

BOOK FIVE IN THE SERIES:

THE OWNER'S MANUAL TO THE NEW YOU

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

DOUG BRITTON, MFT

Five-day Bible-based study for individuals, small groups, and classes

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- Day One: Make a Plan
 - Day Two: Be an Active Reader
 - Day Three: Open Your Heart
 - Day Four: Bring the Bible into Your Daily Life
 - Day Five: Review and Test

Book five in "The Owner's Manual to the New You" series

How to Study the Bible

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“The Owner’s Manual to the New You” is a series of forty-eight cross-cultural discipleship books by biblical counselor and author Doug Britton, MFT. Each book is ideal for a five-day study by small groups, classes, or individuals.

Although this is a forty-eight book series, each book can be studied as a complete book by itself.

The Owner's Manual to the New You

Doug Britton has completed twenty-eight of the forty-eight books in "The Owner's Manual to the New You," with more books coming soon. These books will be available online free of charge for individual use later in 2017.

Completed books are marked with an asterisk (*).

Knowing God

- Book 1: Who is God?*
- Book 2: Becoming a Believer*
- Book 3: Your Identity in Christ*
- Book 4: Quick Overview of the Bible*
- Book 5: How to Study the Bible*
- Book 6: How to Pray*
- Book 7: Key Christian Practices*
- Book 8: Successful Christian Living*
- Book 9: Living a Joyful Life*
- Book 10: Knowing God's Will*
- Book 11: Obeying God*
- Book 12: Living in God's Power*

Developing a Godly Character

- Book 13: Growing in Christ
- Book 14: Changing Your Self-Image
- Book 15: Changing Your Attitudes*
- Book 16: Living with Humility*
- Book 17: Living with Purpose
- Book 18: Living with Integrity*
- Book 19: Living with Self-Discipline
- Book 20: Growing through Problems*
- Book 21: Trusting God
- Book 22: Breaking Free from Our Culture*
- Book 23: Handling Money Responsibly*
- Book 24: Staying Faithful to God

Enjoying Healthy Relationships

- Book 25: Keys to Healthy Relationships*
- Book 26: Making Friends
- Book 27: Showing Grace to Others*
- Book 28: Forgiving Others*
- Book 29: Serving Others
- Book 30: Resolving Conflicts
- Book 31: Overcoming Peer Pressure
- Book 32: Helping Others with Wisdom
- Book 33: Dating, Marriage, and Sex
- Book 34: Healing Racial and Social Divisions
- Book 35: Respecting Authority
- Book 36: Sharing Your Faith

Overcoming Personal Problems

- Book 37: Overcoming Your Anger (Part 1)*
- Book 38: Overcoming Your Anger (Part 2)*
- Book 39: Overcoming Hurt Feelings
- Book 40: Overcoming Temptation (Part 1)*
- Book 41: Overcoming Temptation (Part 2)*
- Book 42: Overcoming Anxiety and Fear
- Book 43: Overcoming Jealousy and Insecurity
- Book 44: Overcoming a Judgmental Attitude
- Book 45: Overcoming Guilt and Shame*
- Book 46: Overcoming Hopelessness*
- Book 47: Overcoming Failure*
- Book 48: Overcoming the Fear of Death*

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Foreword

When I was first approached about writing a series of downloadable books for intensive discipleship training, I was excited. Jesus has revolutionized my life, and I am glad to share his truths with you.

The pages you are about to study come straight from God's word. They contain truth that puts our feet on the path to the fullest life possible—truth that sets us free.

As Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32).

May God speak to your heart as you read, and may he bring his truth alive in your life.

Your brother in Christ,

Doug Britton

P.S. LifeTree Books is offering this downloadable book and all the other books in “The Owner's Manual to the New You” series free of charge. If you find these books helpful, let me encourage you to spread the news to churches, ministries, and individuals who might benefit from them.



Day One: Make a Plan

Why should you read the Bible?

