maximum impact. They are tools for you to use.

## WEEK ONE / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."*

Find the book of Psalms in your Bible and read **Psalm 1**. Read it once slowly. Then read it slowly three more times.

Feel free to write in your Bible. Highlight or circle important words or phrases and write notes, thoughts, and questions in the margin.

What does this Psalm tell you about God?

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What does it reveal about God's Word, "the law of the Lord"?

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What does it say about you?

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Close by converting **Psalm 1** into a personal prayer and praying through it for yourself.

## WEEK ONE / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."*

Find and read **John 5:24** three times slowly. This is Jesus speaking to a rough crowd.

What does Jesus say in **John 5** about eternal life?

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Find and read **Ephesians 2:8-9** three times slowly. This is Paul writing about salvation.

What does Paul say in Ephesians 2 about being saved? How is a person saved from their sins?

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Today consider your own heart.

Where are you with God right now?

Where would you like to be with God?

Think about these things and translate them into a conversation with God in prayer.

Close your time in prayer.

## WEEK ONE / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.  
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a  
light to my path."*

Read **John 14:16-17**. Slow down and try to understand Jesus' words here. He is speaking to his best friends about what will happen after He dies and leaves the earth.

Next read **John 14:25-27**.

What seems to be Jesus' main concern in these passages?

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How does Jesus encourage His disciples?

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How will they receive help, truth, and peace after He is gone?

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How could this apply to you?

Close your time in prayer.

## WEEK ONE / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.  
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Read **John 16:5-15**. This is Jesus talking to His followers before His death. Although this message was specifically for them, its truth has great impact and relevance for you.

Think about the role of the Holy Spirit in this text. What does Jesus say about the Spirit?

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What will the Spirit do in the life of the disciples?

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What do you want him to do in your life as you engage God in the Scriptures?

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Close your time in prayer.

## WEEK ONE / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."*

Read **Ephesians 1:17-21** through several times. Work to understand every word and idea. This is a prayer by the Apostle Paul for some believers that he knew very well.

What does the prayer say about how you get to know God?

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What does it say about God's role in this growing relationship?

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Identify three things you want for your relationship and intimacy with Jesus and close your time by asking God for these in prayer.

## WEEK ONE / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."*

Read **Romans 12:1-2** slowly twice. Work to understand each word and idea.

Read **Ephesians 5:1-2** slowly three times.

What do these two texts have in common?

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What are they encouraging or commanding you to do?

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Close your time in prayer.

## BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

What is your story of faith in Jesus?  
Are you a believer? How did you come to faith?

Is it really critical to read the Bible to walk closely with Jesus?

Are you regularly and independently reading the Bible now?  
Why or why not?

What insights might you gain from a deeper understanding of God's Word? List as many insights as you can.

What has been your goal in Bible reading up to this point?  
What is God's goal for your time in His Word?

How have you allowed guilt to affect your time in God's Word?

In what ways have you been afraid of reading God's Word?

What was your favorite part of Psalm 1?

How does the image of the tree in Psalm 1 encourage or convict you?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit of God as you engage God in the Scriptures?

What are the major obstacles to your spending more unhurried time in God's Word?

What insights did you gain from the other readings this week?

WEEK ONE  
GOD'S GOAL

# RELEARNING HOW TO READ

WEEK TWO

# WEEK TWO

## RELEARNING HOW TO READ

Do you remember getting a handwritten love letter from a sweetheart? If you do, you will recall the sense of wonder, gravity and mystique that surrounded that secret and precious exchange. You probably carefully guarded it, then rushed off to read it privately and poured over the language several times. What was said? What was not said? There was deep meaning in it all.

The following anecdote was published in the New York Times in 1940 as a promotion of J. Mortimer Adler's now classic, *How to Read a Book*.<sup>2</sup> It well illustrates how an intentional approach to reading drastically affects its impact and stamina.

### *"How To Read A Love Letter*

*This young man has just received his first love letter. He may read it three or four times, but he is just beginning. To read it as accurately as he would like would require several dictionaries and a good deal of close work with a few experts of etymology and philology.*

*However, he will do alright without them.*

*He will ponder over the exact shade of meaning of every word, every comma. She has headed the letter, "Dear John." What, he asks himself, is the exact significance of those words? Did she refrain from saying "Dear-est" because she was bashful? Would "My Dear" have sounded too formal?*

*Maybe she would have said "Dear So-and-so" to anybody! A worried frown will now appear on his face. But it disappears as soon as he really gets to thinking about the first sentence. She certainly wouldn't have written that to anybody!*

*And so he works his way through the letter, one moment perched blissfully on a cloud, the next moment huddled miserably behind an eight ball. It has started a hundred questions in his mind. He could quote it by heart. In fact, he will- to himself-for weeks to come."*

What if you read your Bible like John read his love letter? Although it should approach John's experience, the truth is reading the Bible is not like reading any other book. The Scriptures reveal the very words of God Almighty, the Eternal Creator of all things. As such, every individual word has tremendous meaning. This demands a purposeful reading, a slow reading, an attention to detail, an inquisitive mind and a patient spirit.

You likely whizz through your daily news feed searching for something that sparks in your mind. You may celebrate speed-reading and skimming for the gist. You may highly respect Cliff, the man seemingly responsible for shortened notes on all long and boring books. Who has time to read it all? Sitting with Jesus in the Scriptures must be very, very different.



When our first child was born, everything changed in an instant. I particularly remember the sleep deprivation of those first few weeks of parenthood. Then things began to change even more rapidly. Every day revealed something new. My son showed his first interest in independent movement rather early. He loved to roll over sideways like a runaway stick of firewood. Once I stepped away for six seconds to get a bottle and returned to find him under the entertainment center. He just rolled over and over, laughing the entire way. I only found him by tracking the giggle.

During that season, my wife and I spent a lot of time on the carpet. We sat on the ground, laid on the ground and eventually began to crawl on the ground alongside our son. We discovered a completely new perspective from this vantage point. We noticed some dangers we had overlooked, like sharp corners and unprotected plugs. We began to pay closer attention to the cleanliness of our floors (which were already very clean). The ceilings were much further away. The light was different. You might say that as we slowed down and crawled, we saw almost everything in our home in a very different way.

