

## Bible Study Tips & Tools

**Keep the point of the Bible at the center of your study:** The point of the Bible is God Himself. Therefore, every book, every story, every character and every event reveals information to us regarding the nature and character of God. As you read, keep this in mind by continually asking yourself questions like these...

What does this book/chapter/event/character tell us about God?

How does God reveal to us who He is through this account?

What do I learn about God's unchanging nature through this story?

The Bible is the primary tool through which God reveals Himself to us, which makes God-centered Bible study one of the most powerful means through which we draw near to him. Keeping the above questions in mind as you study the Bible will help you keep the point of the Bible at the center of your study.

**Keep in mind that it's not about you:** We will learn a lot about who we are as individuals, as well as human nature in general, through Bible study. However, that is not *why* we study the Bible. We study the Bible to learn about God. Only after we nail down what a particular book/verse/character reveals to us about God, will we then ask ourselves, "In light of what this passage reveals to us about God, what do we learn about the nature of people in general or me in particular?"

**Remember the Big Picture:** The Bible tells the most amazing story of all-time. The point of the entire Bible is to tell this *one* story. Even though the Bible is composed of 66 different books, written by over 40 different people (the majority of whom never knew each other), during a period of over 1600 years, the theme of this *one* story is unmistakable and there is one consistent message from God to man. Understanding the big picture of this one story is crucial to your understanding of each individual character/book/story/event. We have to study each portion of the Bible in light of the bigger story in which it is embedded. To do this, we will use the Bible to study the Bible.

**Keep the story real:** The stories we read about in the Bible are true stories that happened to real people. They reveal to us information about an *actual, living God*. To the extent that we can, we want to step into these stories and walk around in these people's shoes, looking at the world from their perspective and thus, learning about the nature and character of God right along side them. To do this, we must recognize the present-tense reality of God's Word being spoken to *us, now*, through these stories.

**Establish and Remember the Context of what you're reading:** The Bible was written as individual books by individual people, during certain historical times, within particular cultures, and to a specific person or group of people with a specific purpose. Understanding who wrote each book, to whom each book was written and why it was written will help us understand how that book is relevant to the big picture story of the Bible as a whole, as well as how it relates to us today.

**Approach God's Word with Prayer:** Before you jump into study of Scripture ask God for understanding while reading it and wisdom in applying it. Ask Him to meet you as you study and to reveal Himself to you as you read, then expect that He will!

**Read repetitively for comprehension:** Your first goal in Bible study is to understand what you are reading. Sounds simplistic, but we can't discuss what we have read, much less understand its application, unless we first understand what the text says. (Sometimes this is easier said than done!) During this study you will be reading at most 2-3 chapters a week, so each week you should read and re-read (and then re-read again) each chapter you are assigned. Each time you read, you will catch details that you missed before and the pieces of what we are studying will begin to come together more cohesively.

YOUR GOAL at home as you read, is to understand what the text says (observation & comprehension).  
MY GOAL during lecture, is to help you determine what the text means and how it fits into the big picture of the Bible (interpretation).

YOUR SMALL GROUP's goal during discussion, is to relate the text to your everyday life as you seek to answer the question, "What do I do with this?" (application).

*For the duration of this study, I will be using the ESV translation of the Bible. The ESV is a word-for-word translation (as opposed to a thought-by-thought translation), which keeps us as close to the original language as possible.*

**Take Notes & Write Questions** as you read. This will make sure your mind is engaged in the reading process. It will also help guide your reading and help you remember what you read. Hopefully, most of your questions will be answered during the lecture or small group discussion time. If not, please ask!

**Make a Commitment** to devote yourself to the study of God's Word. The intentional setting aside of time to make this a priority is going to require a lot of effort on your part, but the pay-off of studying God's word with care and consistency is HUGE! The Lord makes beautiful promises regarding the effect His living Word will have on our souls. Let's chase those life-giving promises together

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