In *Quick Overview of the Bible*, Book 4 of “The Owner’s Manual to the New You,” you read many reasons we should read (or listen to) the Bible. Here’s a quick summary:

- God tells us to read (or listen to) the Bible.
- The Bible helps us have a close relationship with Jesus.
- The Bible teaches truth and corrects falsehoods.
- The Bible shows us God’s love, power, and holiness.
- The Bible tells us how to think, love, and live.
- The Bible transforms us.
- The Bible inspires, encourages, and challenges us.
- The Bible convicts us of sin and warns us against rebelling.
- The Bible gives us hope for eternal life with Jesus.
- Spending time with God in his word is important. As God said to Joshua:

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8)

Discussion questions

1. Which of the above reasons to read the Bible seem most important to you? Why?
2. Hosea 4:6 says, “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.” What do you think that means? How does this apply to us today?

How often do you read the Bible?

Although we know how important the Bible is, many of us do not read it very often. See if any of the following statements sound familiar. As you read, check each one that you sometimes think.

- I’m too busy to read the Bible.
- I don’t feel like reading it.
- I don’t know where to start reading in the Bible.
- I have good intentions, but then I forget to read.



- I start to read, but then I get distracted and stop.
- I already know what the Bible says, so there's no need to read it.
- I don't remember what I read, so why read it?

If you checked any of these boxes, you aren't alone. Most Christians have had similar thoughts at one time or another.

Discussion questions

3. How many days a week do you read the Bible? What time of day do you read it? How long do you read it?
4. What has been your biggest obstacle to reading the Bible? How do you think you can overcome this?

Pair an old habit with a new habit of reading (or listening) every day

Chances are good that you have daily habits, things you do regularly. Some examples might be getting dressed, going online, reading the newspaper, checking your email or social media, watching TV, texting a friend, combing your hair, or shaving.

One of my daily habits, something I love to do every morning, is to go online or read the newspaper to see what's happening in the world. I'm a news fanatic.

A few years after becoming a Christian, I realized that I was putting the news before the Bible, so I used my news habit to strengthen my Bible habit. I committed myself not to look at the news until I read the Bible. Since I love to stay up-to-date, I have been reading the Bible nearly every day for years.

I wish I could say I always have a strong desire to read the Bible and never need a reminder like this. Sometimes I do, but other times I don't. This system has kept me consistently in the Word, which has made a huge difference in my life.

Not everyone needs a system, of course. Some people automatically read the Bible. However, if you have trouble disciplining yourself to read the Bible, let me invite you to choose one of your daily habits and set up your own system. For example, you could decide you won't put on your shoes until you read the Bible.

Discussion question

5. What is a current habit you could use to help get you into the habit of reading the Bible every day? Do you want to make a plan? If so, what will you do?

Decide when you will read the Bible

Instead of pairing Bible reading with an old habit, you may want to set up a consistent time of the day when you will read the Bible. There's no rule, but many people find that reading the Bible every morning helps them get off to a good start for the day. Others read while eating lunch, after work, or after dinner.

Planning ahead helps.

An upright man gives thought to his ways. (Proverbs 21:29)

By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures. (Proverbs 24:3-4)

Discussion question

6. When will you read the Bible?

Decide where you will read the Bible

You may find it helpful to develop the habit of reading the Bible in the same place every day. For example, you could read at the kitchen table, in the living room, or in your bedroom.

Discussion question

7. Where will you read or listen to the Bible?

Decide how long you will read the Bible

Spending even a few minutes reading (or listening to) the Bible is much better than not reading it at all. Get started now, even if it's only five minutes a day. Of course, it would be better to read longer. But the key is to get started. Once you start, you can add more time.

Discussion question

8. How long will you read (or listen)?

Start with the New Testament

It's a good idea to start by reading the New Testament. The Gospel of John is a great place to begin. After you start a book of the Bible, such as John or Matthew, keep reading it daily until you finish it.

After you read the New Testament, be sure to also read the Old Testament, perhaps starting in Proverbs. One pattern I like is to alternate, first reading one or more books in the New Testament, then one or more in the Old Testament.