I am inviting you this week to the practice of intentional crawling. Yes, I'm asking you to do the opposite of what most people are asking of you. Slow down. Be inefficient for once. As you open the Scriptures, take your time. Read and reread God's Word. While this may sound too simple to matter very much, I promise it is foundational to finding lifelong joy in God's Word.

Reading the love-inspired words of our gracious Heavenly Father in the Bible should be done with patience and reflection. This is how we are to read God's Word, but this takes an unlearning and a relearning. As you relearn, work on reading as slowly as possible. Think about each individual word and its meaning.

While this may sound tedious, I assure you, it is how you mine for gold. Some gold nuggets are so big they are obvious and easy to find. However, many, if not most, are "hidden" in the details and fine print. You must learn how to pan for this kind of biblical gold. This is about relearning how to read.

“The Bible defines and develops us as Christ followers. Take away the Bible and we cease to exist [as the Body of Christ]. It is both foundation and fuel of spiritual vitality for a Christian.

Accordingly, there are many reasons we as believers need to read the Bible on a consistent basis. (1) We need to read the Bible to know the truth. We want to think clearly about what God says is true and valuable. (2) We read the Bible to know God in a personal relationship.

(3) We read the Bible to live well for God in this world, and living out His will expresses our love for Him. (4) We read the Bible to experience God’s freedom, grace, peace and hope. (5) We read the Bible because it gives us joy.

(6) We read the Bible to grow spiritually, as we reject conformity to the world and are changed by the renewing of our minds. (7) We read the Bible to minister to other Christ followers and to those who have yet to respond to the Gospel, experiencing God’s approval for work well done.

(8) We read the Bible to guard ourselves from sin and error. (9) We read the Bible to be built up as a Christian community with others in the body of Christ.”

- George Guthrie, *Read the Bible for Life*<sup>3</sup>

## WEEK TWO RELEARNING HOW TO READ

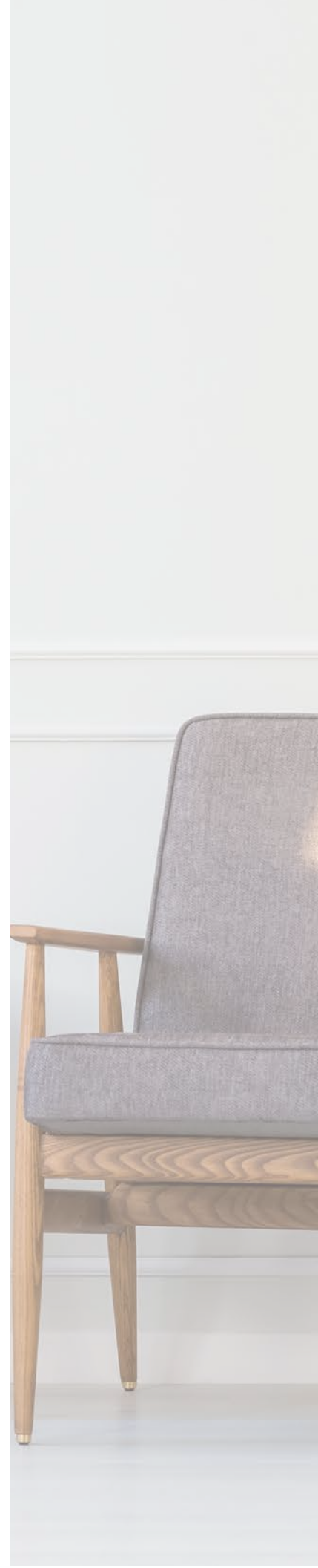
### MEMORY VERSE

“For I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ lives within me.”

- Galatians 2:20

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



# INSIGHTS

## THE BIBLE AT A GLANCE

The Bible is separated into two parts, the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament is the oldest part of our Bible, thus the name. The Old Testament contains 39 individual books, some of them in two parts like First and Second Chronicles. The Book of Job is likely the oldest part, dating to before the time of Abraham. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic. In about 250 B.C., it was officially translated into Greek, the common language of the time. The official collection of 39 books was already well established by the time of Jesus.

The New Testament contains 27 individual books or letters, bringing the total number of books in the whole Bible to 66. The New Testament was written almost entirely in Greek, with a few Hebrew and Aramaic words or phrases included. The oldest part is perhaps the book of James, written by Jesus' half-brother. The last book written was probably Revelation. The whole 27-book unit was recognized, collected and vigorously copied perhaps within just a few decades of Jesus' death. The official formation of the "canon" or "standard" of 27 New Testament books was not a political choice by a king hundreds of years later, but the clear observation from the church of which books had Holy Spirit-wrought power and truth. It was a Divine self-selection above all.

There are over 40 authors of the Bible, most of whom never met each other, yet both Old and New Testament speak a unified truth about God. They are God's Word. They reveal God's character, work and interaction with men and women. God's Holy Spirit inspired these authors to write precisely, accurately and fully His intended revelation. From the first part written to the last part, there is a time lapse of perhaps 2500 years. Your Bible was written from Egypt, Israel, Babylon, Turkey, Greece and perhaps other places, yet it is a whole, with unity and agreement. As such, it has withstood the criticism and attacks of millennia of adversaries and skeptics. Today it remains undeniably accurate, the greatest historical example of precision and preservation in all of literature.

As of 2016, the whole Bible has been translated into 636 distinct languages, and the New Testament into 1442 languages. Hundreds more translations are in process. Around the world, more than 100 million copies of the Bible are sold each year. Additionally, the United Bible Societies give away 400 million copies of the Bible every year.

You have a perfectly accurate and trustworthy, personal copy of this miraculous gift. This sets you apart from the vast majority of history and almost all of the people in the Bible itself. You have a complete copy of God's revelation. What will you do with it?

## WEEK TWO / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."*

Find and read **Colossians 3:16**.

Rewrite it in your journal in full. Then read through the verse several more times slowly, emphasizing and meditating on each word. You may need to look up some of the words online for good definitions.

Write down any thoughts or questions. Work to understand the structure of the sentence and what it means as a whole.

How can you let God's word richly dwell within you?

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Translate the verse into a personal prayer and close your time by talking to God directly.

## WEEK TWO / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."*

Find and read Hebrews **4:12-13**.

