



Reading & Studying God's Word on your Own

While there are countless helpful Bible studies, apps, and other resources to help us study God's Word, it is important that a disciple of Jesus be able to read Scripture and connect with Him through it without the help of another teacher or author. Here are some simple methods to help you read, understand and apply God's Word on your own. All you need for any of these is a Bible, journal, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It may be helpful to read the passage in several different translations. Apps such as Bible Gateway and Blue Letter Bible (BLB) provide many translations for comparison. Your study may also be enhanced by online tools such as concordances, Bible dictionaries, and commentaries. However, do not feel like you have to use all those additional tools—a Bible, journal, and the Holy Spirit are all you need to get started.

Where to Start in the Bible?

1 If you are new to reading the Bible, the gospel of John is a great place to start. After that, you may want to read Acts or Philipians.

If this is not your first time to read the Bible, you may want to start with a New Testament book. When you have finished, choose an Old Testament book. Keep going with the pattern of alternating testaments.

There are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs. Adding one chapter a day to whatever else you are reading is also a good habit.

2 Before you begin each day, pray this simple prayer, "*Holy Spirit, please speak the Father's words to me as I read Scripture. I come to this time ready to listen, learn and obey.*"

3 Then, choose one of the methods to guide you as you read Scripture. Use your journal to record any insights, questions, and things you hear God speaking to you through the Holy Spirit. You may also want to write down your prayer back to God and record any action steps you will take based on what God spoke to you.

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S.O.A.P Method

Scripture: Write down a Scripture you are reading

Observation: What observations are you making about what you are reading?

Application: What application will you make as a result of what God is revealing to you?

Pray: Write a prayer related to your encounter with God as you meditated on this verse and listened to Him.

Three-Column Bible Study

✦ Select a passage of Scripture

(Best if shorter passage—probably not a whole chapter.)

✦ Build Columns

Divide paper into three columns and write the Scripture in the first column. In the second column write the Scripture in your own words. In the third column, write one or more “I will” statements describing what you will do in response to what God has revealed to you. You may even want to think of someone with whom you will share your action plan.

SCRIPTURE

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OBSERVATION

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APPLICATION

Questions to Ask of Any Biblical Passage

- ✦ What is this passage about?
- ✦ What does this teach me about God?
- ✦ What is interesting to me from this passage?
What is confusing to me about this passage?
- ✦ Does this passage reveal anything I need to confess?
- ✦ What can I apply from this passage?

Additional Ideas

- ✦ Drawing what you think the Bible verse/ passage means.
- ✦ Writing/singing to God based on what you heard from Him.
- ✦ Worship Him with an instrument (piano, clarinet, etc.)
- ✦ Expressing your encounter through poetry or essay or a letter to Him