Once you have read the whole Bible, don't stop. Continue to read it every day,

Discussion questions

9. Describe how you read the Bible, whether it is a systematic plan, just turning to a random page and reading, or something else.
10. What type of reading plan will you follow in the future?

Remind yourself to read the Bible

Starting a new habit can be hard, so it can be helpful to set up a way to remind yourself to read. This could be a sticky note you put on an empty coffee cup before you go to bed, a reminder built into your smartphone or computer, or a note you stick into your shoes when you take them off.

Discussion question

11. How will you remind yourself to read the Bible?

Use a translation you understand

There are lots of translations of the Bible. Find one that you can understand. Take a look at the New International Version and the New King James Version. If these seem too difficult, try a paraphrased version such as the Living Bible or the New Living Translation. The Message is another easy-to-read choice.

Join a Bible study with other believers

It can be exciting, inspiring, and instructive to dig into the word with others. Consider joining a small group Bible study or Sunday school class that is going through the Bible verse-by-verse or chapter-by-chapter.

Do you know Jesus?

This book was written to help believers in Jesus grow in their faith and personal life. You will get the most out of these pages if you know Christ, since it is through his love and power that you can truly change. If you have not yet entered into a relationship with Jesus, let me invite you to accept him as your Savior and Lord. Make this your personal prayer:

Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God, and I need your help. I confess I have sinned and failed you in many ways. I invite you to be my Savior and Lord, and I ask you to help me follow you the rest of my life. Thank you for loving me, forgiving me, and accepting me as your child.

If you prayed this prayer, welcome to the family of God. God has plans for you—to transform you. You have an exciting life ahead of you!

Memory verse

An upright man gives thought to his ways. (Proverbs 21:29)

Want to learn more?

Free online Bible study

How to Be Born Again

www.dougbrittonbooks.com/resources/salvation

Books by Doug Britton

Getting Started, Getting Connected

www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore/getting-started

First Things First

www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore/first-things-first

Homework – Day One

1. How many days a week, and how many minutes a day, do you spend reading the Bible?
2. What has been your greatest obstacle to reading the Bible?
3. Write out one verse that tells you to meditate on what the Bible says.
4. What are three of your daily habits?

5. What could you do to “pair” one of these habits with reading the Bible?

6. How many minutes a day do you want to read the Bible? Is this realistic? Why or why not?

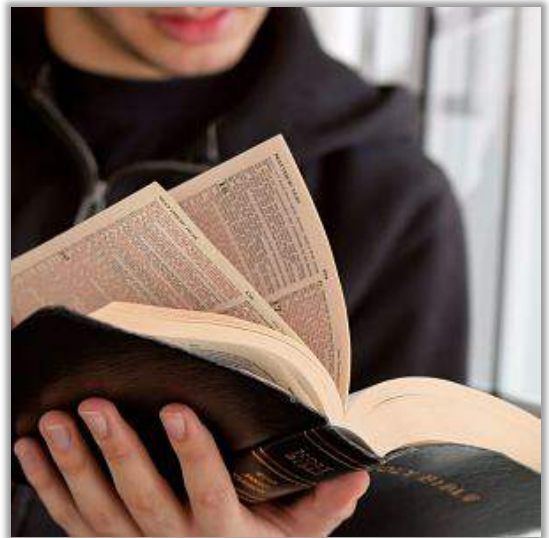
7. How could you remind yourself to read the Bible?

8. What group of people would you like to get together with to study the Bible? What plans will you make to get this going?

Day Two: Be an Active Reader

It's easy to skim over a chapter of the Bible without letting the words sink in. To get the most out of God's word, be an active reader, one who thinks about what you read. As Paul wrote to Timothy, do your best to correctly handle the word of truth.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)



Ask God to help you as you read

Reading the Bible can be much more than learning a lot of facts or studying great literature. Ask God to direct your thoughts and help you know him better. Ask him to help you understand his ways.

Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. (Psalm 119:33-36)

Discussion question

1. In your own words, what do you think the author of the above prayer from Psalm 119 is asking God to do?

Focus on the words

Actively think about what you are reading. Train your mind not to drift. If you catch yourself quickly reading through a few verses without thinking about them—perhaps to fulfill a commitment to read the Bible—stop, pray, and start over again.

Read for the plain meaning

In general, it's a good idea to read the Bible for its plain meaning. If it says "don't steal," then do not steal. If it says "pray often," then pray often.

Remember that sometimes key points in the Bible are made using parables, figures of speech, and symbolism. At these times—such as when Jesus said to pluck out your eye if it offends you (Mark 9:47)—God is emphasizing an important point (the importance of dealing with sin), not telling you literally to pluck out your eye.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you read:

- What is the main message in this passage?

- What does this passage tell me about the character of God?
- Does this passage help me better understand Jesus' plan of salvation? If so, how?

Look at the big picture

When you read, don't simply focus on one verse in a chapter. Instead, also think about the verses before and after it to better see the big picture and how that verse fits in.

In addition, the Bible often deals with the same topic in different places, sometimes emphasizing one aspect in one place and a different aspect in another place. By becoming familiar with several passages that deal with the same topic, you can see how they fit together.

Discussion questions

2. What does it mean to "look at the big picture"?
3. Read the first sentence of Ephesians 4:26 ("In your anger do not sin.") If you only read this sentence, what would you think it means? Now read Ephesians 4:26-32. Does reading this larger passage help you better understand the first sentence you read? In what way?

Make notes and underline key passages

You are more likely to remember what you read if you underline passages and jot down some notes. Don't worry about "defacing" your Bible. Also consider writing insights or questions about a passage in a separate notebook or journal.

Discussion questions

4. Do you take notes as you read the Bible? Why or why not?
5. What type of note-taking has been most effective for you?

Use Bible study aides

Since the world was very different from ours when the Bible was written, it can be helpful to know something about the time periods when it was written. For example, when we read about Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13:5-15), the idea of washing feet could seem weird if we did not understand that this was common at that time.

Some Bibles have notes or "commentaries" at the bottom of the page that explain issues that otherwise could be confusing. In addition, numerous books and online ministries provide in-depth commentaries, Bible dictionaries, maps, and other resources that can help us see the larger picture.

Discussion question

6. What are some Bible study aides you have found helpful?

Don't be discouraged if you can't remember much

For some time after becoming a Christian, I often had the frustrating experience of reading a chapter of the Bible, and then forgetting what I had just read.

However, after a few months, I found myself quoting verses I didn't realize I knew.

When you eat food, you aren't aware of each step of the digestive process. You never know when the food becomes part of your body. Reading the Bible is somewhat similar. Even if you can't recall everything you read, over time it will become part of you, transforming and renewing you.

Don't be upset if you do not understand a passage

You may find passages of Scripture that confuse you or seem contradictory to other passages. If you do, don't be alarmed. There are many truths in the Bible that are easy to understand, such as salvation through faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10) and the commandment to love God and love others (Matthew 22:36-40). But the Bible also has great depth. You could study it for a lifetime and still not completely understand it all.

Here are some steps you could take if you don't understand a passage:

- Pray for understanding.
- Ask a pastor or mature Christian friend for help.
- Ask your church or local Christian bookstore for commentaries or other Bible study books.
- Put the passage "on the shelf" and come back to it a few months later to see if you can understand it then.

Memorize and meditate on verses

Memorize selected verses, then meditate on (or think about) them throughout the day. Don't feel bad if you have trouble memorizing Scriptures. Many people do too. But work at it. You will benefit from whatever you are able to accomplish.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:11)

Once you memorize Bible verses, think about them when you need to make a decision. You will discover that your knowledge of God's word helps you make wise choices.

An upright man gives thought to his ways. (Proverbs 21:29)

Digging deeper

For a great discussion about how to approach studying the Bible, read Psalm 119. Underline and discuss each verse that deals with God's decrees or laws.