Rewrite it in your journal in full and then read it several more times slowly, emphasizing and meditating on each word.

Write down any thoughts or questions. Work to understand the structure of the sentence and what it means as a whole.

Why do you think God's word is compared to a sharp sword?

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Translate these verses into a personal prayer to close your time.

## WEEK TWO / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.  
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a  
light to my path."*

Read **First Peter 5:6-7**.

Rewrite it in your journal. Then read it several more times slowly, emphasizing and meditating on each word. Linger. Think.

Write down any thoughts or questions. Work to understand the structure of the sentence and what it means as a whole.

What is the relationship between humility and exaltation?

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What does this passage reveal about God?

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Translate this verse into a personal prayer.

## WEEK TWO / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.  
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Read **Colossians 1:15-18**. These are ancient words about Jesus.

Rewrite it in your journal. Then read it several more times slowly, emphasizing and meditating on each word.

Write down any thoughts or questions.

What is the most surprising thing this passage reveals about Jesus?

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The most awe-inspiring?

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The most comforting?

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Close your time in prayer.

## WEEK TWO / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."*

Read **John 16:33**.

Rewrite it in your journal. Then read it through several more times slowly, emphasizing and meditating on each word. Linger. Think.

Write down any thoughts or questions.

How does Jesus provide peace?

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Translate this simple verse into a prayer time for others.

## WEEK TWO / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."*

Read **First Corinthians 10:13**.

Rewrite it in your journal. Then read it through several more times slowly, emphasizing and meditating on each word.

Write down any thoughts or questions.

What are you tempted with the most and how does God meet you there?

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Spend some time praying for your own heart.

## BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

How can you let "the word of Christ" dwell in you richly on a daily basis?

What are some of the benefits of public worship?  
Of private worship?

What four descriptions of the Bible are found in Hebrews 4:12?

What is the relationship between humility and grace in 1 Peter 5? Identify one way you can apply this to your life right now.

What does Colossians 1:15-16 reveal about Jesus that surprises or challenges your concept of Him?

What specific actions can you take to show your faith as you wait on God to answer your prayers?

Right now, what is the biggest weight or concern you have?  
Have you handled it?

When faced with temptation to sin, how can you respond with wisdom?

How do you battle temptation?  
What has been most effective for you?

WEEK TWO  
RELEARNING  
HOW TO READ



# PRAYING GOD'S WORD

WEEK THREE

# WEEK THREE

## PRAYING GOD'S WORD

My wife and I love roller coasters. At one point in our idealistic early years of marriage, we aspired to ride every roller coaster in the United States as a couple. That would have been quite an accomplishment and feat. I told you it was idealistic.

I think what we both love about coasters is the thrill of speed combined with the powerful transformation that happens in almost everyone that rides. You know what I mean - that confidence in the waiting line that slowly morphs into fear and regret as the car clicks up the large hill and you question all of your life choices. The last click releases the chain of cars and you hold on for about 60 seconds of thrill, at the end of which your regret has disappeared and been gladly replaced by wonder, adrenaline and a conniving attempt to keep your seat for an immediate second ride.

I love hearing the verbal shouts, begging requests and loud prayers from the riders on the way up. Suddenly most people in the car are theists, calling out to God for rescue. It is a voluntary ride but at that moment, the coaster is transformed into a prayer service. I also love that you cannot get off at this point. You are secure, forced to accept the connection between the movement and the emotions. One feeds the other. The other is made exciting by the one.

Many understand reading God's Word as an altogether separate practice from prayer. This is a misunderstanding. Like in a roller coaster, with movement and emotion, you cannot separate the reading from the praying of God's Word. You are strapped in for both. In fact, one of the most powerful ways to read and study Scripture is to pray it. And one of the most potent and attentive ways to pray is to pray God's Word. This is a key way to harness the movement of God's Word and move with God in it.

This is perhaps most clearly seen in the famous prayer that Jesus prayed. With almost all Christian denominations praying the Lord's Prayer, it is a central part of Christian worship and likely has been since the disciples of Jesus and the first church. Have you ever worked through this ancient prayer as a personal prayer from you to God?

*Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed (or Holy) be Your name,  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Yours is in the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

**- Matthew 6:9-13**

Donald Whitney, in his short book *Praying the Bible* shares the following responses of people who have explored this practice.<sup>4</sup> "My prayer was more about God and less about me." "It seemed like a real conversation with a real Person." "I had greater assurance that I was praying God's will." "I thought more deeply about what the Bible says." "The Psalm spoke directly to the life situation I am in right now."

You will find written prayers in almost every single book of the Bible. God's Word was intended to be used in this way. It pleases God to pray His Word. It also shines a new light on His Word, opening up truth and application that other reading or studying methods may not.

To pray the Scripture you will build on what you have learned already. As you read slowly and intentionally, pause after each verse or phrase and turn it into a prayer. Over time, this will become more natural and almost immediate.

Consider **Philippians 4:6-7**. *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Paul's commanded response to the anxieties of life is prayer. In response, the peace of God comes rushing in to guard your heart and mind. This is revealed to you in the Word of God, which is meant to be applied in real prayer, in real time.

Found almost exactly in the center of your Bible, the book of Psalms is unique to the rest of Scripture for several reasons. First, the Psalms are prayers. Second, they are songs. They were originally sung and were written to be sung. They are worship songs. Third, they are written to God. All of Scripture is inspired by God and revealed to us for our transformation, but whereas most of the Bible is written from God, to us, the Psalms are largely written to God.

Think about that. God is inviting us to speak to Him and He is teaching us how. Since God is the ultimate author of Scripture, as the Holy Spirit of God inspired human authors, then praying the Psalms is truly praying the words of God, back to God. They use His language, His vocabulary and share His sentiments.

As such, the Psalms will be our primary texts this week in our study. I pray they become regular "go-to" stops for you as you learn to sit with God consistently. Personally, I have studied and prayed my way through the Book of Psalms nearly continuously for many years as a pastor. I cannot begin to describe the joy I have found there. I do not know what I would have done without them.

## WEEK THREE

# PRAYING GOD'S WORD

### MEMORY VERSE

“Make me to know Your ways,  
O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead  
me in Your truth and teach me, for  
You are the God of my salvation.”

