

A Disciple's Guide to Reading the Bible

Knowing & Obeying God's Word



As a disciple, knowing and obeying God's Word is one of the central aspects of our faith. In fact, as a core competency of a disciple, we believe that God's Word is the rule of life for the disciple. It is our foundation of knowing and understanding God and living the life we've been created to live. It is recognizing that the essence of Scripture is Jesus Christ Himself, our Savior and Lord. We worship Christ for who He is and what He has done, and thus choose to live in loving obedience.

Practically, this competency enables the disciple to resist the temptations of Satan, avoiding all forms and the appearance of immorality. It means knowing the Word of God and applying it daily to life. It's living life as a new creation of God, loving Him with all that you are and actively learning sound biblical doctrine to be able to train others to be disciples.

Grab a Bible, something to journal with (notebook or digital), and some time. You can pick a Scripture to study either by using a Bible reading plan or coming up with one on your own. Both [BibleGateway.com](https://www.biblegateway.com) and the [Youversion.com Bible App](https://www.youversion.com) offer a large selection of plans. If reading isn't your thing, you can listen to the Scripture and then reflect and journal on it. The YouVersion.com Bible app offers audio features, and the [DailyAudioBible.com](https://www.dailyaudiobible.com) website is also a good resource. If listening, be sure to solely focus on the Scripture being read and to not listen while doing something else.

Reading (or listening) is the starting point, but the most value comes as you spend some time reflecting on the passage and journaling about it. This helps it move from your head to your heart and allows the Holy Spirit to continue the process of transforming your life and renewing your mind (Romans 12:1-2).

Always start with prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to whatever God has for you in these moments with Him. Read with an open heart and Jesus will give you words of encouragement, direction, and correction (2 Timothy 3:16).

There are several methods people have used to help in processing and applying Scripture personally. In your journal, list the date, the passage, and then use one of the two methods below to guide your reflection. Write down your responses to help clarify and focus your time. You will also have the benefit of going back and reviewing later or sharing with someone else what God is doing through these times with Him.

REAP Study Method

Read – Read the passages(s) of the day. As you read, write down a key text that stands out to you.

- What is happening in this passage? What things are emphasized, repeated, related?
- What do you see about God? What is God doing in this passage?
- What do you see about man?

Examine – Spend some time reflecting and write down thoughts on what you’ve read.

- How do you think the author wants his audience to respond?
- What do you learn about God’s character?
- What wrong beliefs about God and myself did I have?

Application – How you will be different today because of what you have just read? Why does this matter?

- How do I need to repent? What truths do I need to believe? What false beliefs must I turn from?
- What can I do – empowered by the Holy Spirit – today to apply this passage?

Prayer – Pray through the passage and your application, asking God to change your heart and to change your life based on the time you’ve spent in God’s Word

Bonus Round: Share what God taught you today with at least one person.

Personal Devotion Method

- How does this passage encourage me to **worship** God?
- What is God **calling me to do** in this passage?
- Is this passage convicting me of a sin that I need to **repent** of (either a sin of commission or sin of omission)?
- What can I **thank God** for from this passage?
- What does this passage encourage me to **ask** for?
- Other prayer requests that God has laid on my **heart**?
- Prayers that God has **answered**:

At the end of the day, the goal isn’t to simply say you read the Bible today, but to know and obey God’s Word. To think, act, and be more like Jesus. To become a healthy biblical disciple who makes disciples that connect, grow, and engage.

May the Lord bless the reading and application of His word in our lives.