Memory verse

An upright man gives thought to his ways. (Proverbs 21:29)

Notes

Homework – Day Two

1. What does it mean to be an “active reader”?
2. How good of an active reader are you? How can you improve?
3. Review the two examples of taking things out of context. What lessons can you learn from these examples?
4. Is it wrong to write notes in your Bible? Why or why not?

5. What are the three suggested questions to ask yourself when you read a passage in the Bible?

6. Find a Bible commentary and look up John 3:16. What is one thing it says about this verse?

7. Why did the writer of Psalm 119 say (in verse 11) that he has hidden God's word in his heart?

8. Do you think hiding God's word in your heart would be helpful for you too? Why or why not?

Day Three: Open Your Heart

The Bible will challenge your opinions, attitudes, emotions, actions, and beliefs. The question is, how will you respond? Will you try to fit what it says into your current attitudes and opinions, or will you allow it to change you?

Jesus addressed this question when he said:

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. (Matthew 7:24-25)

Discussion questions

1. How open are you to God's truth as you read the Bible?
2. How open are you to new ways of looking at the world, new ways of acting, and new ways of thinking?



Ask God to speak to you as you read

I know people who studied the Bible, commentaries, and other reference works for hours every day. They became very familiar with the Bible, understood what the early Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts said, and could discuss deep theological issues with ease.

Some of these people grew wonderfully—not just in knowledge, but also in faith, in wisdom, in their walk with God, and in their relationships with other people.

But others didn't change for the better. In fact, some became bitter, angry people who wounded their children, destroyed their marriages, and eventually abandoned their walk with God.

What made the difference between the two groups? Those in the first group read the Bible prayerfully, with hearts open to what God would show them personally. They wanted to grow in knowledge and theological insights, but they also wanted to grow closer to God.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Those in the other group seemed to approach Bible study as a way to gain knowledge without opening their hearts to a closer walk with God. They seemed to be interested in theology, but not in how the Bible could impact them personally.

You and I can learn from these examples. Be a student of the Bible. Throw yourself into studying it, but be sure to ask God to give you an open heart as you read it.

Pray before, during, and after you read the bible

Before you read, pray for an open heart. Ask God to help you understand what you read, to learn what he wants you to learn, and to change you supernaturally.

After you read, ask God to help you internalize or grow from what you read.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. (Psalm 119:9-10)

Discussion question

3. If you aren't careful, you may find yourself reading the Bible for knowledge only, instead of also reading for personal application. What steps can you take to be sure you are allowing God's word to speak to you personally?

Ask God to change you on the inside

When you read, it's good to learn how God wants you to talk and act, but don't stop there. Ask God to use his word to change you on the inside as well as on the outside.

As you read, ask yourself:

- How does this passage apply to me? What can I learn from it?
- In light of this passage, do I need to make any changes in my attitude, behavior, or words?

When you allow God to change your heart—your attitudes, emotions, and motivation—you will discover that your words and actions also change. As Jesus said, “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34).

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. (Matthew 23:25-26)

Discussion questions

4. Give an example of a time you seemed clean on the outside but were not clean on the inside.
5. What is one way you would like God to change your heart?

Be aware of the danger of “picking and choosing”

When reading the Bible, many people pick and choose what to believe—and what to obey. If they don't like the Bible's message about holiness, sexual immorality, divorce, forgiveness, generosity, envy, covetousness, anger, or other areas, they look for someone who will “interpret” the Bible to give them the message they want to hear. They are like the people with “itching ears” described in 2 Timothy:

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. (2 Timothy 4:3)

This is a dangerous position to take. The Bible is God's word, teaching us his truth. As his disciples, we need to believe what God says and do what he commands, even when it is difficult.

Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it. (Luke 11:28)

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. (1 John 2:3-6)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)

As you read in *Quick Overview of the Bible* (Book 4 of the "Owner's Manual to the New You"), Christians are no longer under the Old Testament law (Galatians 3:24-25). However, there are hundreds of commands in the New Testament that apply to us today.

Discussion questions

6. Why do you think people "pick and choose"?
7. Why is it dangerous to "pick and choose"?
8. What are some times you are tempted to "pick and choose"?