- Psalm 25:4-5

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



# INSIGHTS

## THE PSALMS

Consider praying through these Psalms in particular situations or times of specific need:

**Psalm 1** - A prayer for personal spiritual growth

**Psalm 4** - A prayer after a really bad day

**Psalm 6** - A prayer for times of stress and anxiety

**Psalm 8** - A worshipful prayer celebrating God as Creator

**Psalm 9** - A prayer of thanksgiving

**Psalm 13** - A prayer for trust in God in the midst of great pain

**Psalm 16** - A prayer of worship and a prayer for help

**Psalm 23** - A prayer for peace, faith and nearness to God

**Psalm 25** - A prayer for guidance and truth

**Psalm 27** - A prayer against fear

**Psalm 28** - Asking God for an answer to your prayers

**Psalm 32** - A prayer of confession

**Psalm 37** - A prayer of hope in the midst of personal attack

**Psalm 43** - A request for help and hope

**Psalm 51** - A prayer of confession and brokenness

**Psalm 59** - A prayer for deliverance from enemies

**Psalm 62** - A prayer of desperation and hope in God

**Psalm 63** - A very personal prayer of worship

**Psalm 66** - A prayer of worship and joy

**Psalm 70** - A prayer in times of great pressure or trouble

**Psalm 78** - A prayer to remember all God has done

**Psalm 86** - A needy prayer of trust in God

**Psalm 90** - A powerful prayer of worship to God

**Psalm 103** - A prayer of praise for God's rich mercies

**Psalm 116** - A prayer of thanksgiving

**Psalm 136** - A celebration of God's grace

**Psalm 139** - A praise prayer of God's power

**Psalm 143** - A prayer for guidance

**Psalm 150** - A song prayer of worship

## WEEK THREE / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word.”*

Read **Psalm 23**.

Now read it through again, translating every phrase into a personal prayer. Start by praying for yourself. Take time to linger and think about each phrase, each line, each verse before moving to the next.

Write your prayer in your journal or below.

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## WEEK THREE / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*“Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found.”*

Read **Ephesians 3:14-21**.

This is one of the most sublime examples of prayer in the New Testament. Read it through slowly several times and then translate the prayer into your life. Pray it over yourself first. Then choose another individual to pray it over. Consider praying it for an unbeliever.

What do you notice about what Paul prays for? Identify the main action words and subjects.

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## WEEK THREE / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.  
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a  
light to my path."*

Read **Psalm 27**.

Read it once before slowing down and translating each verse into a prayer.

Read it again and pray for someone else.

Record your prayers in your journal.

## WEEK THREE / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.  
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Read **John 17:1-26**.

This is one of Jesus' most magnificent prayers, prayed just hours before He was betrayed, captured, beaten and killed.

Pay close attention to what Jesus says and the requests He makes to His Father.

Read it again, slow down and pray the same things for you, your family, your church family and others.

## BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

## WEEK THREE / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."*

Read **Psalm 13**.

This is another prayer of King David. Notice how David moves in this prayer. Where does he begin? What does he express? What questions does he ask? Where does he end?

David says some hard things in this prayer.

Read it again.

Come alongside these words and translate them into your own prayer life. Record your thoughts in your journal.

## WEEK THREE / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."*

Read **Psalm 103**.

This is one of the most beautiful Psalms in the book. Consider what it says about you and about God.

Reflect this psalm back to God in a prayer of worship and joy. Thank Him repeatedly for the things mentioned in this psalm. Let it create for you a private moment of worship and joy in God.



# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

In Psalm 23, what does it mean to you that the Lord is your Shepherd?

What are some ways God cares for His sheep?  
How has God tenderly cared for you?

Share a time when you experienced God's presence, peace, and provision.

In Paul's day, people usually stood to pray. In Ephesians 3:14, Paul "bows his knees." What does Paul's posture indicate about his heart? Discuss some helpful postures you take, or can take, while praying.

What three things does David ask of the Lord in Psalm 27:4?  
How would these apply to your life right now?

What do you see about Jesus' prayer life from John 17?

What is the journey of Psalm 13?  
Where does David begin and where does he end?

What are the five benefits in Psalm 103:2-5?  
Why would the psalmist urge us to not forget these benefits?

What characteristics of God are listed in Psalm 103:8-10?  
For which of these benefits are you most grateful?

How can a person who does not feel like praising God do it from their heart?

WEEK THREE  
PRAYING  
GOD'S WORD

READING  
WORSHIPFULLY

WEEK FOUR

# WEEK FOUR

## READING WORSHIPFULLY

I grew up in a small town south of San Antonio, Texas, to which we often fled for some high-class shopping and restaurants. On a trip there with a family friend, I was sitting next to her in the second seat of our Chevy Suburban and thought I would be cheeky and steal her glasses, which she had taken off and set on the seat to rub her eyes. I popped the rather feminine glasses on and failed to land a dumb joke. Before I returned them, I happened to glance out the window at the South Texas scenery whizzing by. I was struck dumb by what I saw. The trees actually had individual leaves on them, instead of just being big green blobs. I could make out the barbed wire fences along the highway. Wait just a second. What is going on? What have I been missing?

My mother, the driver, asked why I suddenly became so silent and I responded by trying to explain the new world I was witnessed through the stolen spectacles. I could barely find the words. It was only days before I visited an eye doctor and had a pair of glasses of my own. Fortunately, mine were much more masculine.

Have you ever noticed something that has sat right under your nose for years and been flabbergasted by the discovery? This situation reminds us that even a veteran baseball slugger can get better at seeing a pitch. Even a well-experienced surgeon can learn new techniques.

The second chapter of the Book of Acts is life-changing to say the least. The birth of the church as we know it is recorded there. Describing the first church, Luke, the author, says *"they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles."* **(Acts 2:42-43)**

Did you know that this early church did not have a New Testament? They did have a complete Old Testament, but no book or letter of the New Testament had been written down yet. Yet they were "devoted" to teaching. My favorite part is the reaction, "Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe."

