

# Holy Habits: Bible

To *know* and to *follow* God through Jesus...we must read the Bible regularly.

God has made Himself generally known to all of humanity through observing creation. Many people believe that a higher power exists. But *knowing* God is more than believing He exists. Knowing God is having a deeper knowledge of who He is (do you know His name?), what is He doing, how He relates to us, and how we need to live in response to such knowledge. It is difficult to live like someone whom we don't know much about.

*"whoever keeps his word, truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know we are in him: The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked." 1 Jn. 2:5-6*

God reveals Himself more specifically through the Bible and the work of the Holy Spirit. We believe the 66 books of the Bible to be the final and full revelation of God; and therefore, is the final authority for our instruction and our understanding of God. The Old Testament (written before Jesus) points to the need of a savior, and the New Testament communicates how Jesus filled that need. The Bible was written over a span of 1500 yrs. by 40 different authors (unlike the Quran or Book of Mormon) and is amazingly consistent and trustworthy in its writings. That is because they were not merely written by human minds and hands but written by men through the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20-21 says:

*"No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

We believe the Bible is the final authority and that no more prophetic word needs to be revealed. No other authority needs to guide church doctrine, because the final word of revelation was spoken by the Son Jesus Christ through the apostles. Hebrews 1:1-2 says:

*"Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son."*

There are over 5000 preserved manuscripts of the New Testament dating back to the second century. That is more than any secular piece of literature that the world holds to be credible and authentic. The differences between the manuscripts make up less than 2% of the NT and nearly all of them have no theological impact in what the Bible teaches.

The reason we study the Bible is because it is God's word to us about Himself, about us, and what we need to do. Through it, we discover: 1) the hope and love of Jesus, 2) how our sins are forgiven, and 3) how to grow in that relationship with God. It helps us to become mature believers and to reach as many as possible with that Good News. It blesses us as we read it and live by it (Joshua 1:8). Consider 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

Some parts of the Bible are easier to understand than others. Some are written in story form. Some are poetic while some are prophetic. Some describe what happened while some prescribe how we should live. The more we read, the more we understand each part and how they fit together.

*Check out these helpful tips while reading the Bible. If you're new to Bible reading, start with books like Mark, John, or James. Try using apps like The Bible App (bible.com) which comes with multiple versions and reading plans. If you have further questions such as why so many versions of the Bible, which version is best, how we got the Bible, etc. reach out to Pastor Steve at [steveb@hopechapelsterling.org](mailto:steveb@hopechapelsterling.org)*

# R.E.A.P

## READ

Read and reread the passage with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction, and correction. Underline or highlight a word or phrase that seems important and that God is using to speak to you. Write those verses, words, or phrases in your journal.

## EXAMINE

It is important to consider the author's original meaning of the text. Ask yourself these questions and write down your thoughts in your journal:

- Who is writing and who is he writing to?
- What is going on in the passage?
- When was the author writing?
- Where is this happening? Describe the scene.
- Why is the author saying this? What are the circumstances that the author is addressing?
- How do you think the author wants his audience to respond?

## APPLY

Meditate on what God is saying to you and how it affects your life.

- Is there a truth to believe?
- Sin to repent?
- Promise to claim?
- Command to follow?
- What are things that need to change considering this text?
- How can I apply this specifically today?

## PRAY

Pray through the passage and your application, asking God to change your heart and to change your life, based on what you have just read. Praise God for something you learned about Him today.

## 4 Study Methods

Based on "40 Days in the Word" by Rick Warren

## PRONOUNCE IT

Read the verse over and over again but emphasize each word in the verse one at a time. After each word, stop and write down your thoughts, even if it's just a word or two. Go deeper by doing a word study of the key phrases or words. See how the rest of the book or other passages in the Bible use those same words or phrases.

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. – Colossians 3:16*

**Let** the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Let **the word** of Christ dwell in you richly.

Let the word **of Christ** dwell in you richly.

Let the word of Christ **dwell** in you richly.

Let the word of Christ dwell **in you** richly.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you **richly**.

## PICTURE IT

This works best when you're reading a narrative passage, story, or parable. Picture the scene in your mind. Imagine the perspective of each character in the passage. Ask yourself:

- How would I feel if I were involved in this situation?
- With whom in the story do I identify most? And why?
- Ask God to help you see things from another perspective and primarily from His view.

Then write down your thoughts, observations, questions, or desired goals of personal change.

## PROBE IT

Ask a series of questions to gain more insight into the main message, purpose, and interpretation of the passage. S.P.A.C.E. P.E.T.S.

- Is there a Sin to confess?
- Is there a Promise to claim?
- Is there an Attitude to change?
- Is there a Command to obey?
- Is there an Example to follow?
- Is there a Prayer to pray?
- Is there an Error to avoid?
- Is there a Truth to believe?
- Is there Something to praise God for?

## PARAPHRASE IT

You want to be able to explain the entire verse or passage in your own words. It's not enough to know what it says, you need to know what it means. Utilizing other study methods may help you understand the passage enough to paraphrase or summarize it.

- Read the verse or passage over and over.
- Think about what God is saying to you.
- Write it in your own words.
- As you paraphrase following passages, try to paraphrase or summarize entire chapters with one word or one sentence.
- As you paraphrase or summarize entire chapters, try to paraphrase or summarize the entire book with one to three sentences.

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1. *Why do you read the Bible?*
  2. *How often and how do you read the Bible?*
  3. *Is there anything you are going to do differently now?*