Remember that love is at the heart of all of God's commandments

There are hundreds of commandments in the New Testament, and they can seem overwhelming. It's helpful to remember that they aren't simply a long list of unrelated rules to follow.

Instead, they are instructions that tell us how to love God and others. As Jesus said, all of God's commandments "hang on" the two great commandments—to love God and to love others.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
(Matthew 22:37-40)

We need the Bible's commandments so we can learn how to love in a deep way—one based on God's word, not on our emotions. That's because our ideas about love are often wrong.

For example, if you think you are in love with someone (and you aren't married), you might say, "Since we are in love, let's have sex." However, if you understand God's word you would say, "I love you, so let's not have sex."

In other words, when you love someone and you understand God's word, you won't encourage him or her to commit a sin. Instead, you will encourage him or her to grow closer to God.

Discussion question

9. Have you ever felt overwhelmed by all the commandments in the New Testament? Does the above information help? Why or why not?

Memory verse

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)

Want to learn more?

Free online Bible studies

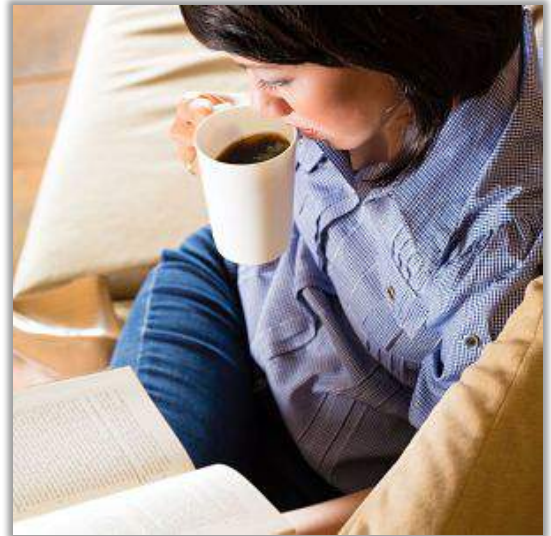
Several studies on developing a Christ-centered self-image

www.dougbrittonbooks.com/resources/self-image

Notes

Day Four: Bring the Bible into Your Daily Life

It's easy to read the Bible and then forget what you read as you go through the day. Try to develop habits that will help you think about God's word throughout the day. Although you may not be reading the Bible all day long, its truths can (and should) affect you as you go through life. Let's take a look at some ways you can "extend" your Bible study.



Consider reading or listening to the Bible more than once a day

When you study the Bible, consider writing a few verses on a piece of paper and then reading them once or twice during the day. Other ways you could keep the Bible alive in your thoughts would be to read the Bible as you eat lunch, listen to an audio Bible as you commute to work, or listen to a devotional on your smartphone as you take a walk.

Discussion questions

1. Do you think any of these for keeping the Bible alive in your thoughts would be practical for you? Why or why not?
2. Are there other ways you could "extend" your Bible study each day? Explain your answer.

Meditate on it

Have you ever thought about a great ball game you watched the previous night, remembered a favorite TV show, or enjoyed the memory of a birthday party? You can do the same thing when you meditate on (or think about) something you read in the Bible. It might be a new insight, a passage that gives you comfort, or a verse that encourages you.

As we learn to meditate on what we have read, we can draw strength and comfort from God's word. (The meditation the Bible talks about is thinking focused on God's word. It is not emptying your mind or practicing "eastern" meditation.)

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. (Psalm 119:97)

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8)

I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. (2 Peter 3:2)

Discussion questions

3. What is something you read lately in the Bible that encourages, challenges, or comforts you?

4. How would thinking about this during the day affect your life?

Sing Bible songs

If you know songs that include Bible passages, you could sing them when alone. If you are creative, you could put some favorite verses to music and sing them as you go through the day.

Discussion questions

5. What are some songs you know that include Bible verses?
6. Would you feel comfortable quietly singing these songs to yourself from time to time? Why or why not?

