

How to have a **PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY**

By Pastor Sam Holm

HOW DO I HAVE A PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY?

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

For most of my life, I have believed that Bible study is critical for spiritual growth. However, I didn't know how to get started. The thought of opening the Bible felt overwhelming to me and, at times, even felt boring. As a result, I missed out on the incredible blessing of hearing God speak directly into my life through Scripture.

SCHEDULE BIBLE READING INTO YOUR DAY

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed."

Mark 1:35

Years ago, a mentor taught me the importance of scheduling it into my week. To have a successful personal Bible study, you should set a time, a place, and a plan. Schedule your meeting with God before your day even starts. Look at your calendar a week at a time. Prioritize this meeting and honor it like you would a meeting with the most important person in your life.

Time: *When are you most alert?*

Place: *Where will you be distraction free?*

Plan: *What will you do?*

CHOOSE A READING PLAN

"Blessed is the man... whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, And on His Law he meditates day and night."

Psalms 1:1-2

Maybe you are like me and have tried to start in Genesis and read the Bible straight through. Multiple times I found myself getting bogged down after a few weeks. My incredible wife, Rebecca, showed me how a Bible reading plan (we used the One Year Bible for many years) helps to engage different parts of Scripture and keep each day's reading dynamic. One year we did a chronological plan. You can look for all kinds of plans online and through the free Bible app, YouVersion. Share your plan with friends and read each others' notes on the passages.

Note: If you are a new believer, consider reading John and Romans first. These books will give you a good picture of the pinnacle of all of the Scripture: Jesus.

Set goals. Seek accountability. If you are consistent in your personal Bible study, you will see your time move from a duty to a delight.

MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12

Consider starting a spiritual journal so that you can see God direct your life. Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. As you read the Bible, note a verse or verses that stand out to you. Highlight or underline them. Then pick one verse to write out and ask and answer these (SOS) questions in response:

The S.O.S. Plan

- **SAY** - God, what are You saying to me? Summarize what God is saying through the verse or passage in your own words. What does this say about you? What does it say about God?
- **OBEY** - How do You want me to obey? Is there a command to obey? Is there an example to follow? How can you apply this truth to your life today? Be specific. So many times, I have stopped with something like: "I need to love better." Instead of listening to How God wants me to obey, like: "I need to clean our house for my wife tonight."
- **SHARE** - With whom do you want me to share? We are called to be Jesus' witnesses, not lawyer. A witness shares what they have seen and heard. Who can you share with what God is teaching you?

Title the journal entry, date it, and create a contents page in your journal so you can quickly reference what God has been teaching you during your personal Bible studies.

Example: 2/18 - Wisdom Promised

- **James 1:5** "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking."
- **What is God saying to me?:** (My own words) Are you desperate for God's guidance? Request it from the benevolent King and He is going to extend it into your life. He isn't going to be upset with you for pursuing it.
- **How will I obey?:** (Be specific) I will block 15 minutes of time in my morning commute to ask God to give me wisdom in a broken relationship I have and listen for His response.
- **Who will I tell?:** A coworker I am meeting for lunch

OBEDIENCE MATURES AND MOTIVATES

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

James 1:22

The Bible is the Word of God, but the power of God is not released in our lives until we apply it! When we apply the Bible through the power of the Holy Spirit, it becomes a life-transforming book. Nothing is more exciting than seeing the God of the universe actively leading our actions. Nothing is more difficult and discouraging than reading the Bible when we are not applying it.

Note: You must be saved through faith in Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit in order to understand and apply the Bible. Obedience follows faith. If you have questions about how to follow Jesus by grace through faith, [click here. \(firstmckinney.com/3-circles-gospel\)](https://firstmckinney.com/3-circles-gospel)

RESOURCES

Recommended Books:

- ***30 Days to Understanding the Bible*** (by Max Anders) Understand how the Bible is put together in a basic way. An excellent foundation for everyone's personal Bible study.
- ***Living By the Book*** (by Howard Hendricks) Gives an inductive approach to studying scripture along with unique procedures for observation that will lead to a rich time with Jesus in His Word.

Bible Reading Plans and Websites:

- Join First McKinney's Reading Plan: firstmckinney.com/bible
- One Year Bible: oneyearbibleonline.com
- **YouVersion.com**: Many diverse reading plan options that can also be pulled up on your smartphone or tablet. Search for "YouVersion" in your app store.
- ESV Bible Reading Plans: esv.org/learn-more/reading-plans. Find a plan that fits you. Easy to print out these plans to keep in your Bible.
- **Project345.com**: Basic reading plan through the New Testament that takes approximately three minutes and 45 seconds each day for a year.

GOING FURTHER

First McKinney centers its teaching on God's Word, believing that life transformation happens best in community with other believers. Join a Life Group to study Scripture together and grow in faith alongside a supportive community. firstmckinney.com/groups