

A Bible Study Method

“...If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.”
(John 8:31)

A good friend of mine says, “A Quiet Time keeps your ship afloat, but Bible study puts wind in your sails.” I couldn’t agree with him more. There is no way to over stress the importance of daily Bible study.

Sometimes we forget what a privilege it is to have the printed word so readily available. If a 1st century Christian wanted to learn more about God’s Word, he or she would sometimes have to travel for miles to hear a teacher. He or she could only listen when the teacher was available. In contrast, we now have daily access to the greatest Bible teachers in the world. Bible study commentaries can bring them right into your living room as often and as long as you want! It’s surprising that more Christians do not take advantage of this tremendous privilege.

Have you ever wondered why Christians young and old come back from camps and retreats so motivated to serve the Lord? *The answer is that they have been focusing on the Lord and spending time in His teachings.* It requires discipline to stay on the cutting edge of Christian growth. All too often, we come home and get back into the rut of spending time with God only on Sundays. Eventually, we settle into a mediocre spiritual lifestyle. We seem surprised when this happens over and over again. Some people feel that getting “super-charged” during a retreat or a revival meeting should last them for several months of effective ministry. Like fad dieting, this approach to growth only leads to a cycle of joy followed by discouragement.

You don’t have to settle for a mediocre life! The key is consistent daily intake from God’s Word and a heart that is eager for personal spiritual growth. Soon you will be used by Him and then the fulfillment will begin.

There is no greater joy than knowing that you are growing spiritually and that you are also being used to minister to others. Ask yourself these honest questions: “Do I really want to grow, or am I willing to be a nominal, defeated Christian? Do I really want to impact my world for Christ, or am I content to sit back and watch the world become increasingly dysfunctional and spiritually indifferent?” If you commit yourself to grow in Christ, you will have to decide to study the Bible.

When Jesus was on earth, everyone crowded around Him because they wanted His

time and attention. Why did they want to be with Him? Because they knew that through Him they would be *changed!*

Eleven ordinary men were transformed into leaders and they shook the world for Christ. Their secret was spending quality time with the Master. Why should it be any different for us today? Anyone who spends quality time with Christ studying His Word will never be the same. The more time spent studying and applying His teachings, the more you will become like Him. *“Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”* (Acts 4:13) Spending time with the Lord made the difference for Peter and John.

Most of us have heard our whole lives “You need to study the Bible.” The question is, “Has anyone ever showed you how?” If not, the following Bible study method is simple, inexpensive, and inspirational. It can be enjoyed for months and years and take you completely through the Old and New Testaments. Wouldn't it be wonderful to make a serious commitment to study the entire Bible?

LET'S GET STARTED!

Preparation Steps:

First - Use an up to date translation of the Bible.

Second - You will need to use a Bible that has blank areas in the margins so you can record insights. Wide margin Bibles are available under the **Bibles and Concordances** tab. These Bibles give ample space to record insights in the margins. You may wish to use a simple notebook to record insights.

Third - You will want the best Bible teachers available in print. We suggest that you begin with the *Be Series* from *Victor Books*. This series is available by clicking on the **“Be Series”** Tab. It will take you completely through the New Testament and Old Testament. Start with Matthew. In the *Be Series*, this book is entitled *Be Loyal*, and is written by Dr. Warren Wiersbe. With over 3 million copies sold, it is the best selling Bible study guide in America. We have found it to be an excellent source for sound Biblical teaching.

Fourth - After you have obtained your tools, decide on a specific time each day to study the Bible. If you say to yourself, “I will study the Bible when I have extra time,” you probably won't do it. Bible study cannot be viewed as an optional discipline. You must realize that it is a necessity for your spiritual growth. Your

perception of its importance will determine how often you study the Bible.

Example: When you decide on a specific time each night, the clock helps remind you of your commitment. Somehow, you never have time for things unless you specifically plan to do them! It is helpful to place your Bible and study tools in a place where they are easily visible. Spending 30-60 minutes in Bible study each night is a good way to start. Example: If you have children, plan to study after the kids are asleep. Be practical and plan for long term success.

Bible Study Steps:

First - Begin by having prayer and telling the Lord that you are open and ready to obey any truth that He shows you. Tell Him that you want to be a Godly man or woman. Ask Him to show you truths and insights that will help you grow spiritually.

Second - Begin by reading the first chapter of Matthew in your Bible

Third - Next, open the *Be Loyal* book and read the teaching about Matthew Chapter 1. As you read, ask the Lord to make you aware of Biblical truths and insights that you can apply to your own life. As the Lord gives you understanding and insights, write them in the margin of your Bible or notebook next to the verse.

Fourth - Slowly read through the chapter verse by verse again and carefully consider the meaning of each passage. As you read, pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal insights and truths that your Bible teacher may have missed. The Lord will often give you additional truths. Write these insights in the margins of your Bible or in your Bible study notebook.

Chapter 1 of Matthew is now lined with pearls of Biblical truth and insights. It is tempting to stop - one step short of application. *The Bible starts making a difference in our lives when we apply it personally.*

Fifth - The last step is application. We must be ready to *yield* and *obey* His will. This step is where the real growth occurs. Ask yourself, "Am I really ready to yield to God's will and let Him change me into what He wants me to be? Am I ready to be obedient?" So many times we somehow feel that *consent* to the teaching of Scripture is equivalent to *obedience*. *Applying* the Word to our lives is the key. Often, we want to just stop at the concept understood and not press on to the application. *We tend to insulate ourselves from change.* Don't be afraid, He will always make you better!

Slowly and prayerfully read each insight which you have written. Come to God with one or more of these prayers as you consider each insight:

Lord, help me to....

Lord, I thank You so much for....

Lord, You are...

Lord, forgive me for...

As you do this, God will begin to change your character and give you wisdom, growth, and new maturity! *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”* (2 Timothy 3:16)

Other Helps:

- You do not have to complete all of these steps in one night. Relax and fully enjoy your Bible study! Remember that speed is not a goal.
- Study one chapter at a time.
- Watch out for this temptation: “I feel so good about my Christian growth, I don’t think I need to study the Bible tonight.”
- While you are studying, don’t let yourself slip into the habit of, “This is just what Mark needs to hear.” Listen for yourself first, asking the Lord to change you, then you can share your insights with others.
- If you are having trouble finding time to memorize and meditate on Scripture during the week, incorporate Scripture memory into your Bible study time.
- Your morning quiet time is your appetizer for the day. Bible study is your main course.

Will you make a commitment to have daily Bible study? If so, click on the “**Be Series**” tab and purchase some *Be Series* books. If you need a wide margin Bible simply click on the **Bibles and Concordances** tab. They are available at discounted prices.

This Bible study method is included on pages 245-249 in *A Call to Growth*.