Talk about it

Pray for opportunities to bring Bible insights into your daily conversations. Share your excitement with others. When you share you build up your own faith as well encourage others. But be sensitive. Don't come across as pushy or as a know-it-all.

If you have children, the Bible has clear instructions about teaching them.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 11:18-20)

Discussion questions

7. When was the last time you talked about something you read in the Bible with someone? What was the conversation like?
8. What is something you read that you would like to share with someone? How could you offer to talk about it without seeming pushy?

Be guided by it

Your daily Bible studies can lay the foundation for an ongoing awareness of God and what the Bible says as you go through life. The more you read the Bible, the more aware you become of how its commands and guidelines show you how to live. Develop the habit of asking yourself what the Bible says when you are in a confusing or difficult situation. For example:

- The Bible helps you choose righteousness.
- The Bible helps you flee temptation and avoid sin.
- The Bible shows you how to love God and other people.

- The Bible lights your path and helps you make wise decisions.

Discussion questions

9. Describe two times when something you read in the Bible helped you.
10. How can you remind yourself of what the Bible says when you are making a decision?

See the world through its truth

You are surrounded by influences that can pull you away from God—your culture, advertising's lies, TV, the Internet, your job, your friends, and more. But as you study the Bible and think about what it says, you can start to see through God's eyes.

You can break free from things that have enslaved you—old habit, thoughts, fears, and temptations. You can live in a radically different way throughout the day. You can focus on what's really important—loving God and loving others.

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40)

As you study God's word and meditate on what it says, your worldview changes, and you change.

Discussion questions

11. How has your worldview changed since you started reading the Bible?
12. How have you changed since you started reading the Bible?

Memory verse

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. (Psalm 119:97)

Want to learn more?

Free online Bible studies

Several studies on Christian living

www.dougbrittonbooks.com/resources/jesus

Notes

Homework – Day Four

1. This lesson teaches we should not think of Bible study as “read it and forget it.” What does it mean to bring the Bible into your daily life?
2. What are some ways you would like to bring the Bible more into your daily life?
3. What does the Bible mean when it talks about meditating on God’s word?
4. How can you increase the amount of time you meditate on God’s word?

Day Five: Review and Test (may be removed by leader)

Note to teachers and small group leaders

These questions can be used in day five as a review and/or test. Remove this page if you do not want group members to see the questions ahead of time.

True or false (circle one)

- T F 1. We should only read the Bible when we feel led to do so by the Holy Spirit.
- T F 2. A good way to decide where to read is to close your eyes, pray, and put your finger on a page.
- T F 3. It's good to read with an open heart as well as to learn information.
- T F 4. If something in the Bible confuses you, you're probably not a Christian.
- T F 5. It would be wrong to write in a Bible.
- T F 6. Love is at the heart of all of God's commandments.
- T F 7. The Bible says we should never talk about politics or religion.
- T F 8. The Bible's worldview is radically different from our culture's worldview.
- T F 9. It would be okay with God if we set Bible verses to music.
- T F 10. We are bad Christians if we need to make it a habit to read the Bible.

Short questions

- 1. Why is it important to develop a habit of reading the Bible?

- 2. What does it mean to take a verse out of context? Why is it important to be aware of this?

3. Is it important to ask God to give you an open heart as you read the Bible? Why or why not?

4. What are possible dangers when quoting the Bible to others? How can you avoid those dangers?

5. What does it mean to meditate on Bible passages? Is this something you do? Should you do it more often?

Memory verses

1. Joshua 1:8

2. James 1:22

Day Five: Answer Key to Test (may be removed by leader)

Note to teachers and small group leaders

Remove this page if you do not want group members to see these answers ahead of time.

True or false (circle one)

- F 1. We should only read the Bible when we feel led to do so by the Holy Spirit.
- F 2. A good way to decide where to read is to close your eyes, pray, and put your finger on a page.
- T 3. It's good to read with an open heart as well as to learn information.
- F 4. If something in the Bible confuses you, you're probably not a Christian.
- F 5. It would be wrong to write in a Bible.
- T 6. Love is at the heart of all of God's commandments.
- F 7. The Bible says we should never talk about politics or religion.
- T 8. The Bible's worldview is radically different from our culture's worldview.
- T 9. It would be okay with God if we put Bible verses to music.
- F 10. We are bad Christians if we need to make it a habit to read the Bible.