If there is any biblical element missing in many church gatherings today, it is a sense of awe. If there is anything missing in the average Christian's daily experience, it is likely a sense of awe and wonder of God. The first and irreplaceable step to recapturing this sense of awe is sitting with Jesus in God's Word, reading it worshipfully. It is really about learning how to see again. God is revealed in every word and line of the Bible. Believe me, He is wonderful, awe-some and way bigger than you ever imagined.

Isaiah, the wild-eyed prophet of God (I am convinced he had crazy-cool, sky-blue eyes), actually caught a glimpse of God's glory. He records for us, *"I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Burning angels stood above Him, each having six wings... one called out to another and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of armies, the whole earth is full of His glory.'"* **(Isaiah 6:1-3)**

Wow. While I cannot prove this, I think it was a very long time before Isaiah was able to tell anyone about this experience. I think he was completely overwhelmed and fumbled over every attempt to describe it. I think it was even longer before he could write it down. However, there is one thing I know for sure: Isaiah was never the same.

The same wonder is available to you today. Just as God revealed Himself to Isaiah that magnificent day, He longs to reveal Himself to you. Whether or not you believe it, you can be just as powerfully changed as Isaiah was by what God reveals to you. It begins by sitting down with Jesus and reading God's Word worshipfully. That is, with a new set of glasses.

This is opposite from what I call the "yearbook" approach. Do you remember your high school or college yearbook? What was the first thing you did when you got it? You frantically searched the pages looking for yourself. That is what you did. That is what everybody does. Many people have the same approach to Scripture. But, this approach is a drastic limitation. It's not all about you. It's all about God, therefore it is all for you.

God loves and pursues you. Instead of pursuing yourself, pursue a bigger view of God and you will find that as you do, God graciously includes you.

Reading this way, you are less interested in your issues or questions and more enamored with an expanding view of God. With this attitude, you read God's Word looking for God instead of looking for yourself. You set aside your problems for a moment, and seek the kind of solutions found only in a bigger view of God Himself.

## WEEK FOUR

# READING WORSHIPFULLY

### MEMORY VERSE

“I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

- Ephesians 1:17

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



## WEEK FOUR / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."*

Read **Exodus 3:1-15**.

Moses was, at this point, an orphaned Hebrew, adopted Egyptian, fugitive murderer and new husband. His life was complicated.

How did God reveal Himself to Moses?

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What did God say? What did Moses say?

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How does this passage expand your view of God?

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Close in prayer by telling God how wonderful He is to you.

## WEEK FOUR / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."*

Read **Exodus 34:2-9**.

This encounter with God is a response to Moses' request to see God's glory (**33:18**).

What did God reveal? What did He say?

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How is this different from yesterday's reading in **Exodus 3**?

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What was Moses' response?

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Close in prayer by telling God how great He is.

## WEEK FOUR / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.  
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a  
light to my path."*

Read **Luke 2:1-20**.

This is a familiar text about the birth of Jesus.

Picture yourself as a shepherd or bystander in Bethlehem. What might your response be to this scene of wonder and humility?

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Now read **Hebrews 1:1-4**. Read it through several times. How does this text inform worship of Jesus?

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Close in prayer by thanking Jesus for how He pursued you with grace.

## WEEK FOUR / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.  
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Read **John 1:1-18**.

This is the poetic "first word" of John's gospel.

What does it reveal about Jesus' personality and character? What about His mission?

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How could you translate this text into a prayer or time of personal worship with Jesus?

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Close in prayer by using the language of John 1 as you thank Jesus for all He has done for you.

## BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

## WEEK FOUR / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."*

Read **Matthew 16:21- 17:13**.

This is the story of Jesus' transfiguration" and the events just before and afterward.

What does Jesus reveal to His disciples in this episode? How do they respond?

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What does this text reveal about Jesus and how might it affect your worship of Him?

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Read the passage again and close in prayer.

## WEEK FOUR / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."*

Read **John 2:13-23**.

How did Jesus explain His actions and how do the disciples respond?

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Read **Matthew 28:13-23**.

What do you find most interesting about this account of Jesus' resurrection?

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Read it again.

How might you have responded if you saw the resurrected Jesus?

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Close in prayer by thanking Jesus for the gift, promise, and power in His resurrection from the dead.



# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

What is worship? How would you define the word or practice to someone who is not familiar with church, the Bible or Christian practices?

Why does God desire to be worshipped?  
Is that arrogant of God? Why or why not?

The two Exodus passages revealed truths about God's character. How could these ideas fuel your worship in new ways?

Where do you see worship in the account of the birth of Jesus?

Why do you think angels appeared to shepherds first?  
What does the angelic message to the shepherds teach you about worship?

In the introduction of John's Gospel, what is revealed about Jesus that would inspire your worship of Him?  
What language did you find most powerful there?

In the transfiguration of Jesus, where and how do you see people responding in worship?  
What does this story reveal about the nature of worship?

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus' resurrection, and the final commission to His disciples, where do you see worship?  
What do these stories reveal about the nature of worship?

How has this week of readings and prayer affected your worship of Jesus?

WEEK FOUR  
READING  
WORSHIPFULLY

# READING INTENTIONALLY

WEEK FIVE

# WEEK FIVE

## READING INTENTIONALLY

Even though both of my parents are avid readers, I did not fall in love with reading until late in life. Like many kids, I only read what I was forced to read, and even then, I read reluctantly and without joy. I remember skimming even the “Cliff Notes” version of Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* in high school. I hated it. Maybe this is a bad example because I think most people hated that one (no offense Emily). I had to answer test questions from a very high vantage point, if you know what I mean.

Later I accidentally discovered fiction books in the adventure and “thriller” genre. I believe these were the very first books, besides textbooks, that I read cover to cover. In my adolescent wisdom, I considered these far greater than the so-called “classics.” They had movement, excitement, drama and color. I quickly began to disdain any literature that was “old,” even if I did so unconsciously.

I had also never read the Bible at this point in my life. Because it classified as “old,” I was not interested. Sadly, many in every generation and from all backgrounds have fallen into this same reading trap. “Since the Bible is so old, it can’t be very relevant to my life now”... or so it goes. Even when we overcome this and begin to read the Bible, many do so with lingering symptoms of skepticism. This is perhaps why many do not enjoy reading the Scriptures or read them without purpose or intention.

Reading God’s Word is quite different from reading Tolkien, Lewis, King, Crichton or Jane Austen. Masterful fiction authors are telling a human story, invented and ornamented. Some details are there simply for color, ambience, and movement. Some are boring, nonsensical or completely peripheral, often from authors paid by the word.

On the other hand, the Bible is both a human book and a Divine book. That is, it was written by human authors, but is divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit of God working through those authors. This makes the Bible unique among all literature. This also means that no single part, indeed not even a single word, of the Scriptures is without meaning and value. There is no detail that is peripheral or useless.

However, there is also something similar about reading Tolkien and the Bible because they are both literature. As literature, the Bible tells a story that is complex, with a beginning, middle and end, finished with quite a few side and back-stories. Because of this, you would not do well to consistently pick a reading spot at random. Just the same, much is lost by jumping into the third book of *The Lord of the Rings* without any concept of what comes before.

This week we will focus on only two passages, both from the Apostle Paul. Your goal is to combine what you have learned and experienced for the past month in God's Word and take it to a very important next step: to read with purpose, intention, and deliberateness.

Reading the Bible intentionally can happen in many ways. You can choose a passage, book or psalm and reread it many times over many days. This is a simple way to "write the Word on your heart," working toward memorizing it and understanding it as deeply as you can.

Choosing a particular book to read and reread is a great way to start reading with greater intention. Consider an overlapping plan for reading through a narrative book like Genesis, Acts or the Gospel of Matthew. This will allow you to slow down and keep track of both the overall context and the individual details. Consider a similar plan for reading through a New Testament letter like Romans or Hebrews. These argument-based letters are built like narrative but use different tools.

You can also choose to read the book of Psalms in much the same way. While the individual psalms can share similar language and themes, they are individual units and stand independent of each other in that way.

If you are interested in a study of a particular character (David, Peter, Esther, Nehemiah) or characteristic (an attribute of God, a fruit of the Spirit, a particular sin, a particular practice of holiness, etc.), this should not be intimidating or difficult. The concordance at the back of your Bible can get you started (and the internet can easily help identify passages to read). Read slowly. Read prayerfully. Worship as you read. Read with intention.

# INSIGHTS

## CRITICAL TRUTHS FOR READING THE BIBLE

(ADAPTED FROM RICK WARREN<sup>5</sup>)

- To understand God's Word in truth, you must have personal faith in Jesus and the Holy Spirit of God, whom is given to every believer. These are absolutely essential.
- God is the main character of the Scriptures. They are ultimately about Him. Jesus is the chief hero of the Bible. The story line of the Scriptures focuses on Jesus.
- The Bible is its own best commentary: interpret unclear passages in light of the clear passages. Let the Bible explain itself.
- God inspires the whole and each individual part of Scripture. This means that every single word is important. No part of God's Word is wasted or useless.
- You must read the New Testament with the Old Testament in mind; Read the Old Testament with the New Testament in mind. They are not two separate stories, nor do they describe two different Gods. The Old Testament is the stage upon which the New Testament is played.
- Interpret personal experience based on Scripture, not the other way around.

## WEEK FIVE

# READING INTENTIONALLY

### MEMORY VERSE

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



## WEEK FIVE / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."*

Read **Romans 5**, the whole chapter. You may read it several times.

Think about it in five paragraphs, with breaks after verses 5, 11, 14 and 17.

In your journal, summarize each paragraph with one sentence in your own words. This will be challenging, but work at it.

Close in prayer, thanking God for speaking through His word.

## WEEK FIVE / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."*

Read **Romans 5** again today.

Review your paragraph summaries from yesterday, then read the chapter one more time.

How would you improve or change your summaries?

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Identify one truth for which you are thankful from each paragraph?

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Close in prayer.

## WEEK FIVE / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.  
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a  
light to my path."*

Read **Philippians 1**.

Work to understand the flow and movement in the chapter.

Write down your personal insights, truths about God and any questions you may have.

Close in prayer, thanking God for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

## WEEK FIVE / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.  
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Read **Philippians 1** and **2** together.

Work to understand the flow and movement in both chapters.

Write down in your journal personal insights, truths about God and questions you may have.

Close in prayer.

## BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.



## WEEK FIVE / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."*

Read **Philippians 2** and **3**.

Work to understand the flow and movement in the chapter.

Write down your personal insights, truths about God and any questions you may have.

Close in prayer, thanking God for the gift of the church.

## WEEK FIVE / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."*

Read **Philippians 3** and **4**.

Work to understand the flow and movement in the chapter.

Write down your personal insights, truths about God and any questions you may have.

Close in prayer.

# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

It has been said that Romans 5 is a central text of study for the Christian who is serious about their Bible. Why do you think someone would say this?

What benefit did you gain from reading Romans 5 over two separate days?

What truths from Romans 5 did you find most powerful

Romans 5 is a transition point from a discussion of salvation to a discussion of holiness and spiritual growth (sanctification). How do you see this shift in the text?

What would you say the book of Philippians is about?

What are some central themes or key words you recognized as you read Philippians?

What benefit did you gain from reading the book of Philippians with some overlap like you did over four days?  
Was it helpful? Why or why not?

How did reading the Scriptures more intentionally help you overall?

In what other ways could you read the Bible more intentionally than you have before?

WEEK FIVE  
READING  
INTENTIONALLY

# WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

WEEK SIX

## WEEK SIX

### WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

I'm not sure why but I've had a significant competitive streak since I was young, especially when it came to basketball. Perhaps it was because I was never really any good at it, yet I held myself to a high standard. I never liked losing, but unfortunately I got a lot of practice. This all exploded when in college several friends simply refused to play ball with me because they didn't enjoy my attitude. Ouch. It was at this point I started to consider the connection between my walk with Christ (which was very new at this time) and my interaction with the world. I needed to change but I didn't really know how to do it. So I just stopped playing basketball altogether. I eliminated the problem.

But there's a problem with eliminating the problem in this way. The underlying issue just popped up somewhere else, like board games. My wife and kids play cards, dice, and board games several times a week. We highly enjoy it. I would not have made a good Puritan. And even now I struggle sometimes with my attitude, especially when I am not ahead. You see, I needed to change back in college and I still need to change now. I have some growing to do and it is much more than just intellectual. I need to apply what I am learning in God's Word.