Memory verses

- 1. Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

- 2. James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Small Group Leader's Guidelines

Introduction. These lessons are for new believers as well as mature Christians. They can be studied in various settings, ranging from small groups to discipleship classes to mentoring to personal study. They are ideal for studies lasting from sixty to ninety minutes.

Choose the verses and discussion questions you will talk about. Don't think you must cover every verse and question. With new believers, go over the main points, key verses, and selected questions. Go into more depth with mature Christians.

Begin and end each study with prayer. Start by asking God to help each person grow from the study. At the end, ask everyone to pray (either alone or with a prayer partner) for help to put God's truth into practice.

Review homework. Before starting the current lesson, ask group members to discuss their answers to some of the previous day's homework questions.

Personalize the lesson. Although it's okay to read each lesson word-for-word, the material will "come alive" if you discuss some of the key points in your own words. Be sure to share stories of your own struggles and how God helped you.

Get everyone involved. The more people are actively involved, the more they are impacted by what you are studying.

Ask group members to circle or underline important points or key parts of Scriptures as you go through the material. Then ask them what these words mean or why they are important.

Ask the discussion questions in each day's lesson to get your group involved.

Consider breaking up into smaller groups to discuss the questions if you are leading a large group or class.

Use day five for a review and test. Use the questions in day five as a review and/or test. Remove these pages if you do not want group members to see the questions ahead of time.

Want to Learn More?

Small group leader's book: *How to Lead a Christ-Centered Small Group*. This book by Doug Britton has detailed information on leading small groups and overcoming typical problems. It can be purchased at www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore/small-groups.

Free online Bible studies: Visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com/resources/small-groups to read a wide variety of online studies on Christianity and daily living as well as more suggestions about how to lead small groups.

About the Author

Doug Britton, Bible-based Marriage and Family Therapist, has helped hundreds of thousands of people as a therapist, clinical director of a treatment center, seminar speaker, radio co-host, and author of over twenty books that show people how to apply God's truths in their daily lives.

He has also trained pastors, counselors, mentors, and lay leaders in biblical counseling, mentoring, and small group leadership.

Doug and his wife Skeeter live in Northern California.



Books

Doug has written Bible-based books on many daily-living topics. Visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com/bookstore.

Free online Bible studies for daily living

Read and download Doug's free online studies on marriage, parenting, anger, self-concept, anxiety, depression, temptation, fear of death, biblical counseling, mentoring, small group leadership, and other topics. Visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com/resources.

Seminars and retreats

Doug is the founder and president of LifeTree Institute. If you would like him or another member of the LifeTree team to speak in your church on any of the above topics, please visit www.dougbrittonbooks.com and click on the "Seminars" link.

More Books by Doug Britton

In addition to “The Owner’s Manual to the New You,” Doug Britton has written many more cross-cultural, Bible-based books on leadership, discipleship, and key areas of daily living.

Growing in Christ

Getting Started, Getting Connected

First Things First

Living by Grace

Living Free

Breaking Free (from Drugs and Alcohol)

Conquering Depression

Defeating Temptation

Healing Life’s Hurts

Overcoming Jealousy and Insecurity

Six Keys to Personal Growth

Six Keys to Successful Relationships

Strengthening Your Marriage

Victory over Grumpiness, Irritation, & Anger

Who Do You Think You Are?

Marriage by the Book

Laying a Solid Foundation

Making Christ the Cornerstone

Encouraging Your Spouse

Extending Grace to Your Mate

Talking with Respect and Love

Improving Your Teamwork

Putting Money in its Place

Celebrating Intimacy and Romance

Successful Christian Parenting

Parenting Foundations

Preparing Your Child for Life

Christian Leadership

How to Lead a Christ-Centered Small Group

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