On the subject of application, consider the following statement:

*The love of a husband for his wife is never more fully lived out than with a surprise bouquet of flowers on an insignificant Wednesday.*

Do you agree or disagree? What is this statement trying to say about love? About displays of love? About "fake" or "lesser" displays of love? If you were a husband, how would this make you feel? Would it motivate you to do anything specific?

In this simple interaction, you have done the hard work of application. You first read a single sentence written in the third person. It was not written about you or your specific situation. Nonetheless, you can learn something from it, even if you are a female, unmarried or uninterested in marriage.

Wait a minute, what if this husband is a total jerk every other minute of the day? What if he just did something terrible and is trying to manipulate his wife? What if he forgot her birthday or their anniversary? What if \_\_\_ (you fill in the rest)?

You would be right to ask questions like this. That is because a simple statement like this one can say some things but to say more you need more information. You need a larger story. You need to understand the characters and the details. You need context.

The same is true in Bible study. That is precisely why application comes after learning how to read prayerfully, worshipfully and intentionally. Attempting to apply a text to your life before you fully understand it is profoundly less powerful and potentially dangerous.

Howard Hendricks in his popular book on Bible study methods, *Living by the Book*, repeats a similar warning about misunderstanding application. "The Bible was not written to satisfy your curiosity; it was written to transform your life. The ultimate goal of Bible study is not to do something to the Bible, but to allow the Bible to do something to you..."

Consider a second statement:

*Truth not lived out is truth not learned.*

What do you think? Agree or disagree? What does this statement say about the nature of truth? Why is practice in life so important? What is the relationship of truth and practice?

Here again, you are doing the critical work of application. But there is more. This is the core principle of application: truth not lived out is truth not learned. It has no greater weight and significance than when you are studying your Bible in order to become more like Jesus.

Many years ago, a friend began to tell me about his almost obsessive interest in Mount Rainier. I know, random. Nevertheless, he went on and on about the details and specifics: highest mountain in the Cascade Range and the highest in the state of Washington. It is an active volcano and on the so-called "decade list," making it one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world. This many feet high... this many square miles in space... blah, blah, blah. Then he told me that he learned all of this before he actually saw Mount Rainier with his own eyes. Wait...what? I know. That was my first thought, too. Only years later did he travel to Washington and gaze upon its glorious majesty. His words. I know, dramatic. I thought that, too.

Then, about fifteen years later, I flew into Seattle Tacoma airport to visit a close friend and church planter. With a random glance out of my window just before landing, I was transformed into a little child. Even though I had forgotten all about that random and dramatic conversation so long before, the reality of Rainier's peak jutting up through the clouds took my breath away. There it was. I beheld it with my own eyes. Glorious majesty turned out to be an understatement.

The difference between the second-hand, "learned" experience of Rainier and seeing it in person always reminds me of the difference between an academic study of God's Word and actually planting it in my soul, my identity and my practice. The former has its place, but the latter has all of the power.

Real and lasting change happens from the inside out. It happens on purpose, not by accident. Christians never grow more gracious by accident. They grow in mercy, service, attitude, joy and peace by engaging God's Word and God's Spirit in a way that brings transformation. This is the difference God's Word makes.

# INSIGHTS

## THE S.P.A.C.E.P.E.T.S. APPLICATION METHOD

(ADAPTED FROM RICK WARREN<sup>6</sup>)

Each time you read a passage from the Bible, ask the SPACEPETS questions to identify specific applications.

**S.** Is there a SIN to confess?

**P.** Is there a PROMISE to claim?

**A.** Is there an ATTITUDE to change?

**C.** Is there a COMMAND to obey?

**E.** Is there an EXAMPLE to follow?

**P.** Is there a PRAYER to pray?

**E.** Is there an ERROR to avoid?

**T.** Is there a TRUTH to believe?

**S.** Is there SOMETHING for which to PRAISE God?

## WEEK SIX

# WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

### MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

- Matthew 7:24

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



## WEEK SIX / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."*

Today read **James 1:19-25**.

Ask all the questions in the SPACEPETS acronym for this text.

Write out as many personal applications as you can in your journal.

Close in prayer.

## WEEK SIX / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."*

Read **Matthew 18:15-35**.

This text is about difficult personal relationships, sin, offense, confession and love. Without a doubt, it is highly relevant to your life.

Work toward as many personal and specific applications from this text as possible. Think about a specific, difficult relationship and prayerfully apply these truths to it.

Close in prayer.



## WEEK SIX / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.  
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a  
light to my path."*

Today read **Luke 11:1-13**.

This is a parable of Jesus about love, service, worship and sacrifice.

Use the SPACEPETS acronym and work toward as many specific personal applications from this text as possible.

Close in prayer.

## WEEK SIX / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.  
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

Today read **Revelation 2**, John's letter to four churches.

Identify each church and place it on a map (see the one in the back of your Bible).

Create a chart in your journal that details Jesus' words to each church.

Work toward as many personal applications as possible.

Close in prayer.

## BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

## WEEK SIX / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*“You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live.”*

Today read **Revelation 3**, John’s letter to the final three of seven churches.

Identify each church and place it on a map (see the one in the back of your Bible).

Create a chart in your journal that details Jesus’ words to each church.

Work toward as many personal applications as possible.

Close in prayer.

## WEEK SIX / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*“Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me.”*

Today read **Galatians 5:16-25**.

This is a text full of application, but it may help to read some of what comes before it to establish the context.

Work to identify as many personal applications as possible. Write them out here or in your journal.

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Close in prayer.

# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

What is the context of Matthew 7:24-27?

What is Jesus' main point?

Compare and contrast Matthew 7:24-27 with Luke 6:46-49.

According to Matthew 18:15,

In what case should you go and tell your brother his fault?

In what manner should you tell him? (See also Galatians 6:1)

When should you mention the sin of your brother or sister to others (Matthew 18:16)?

Have you followed these truths?

Have you ever experienced a time in your life when you thought prayer was tedious or when you lacked the desire to pray?

Have you ever asked the Lord to "teach you to pray?"

Share with the group.

What does Luke 11:5-13 tell us about the character of God

What does it mean to "be led" by the Spirit?

Is this happening to you?

In the Galatians 5 text, which of the deeds of the flesh are most common and most acceptable in our culture?

Which one is present in your life?

Review the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5: 22-23.

What is the believer's part in producing these qualities?

What is the Spirit's part? What fruit should you focus on, pray for and seek by the help of the Spirit?

WEEK SIX  
WHAT  
DIFFERENCE  
DOES IT MAKE?

# CHARTING YOUR OWN COURSE

WHAT'S NEXT

# WHAT'S NEXT

## CHARTING YOUR OWN COURSE

It was raining cats and dogs on the day Liza and I were married. On our first anniversary trip, we flew from Houston to Manchester, New Hampshire. Neither of us had ever spent any time in New England and it was early November. Oblivious to the perks and scenery of that area and timing, we had no idea that we missed the peak of the fall tree colors by only a few days. It was spectacular - ineffable. We stopped unexpectedly on the side of a road, several times, to just look at a tree close up. Neither of us knew leaves could be those colors.

With a small wild streak, we made only two nights' worth of reservations out of seven. The rest we would discover and decide as we went. And that was our favorite part of the trip, the freedom of a rental car and the open road. We first bought a physical map which gave us a detailed view of multiple states.. Then we would pick a town name that looked fun or was near a lake and head off. Sometimes we came to an intersection and just picked a direction. It was absolutely marvelous. It felt like we had nowhere to be and all the time in the world. The only thing that mattered is that we were together.

With all of God's inspired Word before you, conveniently bound together and translated into a language you can understand, you have infinite potential. You can hunker down and linger in one place like the large collection of Psalms or the Gospel of John (two of my favorite places). In these places you can linger, reading and rereading for weeks or months or even years, all the while gaining more and more insight, fueling greater holiness and deeper worship. You may also choose to skip around, chasing a particular subject like grace or a specific character like David. You study and reference, jumping from one gold mine to another, collecting application and transformation on the way.

You may also want to take a year and read through the entire Bible. There are tons of approaches, options, plans and helps to do this. Each of these kinds of pursuits is valid and valuable if done with a commitment to the truths and tools learned in this study.

Remember, the explicit goal of this study is to help you develop a rhythm in God's Word that will last a lifetime. We are praying this is just the beginning of a whole new way of engaging God for you. With that in mind, we want to help you chart your own course forward. This final week of our study is completely up to you. You are at the wheel of a rental car at an intersection with nowhere to be. Which way will you go? What will you do next?

For the sake of assistance and accountability, allow us to offer some suggestions.

**The Gospel of John** (or another Gospel)

It is always refreshing and renewing to read the life and words of Jesus himself. Afterward, continue on with the Book of Acts.

**The Book of Jonah, Esther, or Ruth**

These Old Testament books are neatly contained and have rich meaning for prayer, mission, worship and holiness.

**The Book of Galatians or Ephesians**

These letters to local church families are short (only 6 chapters) and have powerful arguments and great applications.

**The Book of Psalms**

Simply start at the beginning of the collection and read one or two Psalms a day, overlapping so that you read the same Psalm multiple times. This allows for maximum impact and study.

**The Life of David**

Tracing the shepherd-boy-turned-King of Israel is a powerful study that will start in First Samuel and take you through Second Samuel into First Kings, First Chronicles and many of the Psalms (especially 1-41 and 51-70).

Perhaps the best way forward is for you is to spend some time praying, asking God to lead you in your study and focus. However and wherever you go next, it is important that you choose and keep the rhythm going. Pick a study or book and jump in, employing all of the methods learned throughout this study. Share your decision with a friend or your small group for accountability. Ask others what and where they are reading, then ask a friend to check in on you regularly and ask the same.

God longs to speak to you. His entire Word lays open and ready before you.

# WHAT'S NEXT

## CHARTING YOUR OWN COURSE

### MEMORY VERSE

“Prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at revelation of Jesus Christ.”

- 1 Peter 1:13

Commit this scripture to memory. This is a powerful way to constantly engage God's Word and write it on your heart.

Consider writing it on a post-it or note-card and putting it in a prominent place like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Work on it each day. This simple practice reminds you to dwell on God's Word constantly.



## WHAT'S NEXT / DAY ONE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your Word."*

What is your plan for today and tomorrow?

God is inviting you to **Sit With Him**.

## WHAT'S NEXT / DAY TWO

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Make me walk in the path of Your word, for that is where my happiness is found."*

What is your plan for today and tomorrow?

God is inviting you to **Sit With Him**.



## WHAT'S NEXT / DAY THREE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"The unfolding of Your word gives light.  
Let your Word be a lamp to my feet, a  
light to my path."*

What is your plan for today and tomorrow?

God is inviting you to **Sit With Him**.

## WHAT'S NEXT / DAY FOUR

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Your Word, O God, revives me.  
It comforts me in all of my troubles."*

What is your plan for today and tomorrow?

God is inviting you to **Sit With Him**.

## BE FREE

If at any point you fall behind in your daily readings, do not give way to guilt, despair or resignation. Never let yesterday's failure keep you from the beauty God wants to reveal today. His mercies are ever new. His grace is abundant. Just skip ahead and jump right back in. God wants to speak to you right now.

## WHAT'S NEXT / DAY FIVE

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"You are my hiding place and shield, O God. I wait for Your word. Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live."*

What is your plan for today and tomorrow?

God is inviting you to **Sit With Him**.

## WHAT'S NEXT / DAY SIX

Begin in prayer to God and include this prayer from **Psalm 119**.

*"Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let sin have any dominion over me."*

What is your plan for today and tomorrow?

God is inviting you to **Sit With Him**.

# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Share with your group how you engaged the reading and study this week. Did you sit with Jesus regularly?

How did this study help you explore God's Word more deeply and inspire you to sit with Jesus more consistently?

What did you choose to study in an ongoing attempt to sit with Jesus?

What is the single greatest thing you learned or experienced over these 7 weeks?

How have the Sit With Me readings and exercises changed you?

What have been the biggest obstacles to your full enjoyment of God's Word during the study?

What have you learned about God?

What have you learned about yourself?

What did you decide to study this week? Why?

What have you learned or experienced in your study this week?

WHAT'S NEXT  
CHARTING YOUR  
OWN COURSE

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SIT  
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